



G. Weir Strock surrounded by family members Robert Strock, standing at left; Kent Strock, kneeling with son Kurtis; Dennis Strock, right.

102-Year-Old Master Farmer Brings History To Life

GAIL STROCK

Mifflin Co. Correspondent
MECHANICSBURG (Cumberland Co.) — G. Weir Strock remembers his parents talking about hearing the rumble of cannons at Gettysburg during the Civil War.

"They'd take the horses temporarily to the woods and hide them there. And Mother had a melodeon, a really good instrument. She hid it in the corn shocks," Weir said.

History came alive as G. Weir Strock, Pennsylvania's oldest Master Farmer, talked about his life at a recent family gathering.

Still quick-witted at age 102, Weir told stories from his century-long life.

Born on February 21, 1893 in Churchtown, Cumberland County, Weir has seen tremendous changes in farming during his lifetime.

Raised in the Churchtown-Lemoyne-Mechanicsburg area, Weir remembers when the West Shore of Harrisburg was mostly farmland. His earliest memories begin at the turn of the century at age seven.

"... and I had quite an experience that summer," Weir said. "It was a dry year. We had a dairy and furnished milk for a man that delivered

it. The pasture was dry. And Dad got permission to drive the cows across the West Branch of the Susquehanna and pasture on the island (City Island).

"I was seven years old. Roy Ranck and I watched cows all summer. We drove them in straight down Market Street and got in the river there and drove them across the river. It was dry. You could go across the river without gettin' water much above your knees. Anyplace! We watched cows till dinnertime every day. They said they started me out in the morning with a broomstick in one hand and a piece of sugarbread in the other."

Weir remembers marketing potatoes with a Conestoga wagon when a severe thunderstorm hit. "I did that when I was a boy," Weir answered a question asked by grandson Kent Strock about marketing crops through town.

"I drove a horse and a spring wagon. We had an orchard back of the barn at that time. I delivered potatoes, apples, and various things. I had a regular peddle route through Camp Hill and Lemoyne. I knew everybody. I kind of had a reputation for selling good potatoes. I sold a big wagon load."

The potatoes sold for 78 cents a

hundred pound.

"While we're talking about that wagon, one time we put 80 bags of wheat on that wagon and hitched a pair of mules in the front and a pair of horses behind the mules. I rode in the saddle horse and guided the mules with the lead reins. I had to load it and unload it," Weir comments. "On my way home, a thunderstorm came up and scared the team. I guess the only thing that held the wagon bed and running gear and the two wheels behind was a bolt pin that went down through the bed and through the bolster on the axle. I must of hit a rut. The bolt pin jumped out and left the wagon and hind wheels sitting in the middle of the road, and I had a pair of mules and two horses going lickety-cut toward home. One saddle horse stumbled a little going down one hill, but it didn't fall. Oh, I was scared!"

Weir moved from a farm in Lemoyne to the Strock farm on Williams Grove Road in Mechanicsburg in 1901. When he turned 11, Weir joined the church and has remained a member for 91 years. He has 36 years of perfect Sunday School attendance.

"My granddad died the winter of (Turn to Page B19)

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