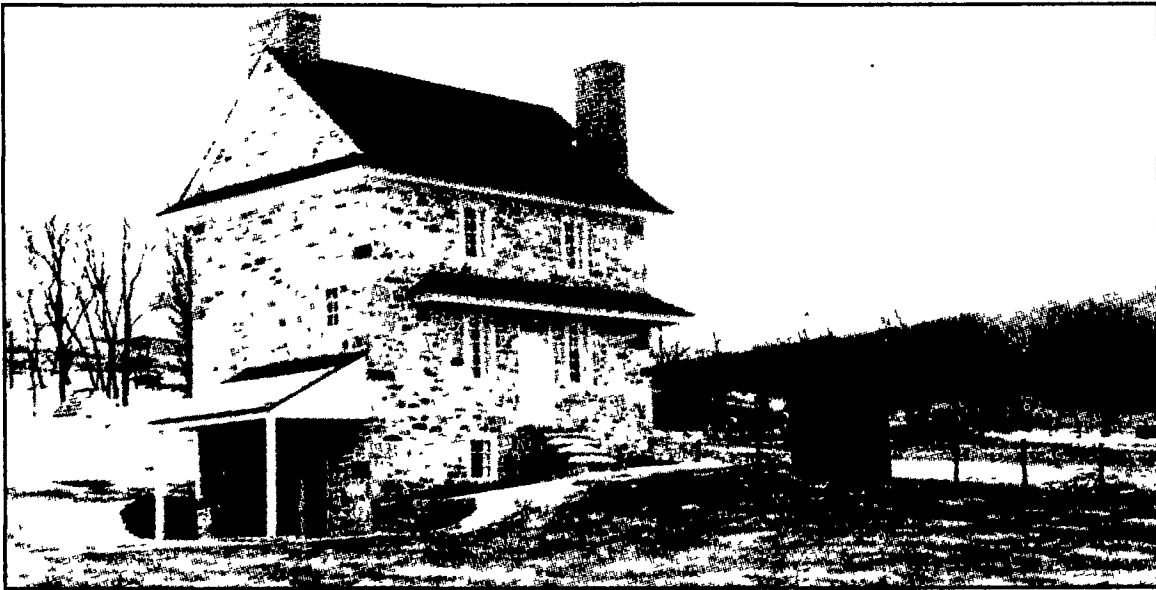


# Lancaster Farming *Antiques Center*



Jim and Vivian Bonson went to great lengths to accurately replicate the historical Chad house. Jim believes that great architecture speaks highly of the artisans that helped produce it before the age of machines.

## Bonson Home Tribute To Historical Workmanship

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Architecture, antiques, and artistic workmanship results in built-in beauty and historical significance at the Bonson home.

Jim Bonson, Reedsville, greatly admires the craftsmanship of old. He turns his artist's eye towards an architectural structure or household furnishing and sees the proportion, construction, and creator's individuality in items

made before mechanization and round nails and meant for everyday use.

"Just look at that," Jim said, running his finger along the S-shaped beveled edge of a shelf divider on the inside of an antique cupboard. "They didn't need to do that. It's great to see the ingenuity of the people. They did what they needed to do with what wood they had and still created something that was graceful, strong, and useful."

Jim, now retired, began collecting antiques at age 19. He and his wife, Vivian, live in an "old" but newly built four-story stone house on Coffee Run Road.

Although located in Mifflin County, the house is a replica of the architecture in Chester County near Philadelphia.

"The whole Chester County area is a very rich area," Jim begins, meaning rich historically and in old estates. "Our house is a nearly exact replica of the John Chad house (sometimes spelled Chadd) built in 1725 in Chester County near Philadelphia."

Some might think the house too tall, but each stone laid by hand, each carefully placed antique, and even the architectural design has its story to tell.

The story actually began in the early 1700s before the Revolutionary War.

John Chad and his wife operated a ferry on the Brandywine River. The house survived the Revolutionary War and the battle of Brandywine. Washington's headquarters was not too far from there. Lafayette was housed in another property nearby. The Brinton house, built in 1704, and the home of the Wyeth family of



Jim Bonson sits at a table that colonists used to conserve space. They removed wooden pins underneath to lift the tabletop off to move the table back along the wall. Sometimes tabletops were inverted and then attached to make benches to sit before the fire.



This hanging cupboard, made of yellow pine, features a wooden peg inside and dividers with beveled edges. A chamber stick and coffee grinder sit on top.



Jim and Vivian Bonson's slate-topped cherry Hepplewhite desk holds a candle and salt box, at the top left.



These two andirons, which were forge-welded in the early 1700s, feature a gooseneck top and pad penny feet. They're a good example of excellent craftsmanship.

painters near Chadds Ford are nearby. The Chad house sits not too far from the H. F. Du Pont property at Winterthur.

"Vivian's aunt and uncle worked for H. F. Du Pont, and we used to visit there. I saw a photo of the Chad house in a book on Pennsylvania architecture at the Mifflin County li-

brary. That's where we got the idea to begin coordinating the building plans."

The stones for the house came from homes in Allensville and Ryde, Mifflin County, and Walnut, Juniata County. The front steps came from the old Barrville schoolhouse a few miles away. The doors, window frames, and chair rails came from a house near Allensville.

"All of the stones were moved up the scaffolding by hand. It's not a project you start today and expect to be sipping tea tomorrow," Jim said with a laugh while explaining the 10-year project. "It takes a lot of patience and hard work. We laid out the property so that your eye will pick up something that complements everything around it. We hid all electricity underground. The brown building hides our power source. We have a phone on every floor, but they're hidden, and electric heat with no registers."

The basement features a huge fireplace with bake oven in the