

PFA women visit homes of Indians and atoms

AIRVILLE — Over a hundred Pennsylvania Farmers Association women studied a legacy of the past and energy for the future during the July 14 regional Ladies Day Out hosted by the York County Association's women's committee.

"Arrowheads to Atoms," was the theme, with the women touring Indian Steps Museum and the information center at Peach Bottom Atomic Plant, both located on the west bank of the Susquehanna River.

Ray Weigand, member of the board of the York County Conservation Society which owns and maintains the museum, welcomed the group gathered on the spacious grounds with a brief background of the historic site.

Numerous tribes of Indians populated the Susquehanna Valley, dating back centuries before the time of Christ. The last tribe was the Shawnees, who resided in the immediate area of Indian Steps. By 1765, when only 18 Shawnees remained, they departed the river shore and were last seen paddling down the shallow, rapids-strewn Susquehanna.

Early in this century, a York attorney, John Edward Vandersloot, was enthralled with the beauty of the site of today's museum, and purchased the 9.6 acres along with a small frame building. It was known locally as "Indian Steps," because over the centuries the Indians had carved steps in the rock banks of the river for better footholds while they fished for the abundant shad.

While preparing a small garden

at his summer cottage, Vandersloot unearthed bits of pottery and arrowheads, whetting what developed into a lifetime avocation of Indian studies.

As the collection grew, Vandersloot determined he would construct a building to contain the relics. He chose to preserve them for later generations in a unique way, embedding over ten thousand arrowheads and stone implements into the masonry of the building, many arranged in artistic designs of birds, animals and Indian art figures.

Later, Philadelphia Electric purchased the property, and eventually donated it to the York County Conservation Society. Modern archaeologists credit Indian Steps with one of the finest collections of Indian artifacts in the nation, some of the relics dating back to 10,000 BC.

Beautifully constructed, with three stories and a "tower" overlooking the tree-studded grounds that slope to the river's edge, Indian Steps boasts giant beams, stone stairs and fireplaces, stained glass windows and a massive stone table weighing two and a half tons.

On the grounds of the mansion is another monument of history, an American holly tree believed to be the largest in the world at this latitude. Towering 65 feet with a massive spread of branches, the holly was already growing when the Pilgrims landed 350 years ago.

Indian Steps is open to visitors April through October, daily except Mondays, unless a holiday falls on Monday. There is no set



As part of their Ladies Day Out tour, women located on the site of what is believed to be the of the Pennsylvania Farmers' Association last native Indian settlement in the Sus- heard a brief history of Indian Steps museum, quehanna River Valley of York County.

admission fee, although visitors are invited to make donations toward the property upkeep and a small gift shop offers appropriate souvenirs.

Following the morning's individual tours of the museum, the group traveled to McKendrie Church for lunch and a brief meeting. Speakers included Nellie Crawford, PFA state women's chairman, Mrs. Roy Christman, committee member from Berks County, and York Association president Jack Dehoff who welcomed the group. A special youth presentation was given by Jill Snelbaker and Sharon Taylor, who represented York County at PFA's state youth conference.

The program took an abrupt turn from the distant past to the immediate future, as the tour then moved to the visitor information center at nearby Peach Bottom Atomic Plant. Following a brief self-tour of the center's static exhibits on energy, host John "Jack" Tucker presented a lecture and demonstration, and wrapped up the day's tour with a film on energy.

"The nuclear energy industry is an over-regulated one," Tucker told his audience of farm women. "Regulation slows industry development and ultimately increases energy costs."

Philadelphia Electric Company, an investor-owned company with some 250,000 stockholders, operates the Peach Bottom plant with its two reactors. Tucker called the reactors a safe source of energy and added the company has

only .06 outage time, that mostly due to electrical storm causes, and is working to make that record even better.

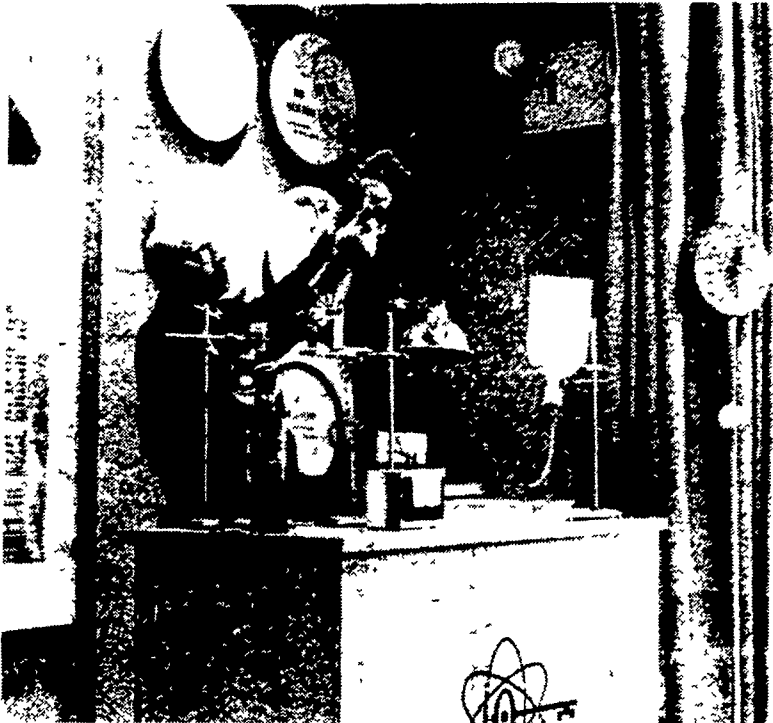
Using lab burners and small model turbines, Tucker demonstrated the principles of both steam turbine energy production and the generation of electricity using pumped water storage, such as that produced at the Muddy Run facility in Lancaster County.

