

Grandson Of Founder Addresses Farm Women's State Convention

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Lancaster Farming Staff
HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.)
 — Snow, ice, and sleet dimmed the attendance but not the spirit of the 75th annual state convention for The Society of Farm Women of Pennsylvania on Monday. About 265 of the society's 3,148 members braved traveling conditions to attend the convention held in the State Forum building during the morning and afternoon sessions and at the Penn Harris Motor Inn for the evening banquet.

Highlight of the convention was a presentation by Frank S. Black

Jr. who is the grandson of Flora Black, the founder of the Society of Farm Women in 1914. Flora started the organization in her Somerset County home. Flora loved farming and believed that farm women had more to offer the community than what they had time to do.

In the beginning, the men visited outside while the women gathered in the home for the monthly meetings.

Black said that it was unusual for men to support women in independent pursuits such as these during the early 1914s. Among his

grandmother's many pursuits, she was active in the Women's Suffrage Society, the American Red Cross, Pa. Historical Committee, the Daughters of the American Revolution, Geneological Society and others. Black said, "But she was most proud of her association with Farm Women."

Frank related several feisty stories told about his grandmother that reflected her indomitable spirit. After his grandmother had planted a knoll with blackberry bushes, a public road was slated to run through the 230-acre farm. His grandmother raised such a fuss about the proposed road destroying her blackberry bushes that public officials diverted the road around the bushes. This created a 90-degree curve in the road that, according to Black, everyone is still paying for today because it has created a graveyard of danger for motorists.

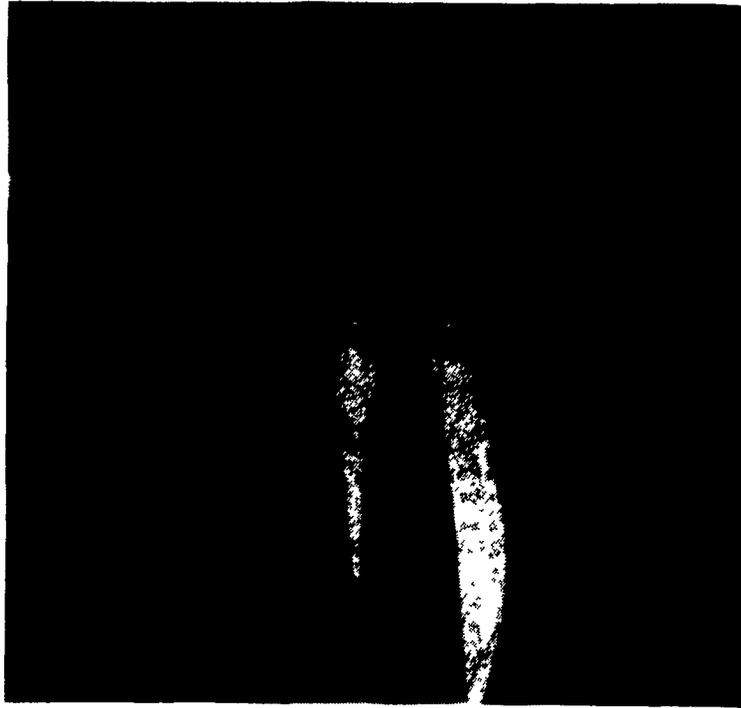
He said that no one ever questioned his grandmother's beliefs. She often complained that all the cats in the world could not rid the family's massive frame house of the mice that lived in the walls. She released a black snake in the basement because, she believed, it would rid the house of snakes. According to her kin, the snake feasted on mice for weeks and would occasionally slither outside in search of more food. One day his mother returned home to find a visiting minister killing the snake.

"They say that my grandmother horsewhipped him (the minister) down the road, and I believe it," her grandson reported.

In the business session, Arlene Witman, president of the state organization for the past three years, handed the reins of leadership to Dottie Stricker.

Of her association with the society, Arlene said, "Farm Women left footprints on my heart and I will never be the same."

