

Beauty For Ashes

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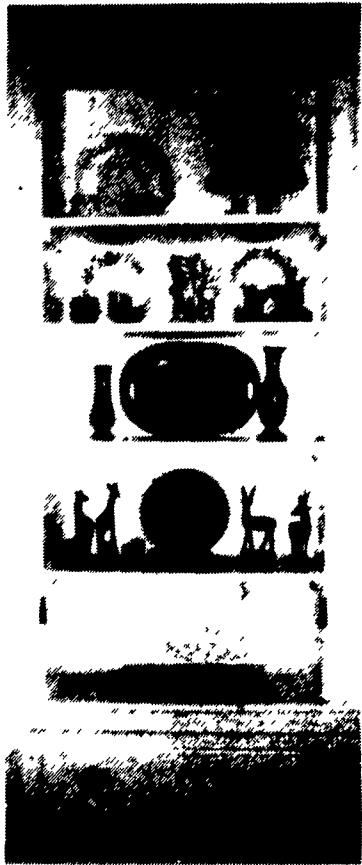
To her horror, flames were shooting inside the car. Lucille grabbed a large nearby fire extinguisher and sprayed until the contents were empty.

The fire seemed to be completely distinguished and Lucille signed with relief, "That was a close call."

No sooner had she breathed those words than the whole car burst into flames.

Lucille called the fire company, but within minutes an explosion rocked the garage, blew out the kitchen windows, and the house filled with boiling black smoke.

Lucille shut the doors that separ-



Although everything seemed destroyed at first glance. These shelves and drawer built into a wall remained standing. Inside the drawer were many photographs protected from the fire. It took a lot of scraping and sanding to restore the fire-ravaged wood, but it's a feature its historic beauty.

ated the addition from the original stone structure.

She grabbed her 81-year-old widowed mother, Muriel Mack, who lives with them. Lucille begged her to stay outside while she tried to rescue some heirlooms from the smoke-filled house.

"It was wicked weather with ice, snow, and wind," Lucille said. "And I had difficulty carrying things outside."

It was also difficult to think what should be saved first. If she had been able to think clearly, she said that she would have saved the registration papers kept on their purebred herd and embryo transplants. But, she didn't. And, years of careful record-keeping on the well-known Caernarvon Farms herd were destroyed in the fire.

A hired man working in the barn helped Lucille carry out an antique rocker and a grandfather's clock that had been in the family for five generations.

Then Lucille noticed her mother was no longer outside. Frantically Lucille screamed for her mother as she searched throughout the smoke-filled rooms on her mother's side of the house. She found her with her arms filled with clothes. In their terror to find their way through the dense smoke, the clothes were dropped.

Lucille placed her mother into a parked vehicle near the barn. By this time, it was too dangerous to enter the house that was completely engulfed in flames when the fire company arrived.

Fire fighters had a difficult time fighting the blaze because fire crept between the open spaces between the old structure and the four additions. The roof caved in and made it even more dangerous for fire fighters.

Not only was the house destroyed, but a spacious family-room in the basement ended up with 60,000 gallons of water poured into it. Before the fire, the basement room was considered the most beautiful part of the old house and the most live-in area. It has not been rebuilt, but an old hutch and many old dishes that were kept in the basement were able to be salvaged.

"Friends washed and washed to removed the smoke and grime from those pieces," Lucille said.

Some quilts and clothing in chests were blackened by smoke but otherwise intact. Much of this was professionally cleaned, but friends did wash and rewash items for days to remove the smoke damage.

The framed original deed was scorched but was able to be reframed and now hangs in the hallway.

A friend also sorted through the debris to salvage many old framed photographs and pictures. Although many still show smoke and water damage, it only adds an aged look to the portraits.

The former kitchen with its old barn beams had been only 12 years old when the fire destroyed it. Although Lucille regretted that the old beams were destroyed by the fire, the Stoltzfuses were pleased that they had valuable old chestnut wood stored in a barn. This wood was used to build cupboards and wainscoting for Andy's office.

Before the fire, the family had painstakingly remodeled the house room by room until the last room was completed. The Victorian-style house had wall papered rooms.

"But I'm learning to like plain walls," Lucille said of the painted dry wall.

"Another good thing that came from the fire," Lucille said with a twinkle in her eye, "was that it got rid of a lot of junk that several generations had accumulated over the years."

Andy had been born in the house that was passed down through his side of the family. The dairy farm sets on 120 acres and adjoins the farm where his brother lives. Caernarvon Farms is known for raising genetic-purebred cattle where they do a lot of flushing embryo work. Many of the embryos have been



These bay windows reflect the Victorian style of the home that was originally built in 1785 and reconstructed in 1845 and again in 1994.

sold to Japan, France, England and other countries. The records destroyed during the fire were painstakingly reconstructed by researching records kept by DHIA and several dairy organizations.

While many unique family heirlooms were lost in the blaze, Lucille said, "To me, things are only things."

"Our greatest blessing still exists," Lucille said in reference to their four adult children and seven

grandchildren. "We have four of the nicest kids and the most special in-laws in the world. We couldn't have picked nicer ones if we had chosen them ourselves."

"More important than things is family, friends, and so many people in the community who rallied around us during this difficult time."

Immediately after the fire, a sister-in-law set up a schedule to

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