

# Ladies Day Blends Historic Fashions, Current Issues

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YORK (York Co.)— Fashions from a century ago and front-burner agriculture issues shared center stage at the Pennsylvania Farmers' Association regional ladies day out program, held April 10 at Wisheaven Hall. About 100 member women from the southeastern area of the state attended the PFA region 1 gathering, hosted by the York County

Farmers' Association's women's committee.

The historic fashion show was in honor of this year's celebration of York's 250th birthday. Tamara Funk, educational coordinator for the York Historical Society, spoke on the significance of clothing in helping to trace historic development and on how to most safely store garments.

"When you learn to 'read' clothing, you can learn so much

about social history, technological, social and moral changes," Tamara said of the study of fabrics and costuming. "Construction details change, hand to machine construction changed; you can see economic and trade history in clothing."

"Museum collections tend to be skewed though," she notes. "Women's clothing was saved more than men's. Small peoples' clothing survived more readily than that of larger people, which was re-used or restyled for others. Wealthy people saved clothing more than poorer people, and those fabrics were the more expensive."

Because the average and large-sized items are the ones that have tended to survive intact. Thus, earlier generations were often assumed to have been smaller-built than today's generation, a theory disputed by recent studies, says Tamara.

And, as a show of hands among the audience attested, special garments - like wedding dresses - are what was, and still is, preserved. Everyday items, when they were completely worn out or beyond remaking, went for rags, leaving few work clothing items for collectors and museum display.

Museums use some special techniques for garment preservation, but some are just careful methods of storage that are adaptable for home use, says the museum costume specialist.

Garments should be kept out of  
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Style from a gold brocade-like fabric, this late 1890's top of an evening gown survived for posterity. Special occasion garments are primarily what have survived the decades, rather than everyday and work clothing.



Leslie Shelburne, museum teacher for the York Historical Society, modeled a 1860's ensemble of black velvet accented with an accessory again popular, a white lace collar.

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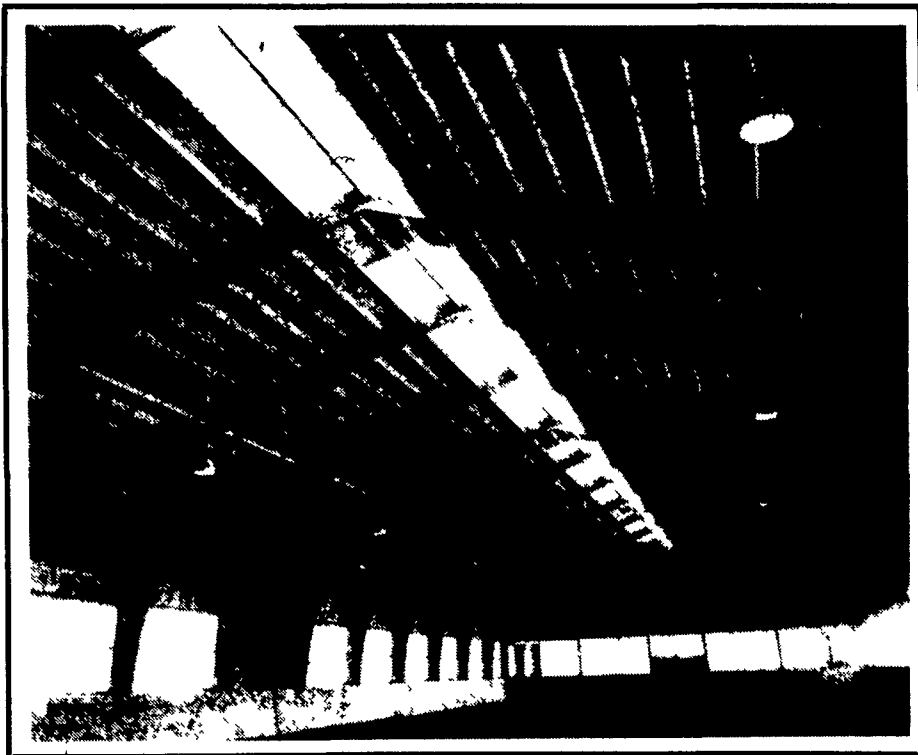
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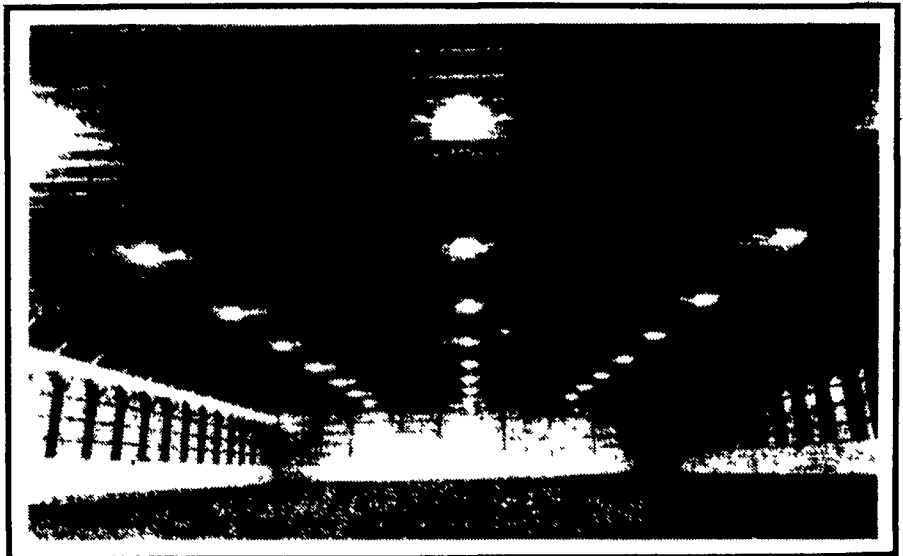
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