

# Beekeepers' First Experience

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family that using honey to bake, with slight modifications, is healthier and more appealing than ordinary table sugar.

Tim grew up on a small farm in Landisville where his parents, Jim and Anne, cared for about 15 ewes, mostly for a lamb crop.

When Tim was about eight years old he found some old hives in the barn, and "it caught my curiosity," he said.

"It was only later that I would learn that those hives belonged to my great-grandfather Martin," Tim said.

In 1990, on a three-month home-repair mission trip to Kentucky with the Mennonite Central Committee, Tim had the opportunity to observe a beekeeper attending his hives.

"He took the time to discuss the different components of a hive," Tim said. "I'll never forget peering in at the queen as the beekeeper pointed it out to me. I found it all extremely fascinating. It was then that I began reading up on the subject."

He married Kelly in 1991, purchased the house near Manheim in 1993, and in the spring the following year, purchased his first package.

The package was a colony of about 12,000 bees and one queen from Georgia. The cost? About \$48.

"He bought it just so he could watch and look at the bees flying around," said Kelly, with a laugh.

Tim purchased two more hives and captured a swarm, which he placed in a fourth hive in 1995. In the late summer that year, varroa mites killed all the hives. To add to the disappointment, he noted, the little bit of honey the Millers did manage

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A swarm of bees takes over a construction site marker at the new Rt. 30 interchange in Lancaster.



A swarm takes up residence on a fence post near the farm.



Some hives are kept at the home of Kelly and Tim Miller.



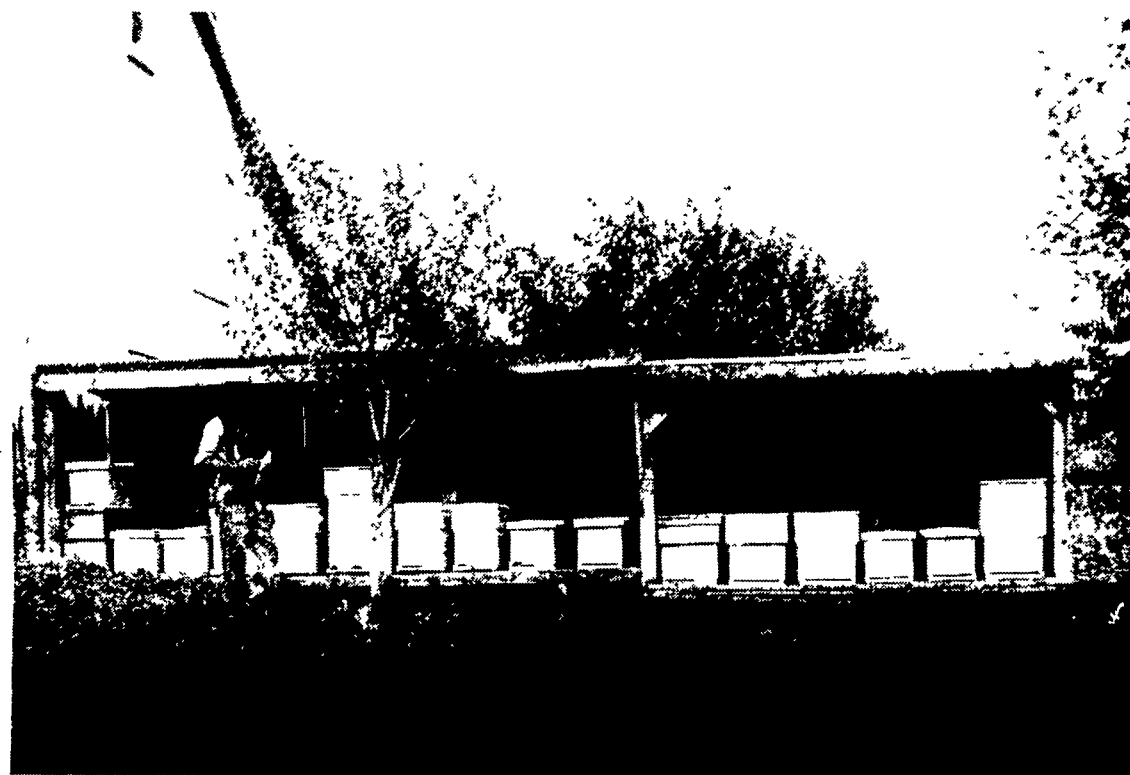
The Millers sell their honey and wax products direct market, mostly by word of mouth. They managed a booth at the Elizabethtown Fair in August with help from Pennsylvania Honey Queen Renee Blatt.



Bees, on ground, make their way into a new hive.



Tim holds up a frame of bees, larvae, and "capped" brood ready to hatch.



This is the photo of Tim's great-grandfather, Martin Miller, in a photo dated about 1915.