

**Ida's Notebook**

Ida Risser



I'm constantly torn between going outside and working or staying inside and reading. My children have given me many books on different subjects in which they felt I'd be interested.

Recently, I got one on "Blueberry Culture", which contains hundreds of pages dealing only with blueberries. It is amazing that there is so much to be said on one subject even if it does cover breeding, propagating, harvesting, processing and marketing.

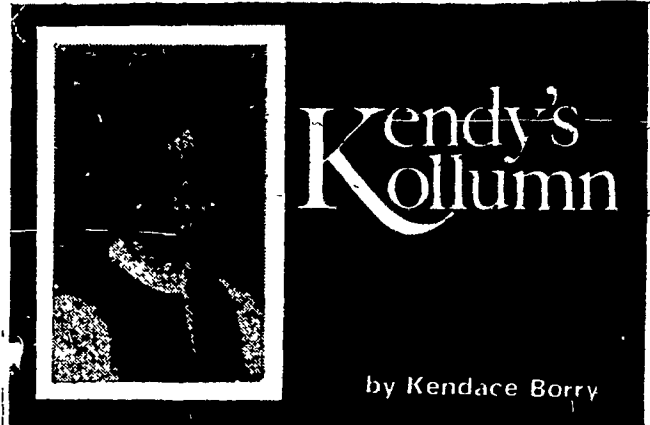
Another is written on "The Pennsylvania Dutch" and includes their religion, their history, their work and their folkways. Still another book tells all about herbs and other medicinal plants.

The other day a reader of Lancaster Farming gave me a catalog of Honey Plants. Now I didn't even know such a catalog existed. In it are listed unusual plants such as anise hyssop, peking cotoneaster, purple

leostreife and mignonette which are grown especially for nectar in a "bee garden".

All of these books contain valuable information but I'm afraid I'd never be able to confine myself to one area of study long enough to learn everything there is to know about it. There are so many fascinating topics which I want to learn about. For example, much as I love woven coverlets, I'm afraid I'd never have the patience to work for years in order to list all the weavers and to research all the intriguing patterns.

So now that I've looked over my books again, I'll go outside and spade up a space for my bushels of dahlias. This year my garden is so full of sugar peas that a new place will have to be found for the flowers. Oh yes, I'd better saw off a few more dead limbs and do some weeding too or I'll wish that I had when harvest time comes.



Mother had gotten me ready for church a little early that morning, and sent me outside to play, with a firm command to "stay out of trouble".

Toddling on my still occasionally unsteady legs, I walked out onto the porch of the house, and surveyed the scene. Now just what could a four year old, dressed in her newest jacy white dress do with a couple of minutes on her hands?

My eyes came to rest on the little chicken house, where the hens and roosters were eagerly scratching in the dirt. Nearby the ducks waddled in and out of the old sunken tub that served as their pond.

In a jiffy I was hightailing it out to the shed. Grabbing a feed scoop with some corn in it, I hurried out to the chicken yard to feed my little feathered friends.

The only problem was that the ducks decided that they were hungry too.

Now when I was four years old, those ducks looked mighty big and mean to me, and when they started waddling over, flapping their wings and quacking as loud as they could, I got scared.

My little hands tried to throw the corn out faster and faster to keep them occupied. The corn fell closer and closer to my black double-buckled shoes, as in my panic, my aim faltered and the corn dribbled out on the ground in front of me.

Terror-stricken, I started to back up, away from those ducks, who relentlessly pressed closer and closer.

Constantly retreating, I slowly moved across the barnyard, my eyes riveted on those fearsome ducks in front of me.

Kerplash! With a terrible finality, I landed backwards in the old duck tub, dirty water and feathers splashing everywhere.

Slowly I stood up. I was soaked. There was only one thing to do. Woefully I headed towards the house.

I think when my mother opened the door and saw me standing there, thoroughly drenched and dress ruined, it finally sank into her head that there would be many problems raising me.

But she made it, through the emergency trips to the hospital, the broken bones from the horse falls, and the wild chases through the night after the 4-H projects.

The only thing that worries me is that now and then I hear her muttering, "I thought it would be easier when she grew up..."

Mother, hang in there.

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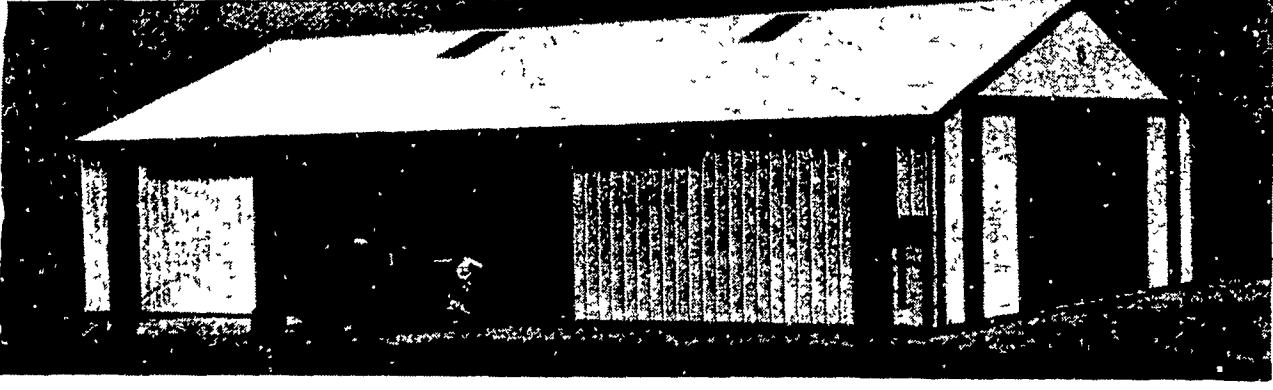
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