

Beauty For Ashes Arises At Caernarvon Farm

LOU ANN GOOD

Lancaster Farming Staff
MORGANTOWN (Berks Co.)
— Hanging on a beautiful stone wall in Lucille and Andrew Stoltzfus' home is a plaque with the words, "Beauty for Ashes," carved into it.

The oak plaque is a reminder that one year ago, ashes and a fire-damaged shell was all that remained of the landmark house that had been built in 1785.

The damage was so extensive and the job looked so overwhelming that many people advised the Stoltzfus' to bulldoze down the shell and built a new home on their Caernarvon Farm.

"I guess we were too attached to it, to do that," Lucille said of the house that had been in Andy's family for generations.

Instead, the Stoltzfuses with the help of neighbors and friends rebuilt the home with its wide windowsills and unique drawers inserted in the walls.

Although the home is beautiful, it has not been restored to its former stateliness with its three-story mansard roof, gables, and plaster hand-carved medallions and wide crown moldings in every high-ceilinged room.

"It would have cost a fortune to rebuilt it exactly as it was," Lucille said.

It is said that when the 1785 house was reconstructed in 1845, many extras features were added to the house in order to provide employment to those in the area.

"Although we loved it the way it was, there are things we like about this one, too," Lucille said.

Hence, the plaque with its words "Beauty for Ashes," remind the



Lucille and Andy Stoltzfus concentrate on the beauty that resulted from the fire that destroyed their home and not on the things they lost. This stone wall between their kitchen

and dining room was exposed after fire burned away its layers of plaster.

Stoltzfuses and their visitors to look at the positive outcome of the fire instead of mourning the home's former beauty.

The plaque itself hangs on an

original stone wall that previously had been covered with plaster. It wasn't exposed until the fire burned away layers of plaster. A stone mason said that it is the most beautiful stone he has ever seen.

Other positive feature include a light, airy, and spacious kitchen, which had been shaded from an enclosed porch. Also, a few indoor walls were eliminated, which allows for larger rooms when entertaining company.

The Feb. 10, 1994 fire originated in the attached garage. That was the morning that the family had difficulty starting one of their cars. A battery charger was used and the car engine was allowed to idle. When the car ignition was turned off, the engine continued to sputter.

Lucille thought it was unusual for the car to do that, but she remembered that one of their former trucks always sputtered along after the key was removed but soon stopped.

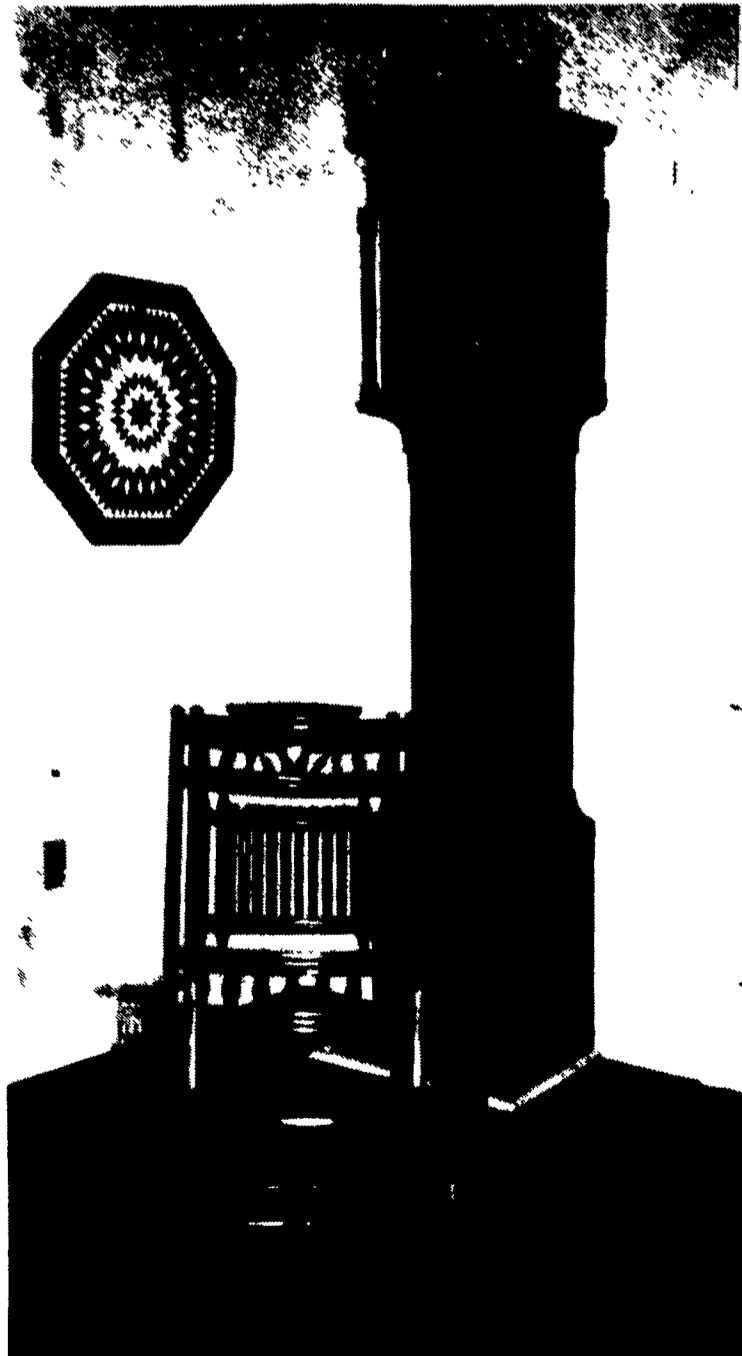


Muriel Mack is content to be settled into her own apartment that was rebuilt after the fire. At 81-years of age, the fire is one of the most terrifying experiences of her life.

Because Andy was gone for the day and Lucille was in charge of feeding the calves, she hurried to the barn to feed a new-born calf.

When she returned about 30 minutes later, she peeped into the garage to check on things.

(Turn to Page B4)



The grandfather clock that had been in the family for five generations and this antique rocking chair were rescued from the fire.

Homestead Notes

Be Prepared For Fire

Ten years ago, the historical barn and three other buildings on the Stoltzfus property were destroyed by fire.

After living through two fires, the Stoltzfuses have some advice to fellow farmers: Make sure your insurance is continually updated and know exactly what it will cover.

Lucille said that they thought they had plenty on the house, but it was not enough to restore it to its original look. They did find their insurance company easy to work

with unlike some horror stories they have heard from acquaintances.

After the barn fire, the Stoltzfus family kept two sets of records, one in the barn and the other in the house. But the night before the house fire, the barn records had been brought into the house to recopy onto the records stored in the house. Lucille and Andy worked until after 11 p.m., and then closed the books, planning to continue the work the next evening.

Unfortunately, when the fire began the next day, Lucille did not

remember to save the records.

Although all the animals and equipment had been saved in the barn fire, insurance coverage did not nearly cover the huge losses to the buildings.

"We had never had a mortgage but to rebuild the barn, we needed to take out one. It was a devastating time for my husband," she said.

It's important to make sure insurance will cover all rebuilding.

Take pictures of appliances and furniture for reimbursement from an insurance company.