

Bicentennial farm

(Continued from Page 68)

first farmer in the County to erect a wooden silo in 1915 measured 11 feet in diameter and 30 feet high. One of the more progressive farms of the time was the house, in which ice was stored for more than six months.

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The facility on the Ferguson farm was underground, measuring 14 feet square at the bottom and nearly 16 feet deep. "We'd start at daylight to haul ice off the pond, and it would take all day to fill it," Ferguson recalled. Normally the men would wait until the pond was frozen over to a depth of four to six inches, after which the ice was cut into blocks with saws, and hauled out by horses. After being chopped down to more manageable sizes, the chunks of ice were loaded on wagons and hauled to the "ice house," which was really nothing more than a hole in the ground with a roof over it.

When finished, the men covered the ice with straw. That insulated the contents enough to stay frozen until July. "We could have had enough ice to last all summer," commented Ferguson about the then modern method for cooling farm products, "but we would have had to have a larger ice house." Prior to this innovation, milk and other products were simply cooled by spring water. Once the ice was used up, farmers had to buy ice in town.

Other signs of the times at the Ferguson farm were an old wooden windmill which was used to pump water prior to 1930, close to 1 1/2 miles of "worm fences" and a woodpile which was 60 feet long. The fences and woodpile kept men and boys busy if there was nothing else to do.

The "worm fences," had a tendency to blow over whenever a storm swept through the area, according to Ferguson, and he used to hate the thought of having to go after stray cows and erecting fences. They were later replaced by the post and rail variety. After that came woven wire fencing and today it's barbed wire and attractive board fences.

Another recollection the Fergusons have concerns schooling. They report that "everybody went to a private school until the early 1900's. Pupils started at age seven and stayed in for up to 10 years. Ferguson, who is a Penn State graduate with a degree in agricultural economics, noted that there were eight to 10 one-room school houses in Colerain

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Township when he was a boy, and yet only seven members in his 11th grade graduating class at Kirkwood. He spent his senior year at Quarryville. During those years (the 1930's) it was also required that students pass entrance exams before going on to high school.

Reflecting on his family's past, and pondering about present developments, Ferguson says work was a lot harder a generation ago and longer. He can remember filling three barns full with loose hay right up to the roof, for example, and adds that the practice was still common prior to World War II.

"You can't get rich farming," he concluded, "it's just a way to make a living. It's inflation of land values which make farms worth so much." He also noted that the struggle in Northern Ireland which gave cause to his ancestors' hasty departure is still going on.



Mr. and Mrs. Hervey Ferguson and friend.

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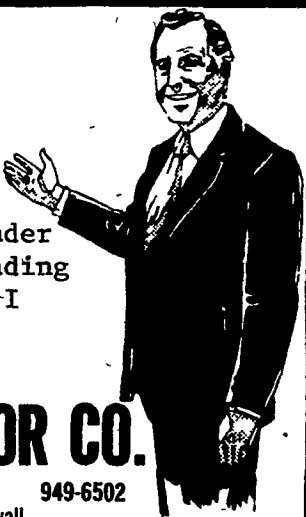
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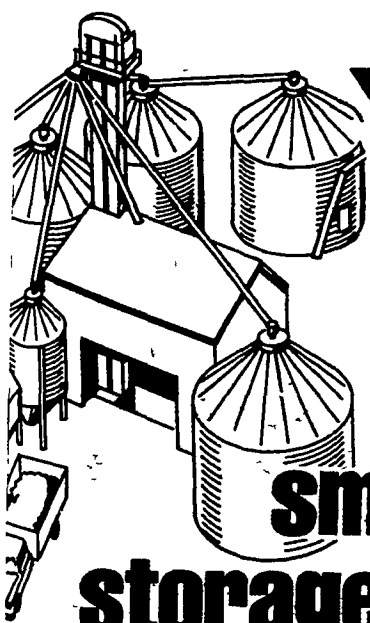
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Greek heads R. L. team

UNIVERSITY PARK - Leonard Greek, a student at Red Lion High School, York County, paced his school's dairy cattle judging team to second place in the state during FFA Week, held here recently on the Penn State University campus. He was incorrectly identified in a picture appearing on page 31 of last week's issue of Lancaster Farming. The Red Lion student, who was coached by vo-ag instructor, Clyde Myers, placed eighth in a group of 220.

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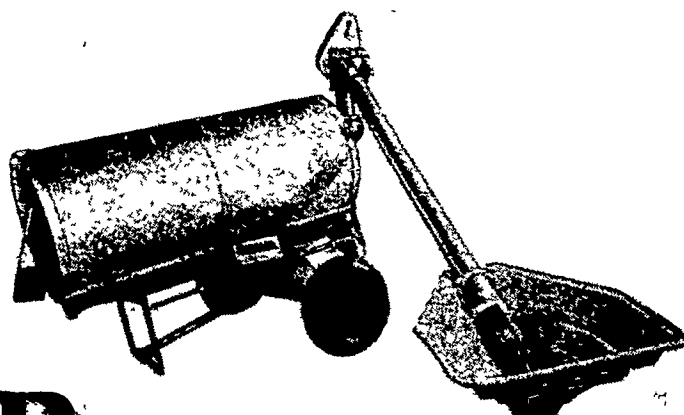
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