

A lifetime of helping people help themselves

By Doris Crowley
 NEWARK, Del. — Dr. Samuel M. Gwinn, director of the Cooperative Extension Service of the University of Delaware, will retire July 31 after a long career devoted to serving extension, including 22 years as director. He came to Delaware in 1948 as 4-H agent for Sussex County.

Over the years, Gwinn has seen the state change in many ways, and he has watched the extension service grow to meet the changing needs of its clients, the people of Delaware. When he arrived 36 years ago as an eager young county agent from West Virginia, most Delawareans still lived in rural areas and many worked on farms. Today, though agriculture remains one of the state's major industries, many farms have

disappeared to make room for suburbs, shopping centers, and other urban development. Most of those that remain have become larger, and more specialized.

During a recent interview, Gwinn reminisced about his boyhood on a farm near Lockbridge, West Virginia, and retraced the route which led him to Delaware and a rewarding extension career.

"I grew up on a 200-acre general farm," he said. "We raised most of what we needed — corn, vegetables, soybeans, fruits, chickens, turkeys and geese. Potatoes were a good crop for us and a good source of income, though we didn't have big acreage. Our main income was from cattle and sheep, plus lumbering. My father worked as a coal miner and

the rest of the family ran the farm. That was the way of life then for almost everybody."

There were seven boys and two girls to help with the work. "My grandmother lived with us and I learned a lot about the history of the Civil War from her. She was 20 years old when it started. I became a history buff as a result."

Like many others who grew up in rural America a generation or so ago, Gwinn attended a one-room school. He was 10 when he joined 4-H, encouraged by a teacher who knew the county 4-H agent. "I had the traditional project for a farm boy — corn, pigs, vegetables." He took part in judging contests, camps, fairs and other 4-H activities. And one year he attended the National 4-H Camp, which at that time was held in Washington,

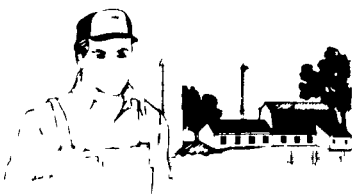
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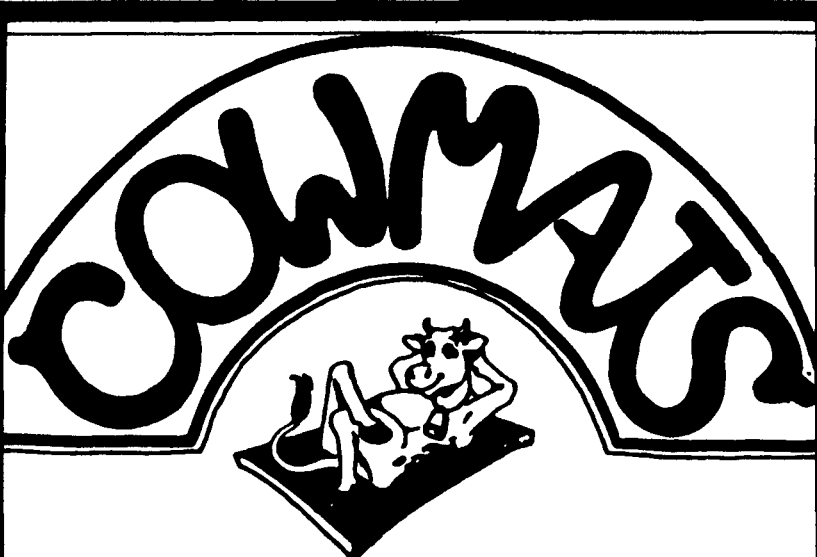
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