

# Lancaster Farming *Antiques Center*

## Collectors Perform Old Music

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**BEDFORD** (Bedford Co.)  
Maynard and Sara Johnson of  
Cincinnati, Ohio were among the  
participants in the first annual



**Maynard Johnson plays the recorder.**

Old Bedford Village Colonial Crafts Fair.

While some collect antique guns, jewelry, or fine china, the Johnsons collect and perform old music.

The couple met in college and have always shared a love for music with Sara playing the hammered dulcimer and the kit fiddle as well as occasional cittern, a mandolin-like instrument. Maynard plays the cello, recorders, and tin whistles. During the 18th century, tin whistles were wooden and known as flageolets.

Maynard read that in Germany in the 18th century, the most common ensemble was a dulcimer, cello, and fiddle. The cello was used the way a bass is used today. End pins to hold the cello in place had not as yet been invented so they held them between their knees. Maynard is making up his technique as he goes along by reading and studying old paintings.

Sara is the publisher of a series of tune collections, "The Kitchen Musician's Occasional," written for dulcimer, fiddle, mandolin and other folk instruments.

The Johnsons began playing for contra dance and square dance groups about 10 years ago. One of their friends, a caller, was an 18th century re-enactor, who was planning to be a dance master and needed musicians. Helping them to get attire and music together, he planted a seed which has grown into a giant's beanstalk.

Five years ago, they met fiddler Michael Thompson, a violin maker who has been making instruments by hand in the 18th century traditional manner. Thompson joined the Johnsons in their music reenactments and demonstrations. Like the Johnsons he enjoys researching old music and discovered the kit fiddles, the small dancing master instruments, so popular in the 18th century and began building them. His kid fiddles are sold in Coloni-

al Williamsburg at the post office just as they were in the days when this Virginia city was the American colony capitol.

Michael also plays for a variety of dance groups doing contra dance, English country dance, and vintage dances, such as regency style ballroom dancing.

Years of playing traditional and dance music has enabled this Ohio couple to accumulate a lot of tune collections.

"We were fascinated to find that many of the tunes, which are virtually unchanged from being played 200 years ago," said Sara who does research at the Library of Congress to acquire information and tunes. The couple also has photocopies of about 10 commonplace books from the 18th century.

"These were personal tune collections written down by people who were fiddlers and fifers in the Revolutionary era," Sara



**"Old tunes" played on the violin are typical of the pop hits of the 1770s-1780s.**

said. "They included a man who was Washington's dentist, and another who was a ship's fiddler."

"We figure that if most of them were playing and writing down the same tunes, and those tunes were also in the music books of the era, they must be 'pop hits.' So, you could say we were playing pop hits of the '70s and '80s — the 1770s and 1780s," that is," Maynard said.

"At historic reenactments such as the 18th century event at Old Bedford Village, the Johnsons attire ranges from the 1770's to the 1800's but can squeak by as earlier period to the French and Indian War. Gradually the couple acquired attire from the later periods as they played in the Ohio River Valley, which was settled in 1788 through the War of 1812. The Johnsons participate in events leading up to the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial and Ohio's statehood in 1803.

The Johnsons participate annually at the Century Trade Fair near Springfield, Ohio, one at Dayton, and at the Mountain Craft Days in Somerset. Occasionally they travel to Valley Forge for concerts and play with a friend at one of the colonial taverns in old Williamsburg.

Sara's interest in colonial music led her to develop her own website at [members.aol.com/kitchiegal/smokepage.html](http://members.aol.com/kitchiegal/smokepage.html)

Some of the research she has done led her to the famous old Revolutionary War patriotic song "Yankee Doodle." The tune has been claimed by many different countries. There's a reaper's song in Holland, a vintners's song in France, and similar tunes in Spain, Italy, and Hungary. Possibly, it reached England from Holland before the reign of Charles I. "Yankee Doodle" appeared as a nursery rhyme about Oliver Cromwell. The word "doodle" refers to a sorry trifling fellow.

Yankee Doodle was so popular that more and more verses were written until they totaled 190. There is a country dance to "Yankee Doodle." Captain George Bush recorded it in his personal notebook of fiddle tune, copied from a now lost fife tutor printed in 1776 in Philadelphia. That copy is the first evidence known for an American printing before 1794.

George Bush was a young officer in the Continental Army and left no descendants, not even our George Dubya. However, the Bush family kept his notebook until 1990 when they donated it to the Historical Society of Delaware.

Captain Bush carried his fiddle with him on his travels and in 1779 began collecting song lyrics, dance figures, and tunes in a pocket notebook.

Finding old tunes can be a fas-



**Michael Thompson shows a visitor how to make an 18th century violin.**

inating hobby and many of the lyrics simply prove that "The more things change, the more they stay the same."

This little ditty is an example:  
"ON MUSICK"

*Musicks a Crochet the Sober think it Vain  
The Fiddles a Wooding Projection*

*Tunes are but flights of a whimsical brain*

*Which the bottle brings best to perfection*

*Musicians are half witted merry and madd*

*And those are the same that admire them*

*They're fools if they pley unless their well paid*

*And the others are block-heads to hire them!*



Available to purchase at the Christmas in July sale, clockwise from left, are a turn of the century German bisque 30-inch Heinrich Handwerck 99; the doll with the plaid hat and red bow is another turn of the century bisque, 25-inch Simon and Halbig 1249 "Santa," A10; 1920's German bisque Kewpie copyrighted by Rose O'Neil, and a 21-inch 1950's hard plastic "Nanette" by Arranbee, an American doll company.

## It's 'Christmas In July' Doll Show And Sale

HAMILTON SQUARE, N.J. — The 24th annual "Christmas In July," Central Jersey's popular and unique summertime doll show and sale, returns to Hamilton Township (Mercer County) on Sunday, July 7, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Angeloni's Cedar Gardens on Route 33.

Sponsored by the Delaware Valley Doll Club of New Jersey, this event traditionally features a vast array of dolls, doll artifacts and toys. More than 55 dealers from throughout the country will be exhibiting and selling antique dolls, modern dolls, doll furniture, doll clothes, books and doll accessories.

Collectors will have over 120 tables to peruse to find that special doll for their collection. The doll show also features teddy bears as well as sampling of antiques and collectible toys.

Club President Donna Rovner, Robbinsville, believes the show's popularity may be due to the well-known doll celebrities who attend. For example, featured among this year's participants are Barbie expert and author A. Glenn Mandeville of Bordentown, N.J.; internationally known porcelain doll artist Jody Abrams of Cream Ridge, N.J.; renown antique dealer Roxanne LeMay Morison of Flourtown; and Joy Harrington of Yardley, who specializes in antiques and primitives.

Those lucky collectors who win a door prize will be pleasantly surprised at this year's numerous offerings. Lunch and snacks are available for those who plan to spend the day shopping and/or reliving their childhood through the beautiful dolls and toys they can view or add to their collection.

Admission to "Christmas In July" is \$4.50 per person.

Proceeds from this annual doll show and sale benefit the Delaware Valley Doll Club's charitable activities.

Hamilton Township is easily accessible in New Jersey via exit 7A of the New Jersey Turnpike to Route I-195 West; to exit 3b Hamilton Square. Proceed to the third traffic light, turn left onto Route 33 West; Angeloni's is on the left opposite Staples. From Pennsylvania take I-95 North to I-295 South to exit 65A Sloan Ave. East. Proceed to second traffic light and turn right onto Quakerbridge Road. Go about three miles and turn left onto Route 33 East, Angeloni's is on the right opposite Staples. Parking is available at the rear of the building.

For more information call (609) 371-1902.