

# Sewing leader remembers past 30 years

BY BETH HEMMINGER

SHIPPENSBURG — "Thirty years seems like yesterday," commented Rose Leidigh after receiving her award for 30 years of service as a 4-H sewing leader at the annual Cumberland County 4-H Leaders Banquet held last week.

Mrs. Leidigh started her long-enjoyed career in the late 1940's. She reflects back to when it all began.

"I was walking in from the corn patch when I saw my good friend Ada Beagle standing on the front porch. She was the Cumberland County Home Economist. While we visited over coffee and sweets, she confronted me about becoming a 4-H leader. 'The county is in need of some good seamstresses,' said the Home Economist. Consequently, I couldn't say no and I became a sewing leader in Cumberland County with my daughters as my first members," remarked Mrs. Leidigh.

"The club started in late spring and summer and girls would walk

from all over the nearby countryside; some walking over two miles to meet at my house every Tuesday morning at 9 o'clock to learn to sew," she said.

Shortly after the club was formed, it was christened "Busy Bees" and the same name has prevailed for 30 years. "Only the 4-H's faces and names have changed," she added.

"In those early years of the 40's and 50's the sewing projects were a bit different than today's sewing projects," chuckled Mrs. Leidigh as she envisioned the cotton and muslin garments of long ago.

The 4-H'er's first project was a tie-string apron usually made from cotton calico or muslin. "It sounds simple?" she exclaimed. "Well, most of the apron was constructed by hand with little assistance from the treadle machine." That was the aim of the apron project she said - to teach the girls how to hand sew which was a necessity in those days.

Shirts and petticoats were the

second project. She recalls that these two garments had a variety of fancy handwork on them, hand-worked lace edges and embroidered bodices. She said, "We didn't have the zig-zag stitch or any other comparable machine type finish; it took hours to finish the lacy edges, but it was an art and very beautiful."

Then as now, each 4-H'er progressed each year making a new and more difficult garment. However, she said, 30 years ago everything was made with cotton or muslin unlike today with all of the different man-made textiles.

She jokingly remarks, "One of the highlights of my career as a leader and seamstress was during the depression when 'feed sacks' were the big rage in materials. Mrs. Leidigh explained that during that time retailed material was not available so everyone used feed sacks to make clothing, sheets,

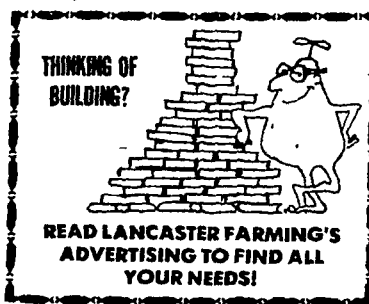
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A thirty-year veteran, Rose Leidigh received a flower arrangement for her many years of dedication and service as a 4-H leader in Cumberland County. Alan Wentz, Cumberland County 4-H agent presented the gift.



The Silver Anniversary Leader in Cumberland County is Dorothy Jones. Mrs. Jones has been a sewing leader for 25 years in the "Newville Creators."





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