

York Homemakers Learn the History of Pa. Coverlets

Nearly 400 York County Homemakers met at the 4-H Center in Blair, Pa. on Wednesday for the York County Extension's annual Homemaker's Christmas Program.

The ladies were treated to a special program that included talks given by Mrs. Rhoda Oberholtzer and Mr. John Heisey along with the traditional singing of carols and the informal exchanging of the latest recipes and homemaking tips.

Mistress of Ceremonies for the day was Mrs. Jack Krepps from the Hanover Homemakers Group with piano selections provided by Mrs. Sandy Feeser.

Keynote speaker for the day was Mr. John Heisey Staff Assistant for the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Art Collection at Williamsburg, Va.

Heisey, who is an expert on woven coverlets, from the 18th and 19th centuries, spoke on the history of the weavers and their work in the early colonies of southeastern Pennsylvania.

Assisted by his wife, Heisey showed his private collection of coverlets to the audience explaining the different prints, colors and borders that were trademarks of the individual weavers.

Heisey noted that each weaver of the period usually

signed his name to the coverlets or else used a unique pattern that was utilized instead of a signature.

"Before the Civil War the coverlets had small overall designs," Heisey explained.

"However after 1878 and during the time of the Country's centennial, the style of the coverlets changed. They had a large central design and were less tightly woven than before."

Heisey stated that coverlets are an heirloom piece that represents history and should be treated with care.

"Unless they are very dirty, coverlets should not be washed or drycleaned," he explained.

"Coverlets should be aired in the shade from time to time and refolded so that they do not develop a crease in one specific area."

Heisey explained to the audience that he had become interested in the history of coverlets after finding out that one of his relatives had been a weaver in York County during the 18th Century. For a number of years he has been collecting coverlets and researching their origins. In the near future he will be publishing a booklet on the history of the weavers in the area and the coverlets which were their business.

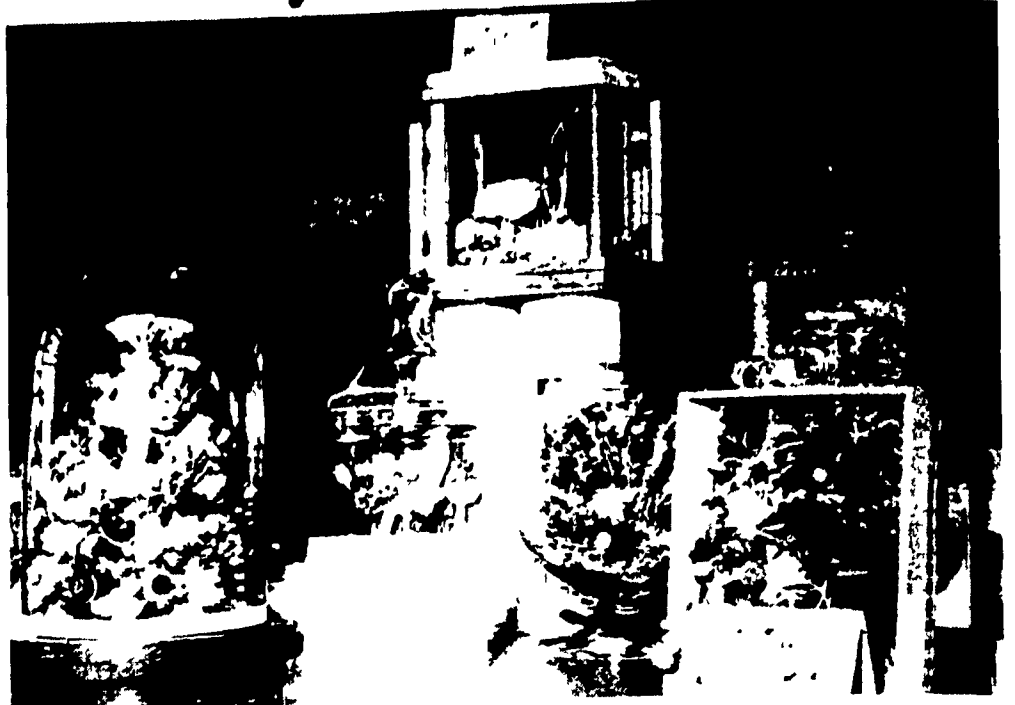
Mrs. Rhoda Oberholtzer from Stauffer's of Kissel Hill, was the featured afternoon speaker.

