



This old house

LINDA R. JONES/Staff

The original iron gate that leads to the entrance of Valley View.

Historic Draft home has a lot of character

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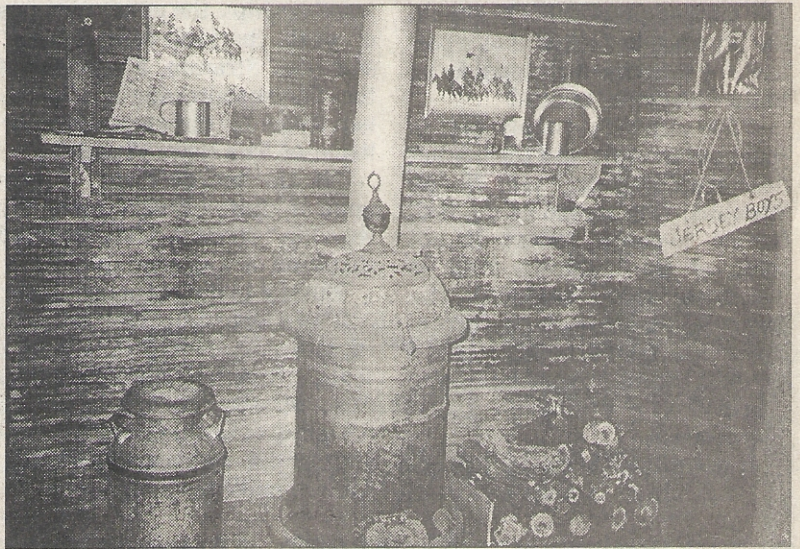
Something old, something new — that's what can be expected at one of the historic houses left in a rapidly developing Stuarts Draft.

Since 1914 Valley View Orchards, which is known as Greiner Hill by the locals, has stood majestically on top of the hill on Offliter Road in Cranberry Hill.

Valley View, described as a classic colonial house, is for sale. In addition to a beautifully restored house, bank barn, and corn crib on two acres, prospective owners will acquire a fascinating chunk of Stuarts Draft history.

The current owners, Bob and Tracie Milk, have gone to great lengths to preserve Valley View's originality, and track and maintain its history. They insist that the three previous owners need to be credited with most of the preservation.

The Milks, originally from New Jersey, discovered Valley View in 1994 while searching for a house in Virginia. They were looking for an older house with bed and breakfast potential. Unfortunately, their house in



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The coal burning pot belly stove now stored in the corn crib was original to the house.

the house was built by L.C. Greiner in 1912 - 1914. The Greiner family began an orchard with apple and peach trees which they called "Valley View." This name is still in the concrete of the front steps. The Milks were told the original farm contained 1,000 acres.

In the cement on the front porch is a set of footprints belonging to Lillian's sister. A tiny set of footprints is in the

room and family room. The family room used to be a dining room. It still has an original built-in oak china press.

The upstairs can also be accessed by the servant staircase. This staircase is narrow and has not been restored. Its originality adds historical charm to the house. It gives an atmosphere of mystery as to what life may have been like for the Greiner family.

New Jersey didn't sell in time to purchase Valley View. In 1996, the Milks were ready to move to Virginia. "Our realtor took us from Winchester to Lexington," said Tracie Milk, "but no house compared to this one." The Milks told their realtor about the house they saw in 1994. The realtor contacted the owners of Valley View and arranged a viewing of the house. It was love at first sight after all. "The house had been even better restored in two years," said Bob Milk.

The Milks were intrigued by the history of the house and family that built it. They received notes from a previous owner and adjusted the information as they learned more. The notes were from an interview with Lillian Greiner, daughter of the original owner. According to these notes,

side porch belonging to Lillian. The front door is the original entrance door. It still has a functional turn key-style bell. "The modern doorbell isn't working because the battery is dead," chuckled Bob Milk.

The front door opens to a roomy foyer displaying high ceilings, a large stairwell and intricate wood work. A summer parlor (now a living room) is off the right and a winter parlor (now the dining room) is off the left of the foyer.

The large and modernized kitchen is behind the dining room and leads into the back of the house. Here is where much of the modernization took place. The original country kitchen used to be in the back of the house. Now that area is fitted with a laundry room, full bath-

bedrooms and two modern large full bathrooms. The smallest room was a maid's or nanny's room for a local African-American woman hired by the Greiner family on the birth of their last child. Her room was the only unheated bedroom. The other original bedrooms were heated by small wood stoves. A sleeping porch was added onto the house upstairs later when the Greiner family started having many guests. In various conversations with neighbors and longtime area residents, the Milks were told there was no bathroom in the house until 1989.

The Greiner family was considered fairly well-to-do. They were believed to be the first family in Stuarts Draft to own a car. After World War II, Mr. Greiner

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