During her term, Arlene set three goals for members by telling them that the key to happiness is caring and sharing. During the first year of her term, members were encouraged to spread happiness in their neighborhoods; the second year, in their communities; and the third year, by raising money for the



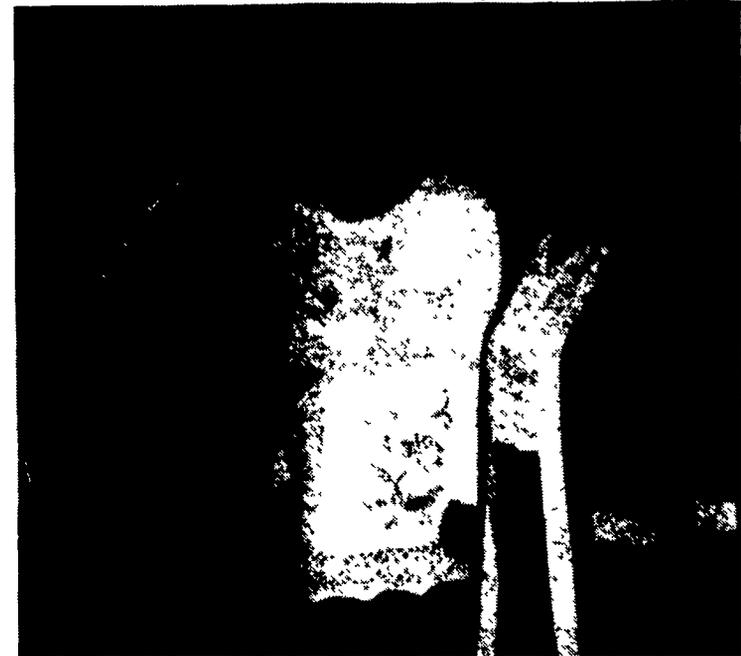
Frank S. Black Jr., grandson of the founder of the Society of Farm Women of Pennsylvania, told stories about his grandmother during the annual banquet.



Selling the Farm Women's emblem are, from left, Charlotte Stoner and Trudy Bard, both of Lancaster Society 15.



Outgoing Farm Women president Arlene Witman stands beside a painting of Flora Black, who founded the Society of Farm Women of Pennsylvania in 1914.



Newly elected directors for a 3-year term, from left are Gladys Meyers, Franklin Co.; Barbara Malehorn, York Co., and Barbara Nissley, Lancaster Co.

Heifer Project International, which provides a food-producing animal to poverty-stricken communities. Recipients then give the first female offspring to another family in need.

Farm Women members exceeded the \$9,000 goal by raising \$11,876 for the heifer project.

In addition to installing Dottie Stricker as president, other new officers include Darlene Schmeltz, treasurer; Audrey Gilbert, secretary; Lois Hughes, first vice president; Catherine Schott, second vice president; and Gladys Mey-

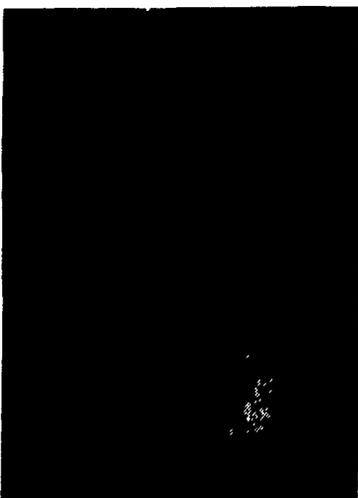
ers, Barbara Malehorn, and Barbara Nissley as directors.

"There's nothing I like to talk about more than the scholarship fund," Naomi Bupp told fellow members. Bupp, who is in charge of the Pennsylvania Society of Farm Women Cookbook, reported that 17,500 cookbooks have been sold as it goes into its eighth printing. Profit from the sales goes into the scholarship fund. Bupp presented a \$6,000 check to the Farm Women for this year's profits.

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Newly elected officers are Dottie Stricker, president, center front; from left, Darlene Schmeltz, treasurer; Audrey Gilbert, secretary; Lois Hughes, first vice president; and Catherine Schott, 2nd vice president.



The famous Pennsylvania Farm Women Cookbook, with 17,500 copies sold, is going into its eighth printing. Naomi Bupp said profits from sales amounted to an additional \$6,000 to be used for the scholarship fund.



During her address to Farm Women members, Jennifer Grimes, Pennsylvania Dairy Princess, told how hard work on the farm established lasting values in her perception of life.