

# Antiques Center

## Pasto Museum Curator Teaches Era of Muscle Power

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— One of Dr. Darwin G. Braund's favorite thank-you notes came from a school-age child who toured the Pasto Agricultural Museum near the Rock Springs Agricultural Research Center in Centre County, a museum filled with farm and home items powered solely by human or animal muscle strength. The note thanked Dr. Braund for showing them the Nordic Track for horses.

Dr. Braund serves as curator of the museum that's open during Ag Progress Days and for tours by appointment. The museum houses more than 700 rare and unusual items. The oldest item at the museum is a 6,000-year-old Mesopotamian clay scythe donated by a Penn State professor of anthropology.

Museum visitors can turn cranks, move levers, and spin wheels on butter churns, corn shellers, corn grinders, cake makers, wagon jacks, fanning mills, cream separators, and grass seeders. None of the items used electric or engine power.



**Dr. Darwin G. Braund of the Pasto Agricultural Museum near Rock Springs, Centre County, talks about farm and household implements used before the advent of electricity or engines.**

Recently, Dr. Braund has been taking some of these interesting artifacts "on the road" when serving as featured speaker at banquets. He presented his program at the Mifflin County Farm City banquet the middle of November.

"Who knows what this is?" Dr. Braund asked, reaching for a long-handled device.

"No, not a popcorn popper. It's a bed warmer. You filled it with hot coals and slid it around between the sheets before climbing in."

Dr. Braund showed the audience what he calls the first computer — a counter for bushels of "whatever." The wooden block with a dial was designed to hang on the side of a threshing machine. He then lifted up a grain scythe that he determined is a left-handed one by the way the edge is beveled.

Working in the home before electricity or engines meant scrubbing clothes on washboards and ironing clothes with irons heated on coals. Later, a cast iron model was built to store hot coals within.

"Did you know Pennsylvania

is the number one state for butter prints and molds?" Dr. Braund asked.

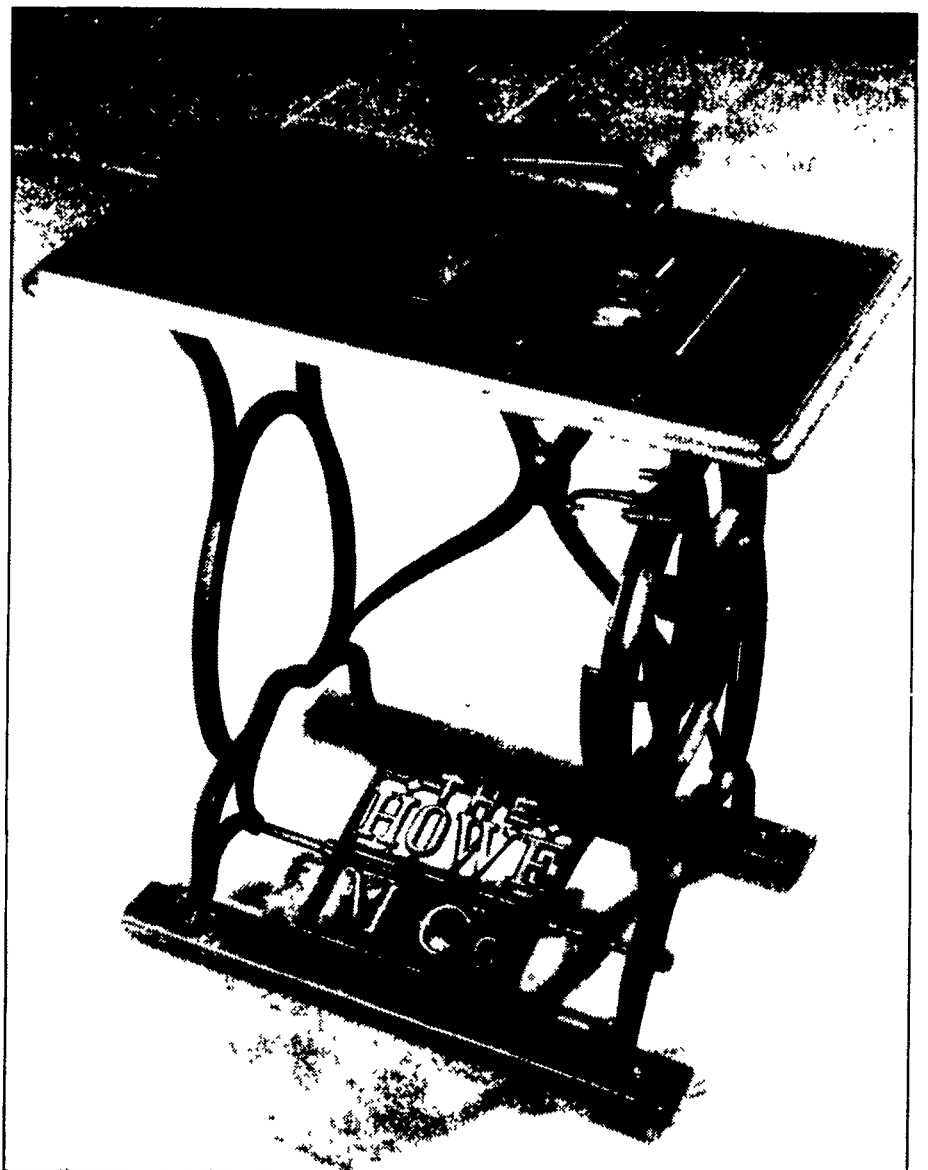
Butter branding represents the beginning of branded products. Farmers would make their butter, identify it with a brand (their initials or special designs or prints in the butter), and then sell it at a store. The customer would know which butter he or she wanted to buy by the brand.

Butter molds are found in 1- and 2-pound sizes. Dr. Braund showed the audience a rare glass butter mold with a cow imprint.

Ice cream was appreciated as much in the mid-1800s as it is today. Dr. Braund showed an 1880 Victorian ice cream scoop in which the top turned to scrape the ice cream onto the plate. His #6 ice cream dipper with scraper means that six of these scoops equal one quart. The tiny #100 scoop was reserved for free samples. Dr. Braund held up an oblong ice cream gadget used to shape the ice cream for in ice cream sandwiches. To prevent wasting any ice cream, the ice cream scoop is curved to fit the side of the ice cream container.



**These cans have traveled far, by steam train. They were used to ship milk and cream from the Stouff farm near Downingtown to Philadelphia in the 1880's and 1890's. Both cans have a brass plate showing the farmer's name, and the smaller cream can also has PRR on it for the Pennsylvania railroad. The large can was reinforced by four, three-inch steel straps, but even so, it shows evidence of considerable "banging around" on its back and forth journeys. It has even been soldered once. -Pasto Agricultural Museum, Penn State University.**



**Elias Howe generally is credited with inventing the sewing machine in 1846. This 1872 step-feed model made by the Howe Company features a brass medallion showing the bust of the inventor. Ladies, start your sewing machines. -Pasto Agricultural Museum, Penn State University.**