Her program, which was entitled, Christmas from the Heart and Hand, featured demonstrations on how to make wreaths, door hangings, centerpieces for tables and other novel Christmas decorations.

Mrs. Oberholtzer showed the audience how to condition greens for use in decorations by standing in a solution of water, iron and glycerine and also demonstrated the technique of using husks of corn to set off arrangements.

Greetings from the extension service were given by Marceil Seckman, Assistant Home Economist and Home Economist, Joanne Lamber.

Many committees of farm women and homemakers groups were helped with the program by donating materials and running the kitchen. They included the Hanover Busy Bees, Paradise Homemakers, Northern York County Homemakers, Scatter Homemakers and Hershey Hills, Happy Nomads and Windsor Manor Homemakers Group.



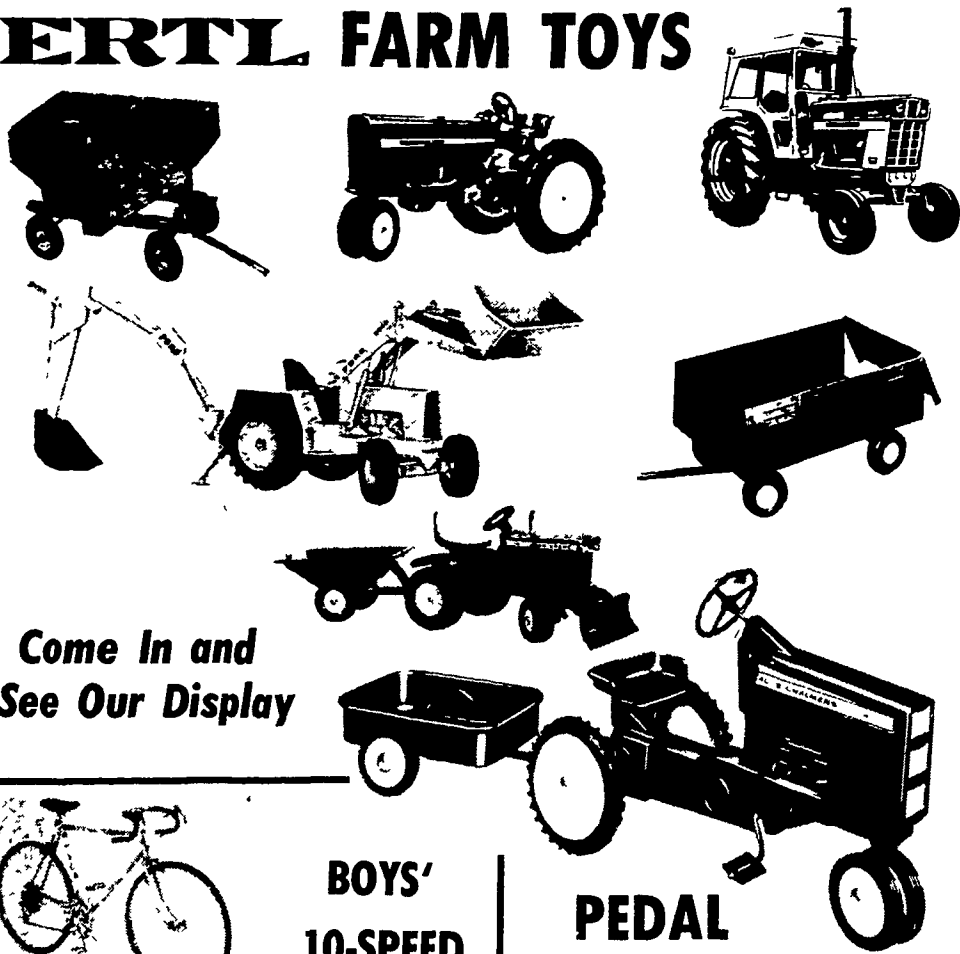
Crafts for Holiday giving were included in a talk given by Mrs. Rhoda

Oberholtzer of Stauffers during the Homemakers meeting.



Mr. John Heisey, staff assistant for the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Collection, was the featured speaker at the York Homemakers Holiday Program. Heisey is an expert on Pa. made coverlets and exhibited his collection during.

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