

with a lot of hard work & progress

Nestleroth farm — remodeling the past for coming generations

BY SALLY BAIR
Staff Correspondent

PENRYN — Mark and Hazel Nestleroth represent the fifth generation of their family to farm at their Dutch Valley Farm at Penryn.

Hazel expressed pride in their Century Farm recognition, saying, "We are proud because the farm has been in agriculture for so long."

Indeed the farm has been cared for by family members for 129 years since it was purchased in

1852 from Frederick and Catharine Keller by Mark's great-great grandfather Cyrus Bomberger.

On the original deed, which is still in the family, it states the sum paid as a total of \$7,400, with \$6,400 of that paid in cash and the remaining \$1,000 to be paid when the owner died "or sooner if thereunto required."

Mark and Hazel have owned the farm since 1966 and now have 80 ewes from which they market lambs and 255 sows. They market about 5,000 pigs annually. John

Chapman is a partner in the operation with Mark.

There is no verification on the age of the house, but as they remodel it they become convinced that the house dates at least from the time of the deed, and probably earlier.

There is a log portion, a stone portion and a frame portion. The only date found so far is one scratched on a window in the frame part which is 1872. That is the newest section of the home.

There's no question that the

stone and log portions are early, because as Hazel puts it, "It's so crooked and old. Although it is built very firmly, nothing is level."

She adds, "The ceilings are low, which is unusual. It is not an elegant farm house." Elegant it

may not be, but it is interesting, warm and inviting. In remodeling, the Nestleroth's have exposed one inside log wall in their living room. The logs are square and measure about 18 inches. "They are enor-

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Mark and Hazel Nestleroth look over original deed dating from 1852 for their Century Farm in Penn Township.



Spinning wheel and rocker are appropriate accessories for exposed log wall in Nestleroth home.

Spahr farm — disaster doesn't mar rich history

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN

LITITZ — "It was a hot, muggy summer night in July of 1939.

"A severe thunderstorm came up about 3 a.m. and my father got me out of bed.

"I got to the landing at the top of the stairs and looked out a window toward the barn.

"The lightning must have struck just moments before because the whole top of the barn just seemed to explode. What a roar it made.

"We ran and got the animals out in time, but the barn filled with wheat and hay, all of the equipment, tobacco shed and small chicken house were lost.

"It's something you don't ever forget."

These were the recollections this

week of a then 12-year-old farm boy whose family was among those honored on Wednesday in the annual Lancaster Century Farms program.

Now, that 12-year-old youth, J. Robert Spahr, and his wife, R. Naomi, continue to work the farm along Greenacre Road, southwest of Lititz, in partnership with son, Jim, who is the seventh generation on the family farm that dates back to 1855.

While the home dairy farm numbers some 70 acres, the Spahrs actually crop more than 200. They rent the nearby Chester Sensenich farm, on which they also feed cattle, and work part of one of the Warwick Farms on shares on the opposite side of Lititz.

And as the Spahrs looked back on the more than a century and a quarter of their family on the farm, they recalled other interesting tidbits out of familial lore.

From the wall, Mrs. Spahr takes down a framed advertisement for a public sale and an elaborate conditions of sale that resulted from the auction.

"This dates back to 1866, the first time the farm changed hands within the family," she explained.

"The farm was split at that time for two sons. The printer's notation cites John Baer and Sons, who also had the agricultural almanac."

Jim Spahr returns to the barn, which his father saw burn to the ground back in 1939.

"In checking back we found that the barn had just been built in 1918, about the time my grandfather became involved in the farm."

In all, the Spahrs crop some 130 acres of corn, 40 acres of hay, 20 of wheat and some 10 in tobacco.

Their herd of grade Holsteins totals about 35 milkers, with an approximate equal number of younger replacement stock.

The herd is gradually being expanded as the free-stall barn built in 1978 will hold 52 cows. At the same time, the Spahrs put up a 20 X 60 silo, which was moved from the nearby Sensenich farm they rent.

About two years ago, the elder Spahrs moved to a ranch home

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Overall view shows Spahr farm along Green Acre Road, southwest of Lititz



Spahr family members, from left, Robert, Naomi and their son, Jim, take look at two-week-old calf with feline visitor.