Peach Bottom's nuclear reactors are fueled with hundreds of rods filled with pellets of uranium 235.

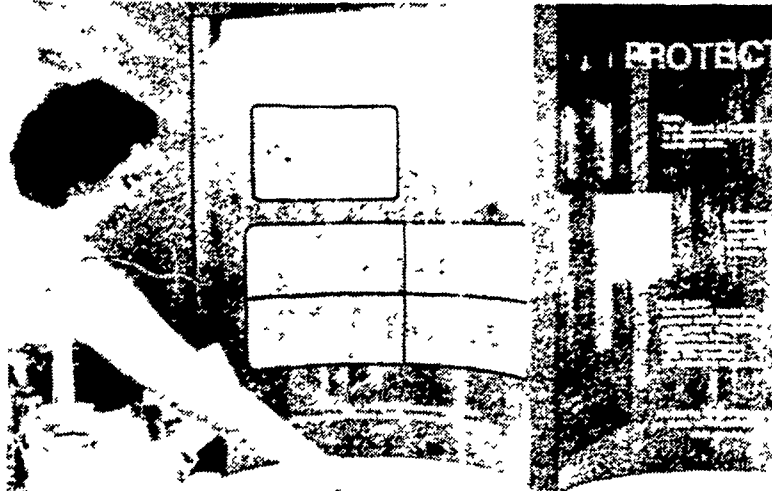
As the atoms in the fuel split in a continuous chain reaction, tremendous heat is generated and transferred to river water pumped in to flow around the rods. Steam from that boiling water is piped to spin the turbines, with each of the two units having a capacity of 1,055,000 kilowatts.

At peak operation, a million and a half-gallons of water per minute flow through the generating facilities. Cooling units of numerous small towers and grids

(Turn to Page D15)

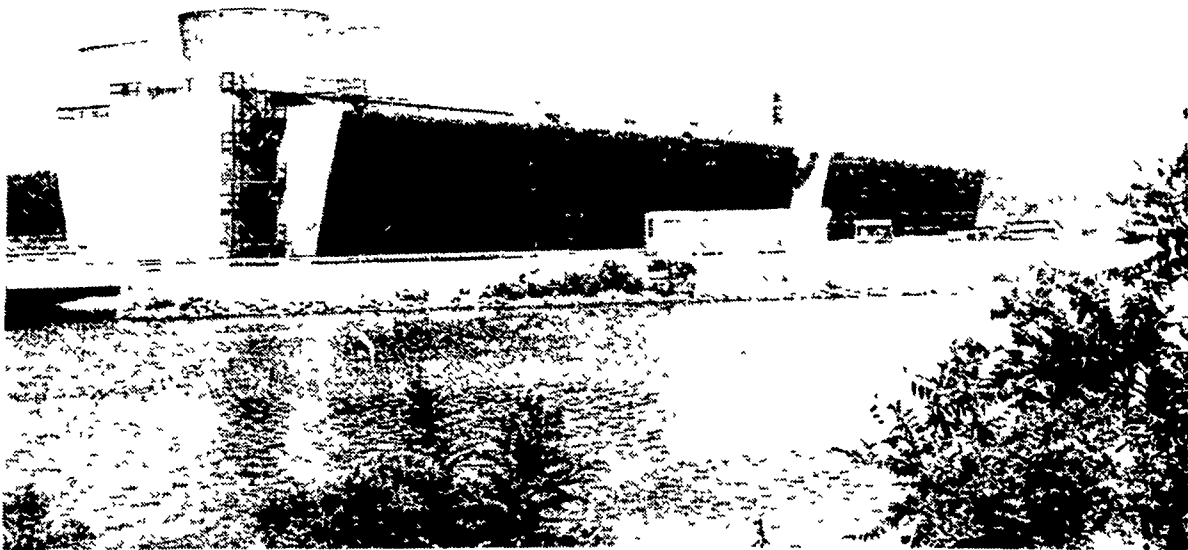


Peach Bottom's information center host, Jack Tucker, explained the basic principles of nuclear and pumped water storage electrical generation with a lecture and lab demonstration.



York Countian Alma Taylor inserts her hand into a radiation-detection device, to determine if her wristwatch will cause the meter to read a radiation level.

Cooling units for Peach Bottom's nuclear plant differ from the massive stacks usually associated with atomic energy installations. They lower the temperature of the steam-producing boiled Susquehanna River to where it can safely return to the Conowingo Dam back-up without damaging river ecology.



To preserve and display part of his vast collection of Indian artifacts, museum builder John Vandersloot embedded the relics of his riverside mansion. Arrowhead-outlined designs, like this of a wild turkey, were based on drawings made by the Susquehanna native.