

Bicentennial farm

There's gold in them there hills!

By DIETER KRIEG

EDITOR'S NOTE - During this Bicentennial Year Lancaster Farming has periodically featured stories on farms within its prime coverage area which have been in the same family for more than 100 years. Agriculture is the foundation of all civilization, and these feature articles on "Bicentennial Farms" are one way of saluting the dedicated efforts of America's farmers. Contained in this issue are the 23rd and 24th such stories in a continuing series.

NEW PARK - It was probably routine, but even if it wasn't, a motorist passing through this area can't blame the governor for thinking that there might be gold in these hills, and therefore asking for "the fifth part of it."

Drive through this part of southern York County at any time, and it's beautiful. Come along on a sunny clear day, and you're treated with a fantastic view, and possibly some gold glistening in the ever-rolling hills.

You can see for miles, for on this farm, owned by the John Hope Anderson family, is some of the highest ground in Fawn Township. This is orchard country, and the gold some people might see couldn't be anything else but golden delicious apples.

Purchased on Nov. 3, 1849 by Joseph R. Anderson, for \$790, the 119 acre farm was cleared of all debts and restrictions through a court proceeding on March 2 of the following year. The official document, which cost Anderson \$37.90 (including recorder's and surveyor's fees), reads in part:

"Free and clear of all restrictions and reservations, as to mines, royalties, quit-rents, or otherwise, excepting and reserving only the fifth part of all gold and silver ore, for use of the Commonwealth, to be delivered at the pit's mouth, clear of all charges.

Silver too?

No one has yet found any silver in these hills either, but perhaps, again, someone was looking at bright sunlight being reflected from glistening leaves of fruit trees.

Joseph Anderson bought the property at a sheriff's sale, a development which more than one owner had found himself in during the past 150 years. A comparison of land prices shows these developments:

In 1826 this 119 acre farm, with a log house and barn, was sold for \$100; in 1843 the same property sold for \$400; by 1847 it changed hands again - this time for \$1025. Just 18 months later it was sold for \$900, and a year after that Anderson took possession for \$790. In the span of just five years the same farm had more than doubled in price. By today's standards the difference between \$400 and \$900 might not sound like much when it comes to buying an entire farm, but it was nonetheless a whopping increase for the 19th Century farmer.

And that sort of trend in land values continued. In 1868, for example - just 19 years after Joseph had bought the farm - the price tag read \$4000.

When Joseph purchased the farm there was an old log house on the property which has since disappeared, leaving



Besides sharing the same paper during a brief intermission from work, these two gentlemen share the same farm and identical names. Bel-View Farm, just east of New Park in southern York County, is operated in partnership by John Hope Anderson and son.

only a slight depression in the ground behind it. The progressive farmer wanted to build a new home for his family, and with that in mind, he purchased an additional three acres of ground in 1857 for \$68.12½. Nine years later construction on the house began, and when finished it turned out to be one with spacious rooms, regal beauty, and even large walk-in closets in every bedroom.

Whether or not this farm has always been an orchard is not definitely known. Anderson, who now operates the orchard and some cropland in partnership with his son, John, presumes that the first thing farmers back then might have planted was an apple tree. His wife added that at one time hogs were raised here.

A unique feature found within the buildings are the remains of an old wind-powered gristmill. A shaft protruded through the barn roof at one time, where it was connected to a fan.

Anderson's grandfather, John H., and an uncle, Harry, are

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