



*Ida Zercher*

## Homemaker and Farm Women Society Leader



by  
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Mrs. Paul A. (Ida Jane) Zercher, Willow Street, president of Farm Women Society 9 for the past two years is a busy homemaker, is active in her church, three Needlework Guilds, the Lampeter-Willow Street Auxiliary to the General Hospital, and gives freely of her time and talents to other worthwhile projects and to help people who need her services.

Mrs. Zercher had the honor of being president of Farm Women Society 9 when it celebrated its fiftieth anniversary March 14 this year. They celebrated this milestone with a covered dish dinner at the Marticville United Methodist Church and a very excellent program. One part of the program that was of great interest was a history which three of the members wrote. It reminded them of some of their activities and good times in the past. Mrs. Clarence Carter's memorial service brought to mind many members who contributed very much to this society's past. Another feature enjoyed by all was Henrietta Scott's vocal rendition of Irish songs. This society organized March 23, 1924 and has been a very active group ever since.

Farm Women Society 9 will sew at the General Hospital October 31, starting at 10 a.m. This group is one of the few Farm Women groups who still sew at the hospital. They take their lunch and the hospital provides a beverage. Seven or eight from the society go and put in a full day sewing, either on sewing machines, by hand or folding the finished products. The hospital has twenty sewing machines. Some of the things they make are nighties, booties, bed pads and covers for bedpans. They also mend sheets and other things.

Mrs. Zercher has been a member of Farm Women Society 9 for nine years and before being president served as vice-president and on various committees. This society has 33 members, the oldest one being 90 years old. They usually meet in homes of the members commencing with a box luncheon with the hostess providing dessert and beverage. Their meeting day is the second Thursday of each month. The meetings are very well attended. All except three or four usually show up for the meetings.



Present and past presidents of Farm Women Society 9: Front row left to right: Ida Jane Zercher, Esther Huber and Clare Gardner. Second row: left to right Mabel Heller, Ann Brubaker, Henrietta Scott, Reba Gring and Jeanne Brenneman.

To get an idea of this society's activities let us look in on this year's schedule of events. It is interesting to note the fellowship that they inject into their charitable projects. They sew cancer pads in January and February in connection with their meetings. Arriving at the home of one of their members at 10 a.m. they work till noon then have a sandwich and dessert together. In the afternoon they have their meeting. In case they do not get their sewing completed they finish another day.

Another service project that is noteworthy—they go to the Blind Association, Walnut & Mary Streets, Lancaster, twice a month to stuff envelopes. They have a needlework guild in the society and the members make garments for it. They also pack fruit baskets in November to give to shut-ins for Thanksgiving.

Money-making affairs? They always have a white elephant sale at their April meeting. Each month three members bring something to sell at the meeting. Also to make money they have bake sales and they have been selling cookbooks.

This society always has a picnic in July. They have been holding it in the back yard of a member in Willow Street.



Mrs. Ida Jane Zercher, president of Farm Women Society 9 holding her gold bud vase which was a favor from the society's 50th anniversary dinner and president's notebook will soon be passing on the Farm Women flags to her successor.

In September they met at Hickory Farms, Park City, and it proved very enjoyable.

Yes, Farm Women Society 9 takes their place among other Farm Women groups. Mrs. Zercher, as president, attends the county executive board meetings quarterly. Probably a third of their membership will attend the county convention November 2nd and three or four always attend state convention in January.

Zerchers are members of Colemanville United Methodist Church. Ida Jane is an active member of the United Methodist Women, on the Administrative Board and the nominating committee of the church. The women's group is very active and are noted for their good cooks. This year they made 50 quarts of spiced watermelon rind to sell. Last year they made 100 quarts. They made 100 quarts of mince meat as they have been doing for many years. They made over 1000 mince meat pies at Thanksgiving time last year. The women held a very successful corn soup supper the last Saturday in September.

One of the big projects of the women was the publishing of a cookbook in 1972. At that time their group was known as the Women's Society of Christian Service but with the merger of the Evangelical United Brethren church the name was changed to United Methodist Women. The cover on this 260 page book was cleverly arranged with a picture of their church and vertically WSCS. For these letters they spelled out the title "We'll Share Colemanville's Cooking Secrets." A special committee compiled the recipes submitted by the members, indexing them and also including the church recipes they use for their mince meat, pie crust, waffles, chicken corn soup, creamed



Mrs. Zercher made this attractive white crepe evening gown for her daughter. Behind her are some of her sister Ruth Warfel's cookbook collection.

chicken patties and sub sandwiches. The church holds a chicken and waffle supper in May and the young people a sub sale every year. The creamed chicken patties are sold at the cafeteria supper in March. The women make chicken pot pie for the church work days.

Mrs. Zercher was in charge of the cookbook largely. Her daughter Margie did the typing for it and her son Jack did the small illustrations. Mrs. Jacque Shaw did the large illustrations and Mrs. Janet Rankin did the title pages. These folks are not known as artists but their art work throughout the cookbook is most interesting and very well done. Nearly 2000 copies of this cookbook have been sold. Mrs. Zercher also helped with the Rawlinsville Camp Auxiliary cookbook which came out about the same time.

Mrs. Zercher is the Sub-District Leader of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Women, representing the southern Lancaster County Methodist churches of Safe Harbor, Boehms, Conestoga, Colemanville, Green Hill and Stehmans.

Ida Jane has helped with the Cornwall Manor bazaar for seven years as has several ladies of Colemanville United Methodist Church. They have been in charge of the juice, cole slaw, rolls and cutting the pies. 826 persons were served dinner two weeks ago at the fall bazaar.

Mrs. Zercher says "I enjoy sewing." She took courses in sewing at the Farm & Home Center, McCaskey High School and at Singer's. As she puts it, "I took sewing lessons for enjoyment. I belong to three needlework guilds—one in church, one in Farm Women and one in Willow Street. I'm going to make two nightgowns for each needlework guild." The needlework center is at the Iris Club in Lancaster. Three fourths of the clothes go to local people and one fourth to Philadelphia.

Mrs. Zercher is a member of the Lampeter-Willow Street Auxiliary to the General Hospital in Lancaster. She pushes the cart at the hospital once a month. They make jelly to sell.

Ida Jane was a Girl Scout Leader in Willow Street for eight years and a Den Mother for the Cub Scouts for seven years.

She is one of about twenty ladies in Lancaster County who help to eye test pre-school children and children in Head Start. These children are from three to five years of age. These clinics are held at various places in the county through the Blind Association. She goes through the Willow Street Lions Club. Three to six ladies are needed at a time, six if there are a lot of children. Mrs. Zercher says each child should be tested once a year.

Mrs. Zercher is quite a domestic worker away from home as well as at home. She does the weekly house cleaning at four other houses, four washings and three ironings for other people. She also helps her sister who isn't well.

Ida Jane is the daughter of Mrs. and Mrs. John Warfel. She graduated from Penn Manor High School then worked nine years at RCA. She grew up on their small farm in Lancaster County. She never outgrew her love for gar-

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