

Chester County Holds Mid-Summer Social

BY MARJORIE KEEN
Chester Co. Correspondent
CHADDS FORD (Chester) —
 In 1793, a Chester County summer was defined by the solar calendar, not Memorial Day and Labor Day, Lois Parker said in welcoming 4-H parents and guests to a mid-summer social celebrating the solstice last Saturday. The celebration planned by the Dilworthtown Country Crafters 4-H Junior Historians featured an 18th-century din-

ner served at the 1714 Barns-Brinton House in Chadds Ford. Lois leads the Junior Historians. Because Quaker settlers in the Brandywine River Valley were English, they would have begun spring plowing on Candlemas Day, February 2. They planted peas, lettuce, radishes and rye, Lois said. By the summer solstice, they would have harvested the first cutting of rye. In 1793, the leader continued, there was a drought,

followed by yellow fever. According to Chester County 4-H Youth Agent Laurie Sicko-Sandow, hands-on history, as practiced by the 8-to-15-year old Dilworthtown Country Crafters, is the first 4-H Junior Historians club in Pennsylvania. Lois wrote the project book, Sicko-Sandow said, and is now receiving inquiries from other interested counties.

"Domestic skills of 18th century girls" is the project theme this year, said Lois. The club meets one Saturday a month during the school year and each Wednesday in summer. The Barns-Brinton House, owned by the Chadds Ford Historical Society, is the regular meeting place, although field trips are scheduled frequently.

Ray Ritchie of Cochranville has volunteered to teach boys' skills in another part of the house, Lois said. So far, the club has only girls. Ray taught them the art of making tape on an inkle loom. Clarissa Dillon, Haverford, serves as the group's historical resource person.

Clothing and dairying are the projects to be mastered by the Junior Historians this year. Beehive oven baking, butter churning, planting an herb garden, candle dipping, making redware pottery, hand milking, cross stitching a sampler and constructing 18th century clothing give the members a feel for the life that was lived 200 years ago.

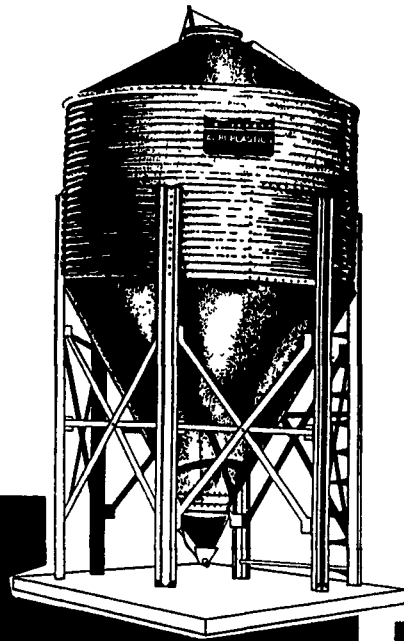


Carolyn Parker churns butter by the entrance to the 1714 Barns-Brinton House at Chadds Ford.

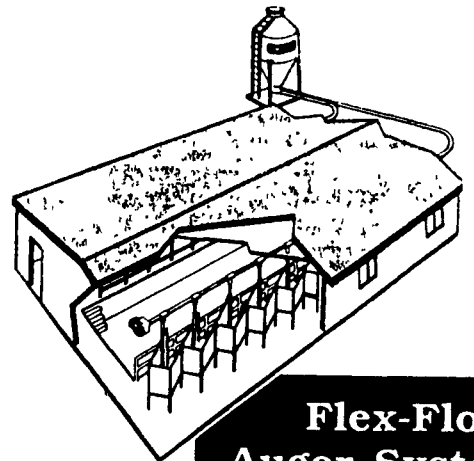


Jason Ingram and Ray Ritchie demonstrate inkle loom weaving.

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