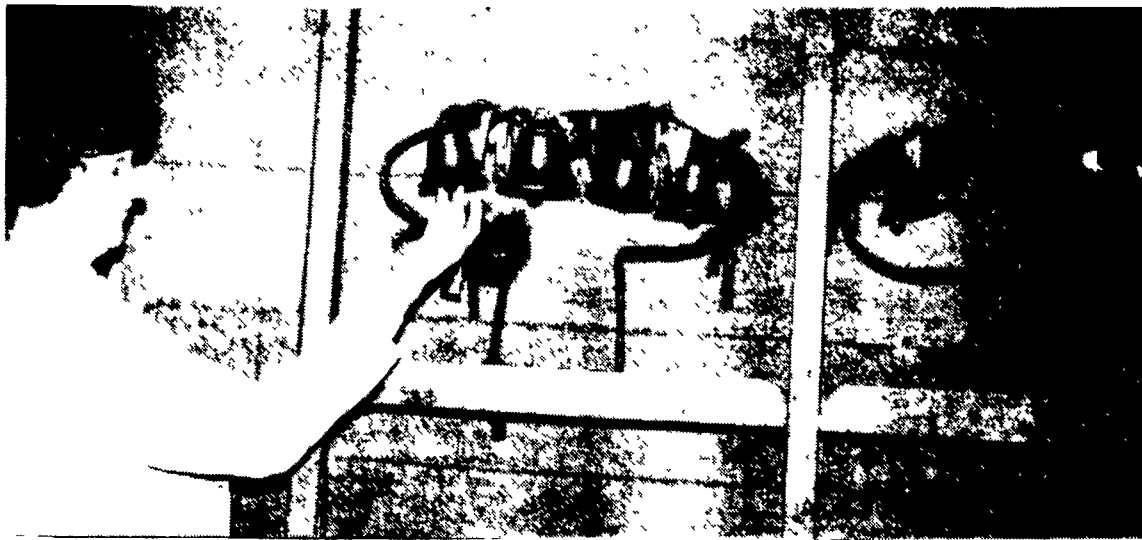


# York Farmers Association women learn about it

## Conestoga Wagon Bells



Conestoga wagon bells are admired by Shirley Hess. As a traveler's courtesy, wagon operators gave their bells to good Samaritans who lent a hand if problems occurred during their journey. Ideally, a wagon arrived with no mishaps, or "with bells on."

BY JOYCE BUPP

Staff Correspondent

**YORK** — York Farmers Association women got a history lesson last Tuesday as their annual ladies' day out focused on the rich heritage of the city and county.

Following a morning quiz program on the settlement of the area, and a luncheon at the host Yorktowne Hotel, the day "out" became just that, with a walking tour of several nationally-known downtown historic sites.

An initial stop at the York Historical Society's museum and headquarters on East Market street offered an in-depth look at the background of the White Rose city, and the surrounding farmlands, that were settled largely by European immigrants.

Excellent displays at the museum begin with archeological artifacts of the Indians who lived here as early as 20,000 B.C. and progress through the 19th century. Items and interesting facts reflect early architecture, religion, clothing, occupations, military, art and implements of daily living, in visual, detailed displays.

The museum's important transportation section features an original Conestoga wagon, the "tractor trailer" of pioneer days, and several early automobiles including a 1906 Pullman manufactured in York.

A life-size street of shops recreates the lifestyle of early York. Visitors can step into commercial establishments of the period, such as apothecary, cabinet maker, and toy shops.

An early settler's cabin, a restored structure originally from the Stewartstown area, depicts the cramped living quarters that housed pioneering families.

Three blocks west on Market Street is one of the country's few remaining, and extremely rare, examples of German medieval half-timber construction.

Originally built in 1741 by Martin Eichelberger, the Plough Tavern offered shelter and food to travelers plying the Monocacy Road, sole highway west toward Pittsburgh outposts, and today better known as Route 30, or the Lincoln Highway. Frequented by Conestoga wagon drivers, who brought freight, news and gossip from the more populous eastern Philadelphia area, the tavern was also a gathering spot for locals to keep abreast of national happenings.

Every item used to furnish the Plough Tavern has been documented to 1760 or earlier, authentically recreating a traveler's haven of the period.

When Eichelberger was unable to keep up with his property payments on the tavern, it reverted to the estate of the Penn's, and was later sold to Joseph Chambers.

Chambers, a "well-to-do"

Englishman, built his home directly adjoining the tavern. Better known today as the "Gates House," Chambers' home was constructed in the English Georgian style, and furnished primarily with Chippendale pieces.

An elegant home for its time, the structure boasts a fireplace in every room, high ceilings and tall windows, lending to light and open feeling to the interior.

In 1778, General Horatio Gates, who led the defeat of the British at Saratoga, arrived in York, where the Continental Congress had fled across the Susquehanna for safety.

Gates' wife, aiming to rent York's most elegant home for their stay, moved into the Chambers' home. A plot to oust General George Washington was squelched during a dinner party in the house, while visiting Frenchman Marquis de Lafayette toasted his country's support to the leader of the troops shivering at Valley Forge.

At the opposite end of the Gates

House - Plough Tavern courtyard area is the Bobb log house. Built in 1814, the log house was moved across town to its present site in the early 1960's and is representative of the most common type of family living structure in York during the 1800's.

Notable furnishings of the log house are several pieces of painted furniture and examples of fraktur, the hand-decorated birth, death and marriage certificates highly valued by collectors. Quilts, spinning equipment and period household items further depict log house life in the 1800's.

Speakers who took part in the morning program of the ladies day out included Charles Klinger of the PFA staff and York Farmers Association's president Ellis Crowl.

Klinger urged the farm wives to

stay knowledgeable of the 1985 Farm Bill as it begins to evolve and to lend their support where needed. With numerous non-farm groups interested in helping write this far-reaching legislation, he stressed the importance of farm organizations, having input into the final writing of the bill.

County president Crowl also spoke briefly to state legislation. He noted a recent proposal to levy an assessment on every ton of feed sold through dealers, to finance improved state research facilities for animal health problems.

Crowl suggested that farm families consider equitable ways for farmers who grow the bulk of their own feed to contribute to his research fund on a similar level as would farmers who purchase all their feed products.

## Suction pump fire engine



PFA's Charlie Klinger admires the York Historical Society's suction pump fire engine, built in 1853 for the Goodwill Fire Company #5.

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