

## Miles and Irene Nolt

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later that she began sewing for relatives and then for friends and neighbors. In the early days of their marriage she "helped out with the eggs and the chickens." She was also busy raising the Nolts' four children, Fay, now married to Ira Landis, 40; Glenn, 34; Dale, 25; and Clair, 28. They have five grandchildren.

Word spread, and now her business has reached the point where she sometimes turns customers away. Although she worked in a garment factory before her marriage, she doesn't think that played a big part in developing her skill because she was making lingerie. She says simply, "I think God gives people

talents and mine is a God-given talent."

Asked what she sews, she responds, "You name it...dresses, suits, skirts, blouses." Customers bring patterns and fabric, and Irene goes from there. She requires at least one fitting for everything she makes.

She does many weddings, but perhaps those most dear to her were the weddings of her own children. She made the wedding gowns and the attendants' dresses for all four weddings. She uses a basic pattern for wedding dresses, and customers will bring pictures which she tries to duplicate.

"It's a challenge," she says of her work. "I have some regular customers I've been sewing for for 40 years. They come from

Millersville, where Irene and Miles lived for a few years, and from Hershey, but most are local.

Irene says she didn't sew in the summer when the family was home, because she was busy gardening, planting tobacco and pulling tobacco plants. Now, however, her outside work has slowed somewhat and she sews year round.

Irene always has so many projects that she says she will often cut when she's in the mood, and then sew for a few days.

Miles and Irene moved to their present farm in 1949, and planted the first nut trees, English walnuts, in 1950. Miles recalls that his father advised planting nut trees rather than shade trees, and it was the start of an extensive hobby.

Next they added pecans, which Miles says most people feel they can't grow in this climate. "You must have two different varieties," he notes.

Later they added black walnuts, shell barks, chestnuts and persimmons. Miles grows oriental persimmons, though American persimmons are hardier.

He now has 30 different varieties of nuts on 35 grafted trees. He explained that grafted trees allow you to get exactly what you want. If you grow trees that have sprung up on their own, there is no way to tell what pollinated them, nor exactly what quality of nut you will get. Furthermore, some varieties are more productive than others, so if you use scionwood off the parent tree grafted onto a seedling, the nut will be exactly what the parent tree grows.

Miles enjoys doing the grafting, and likes to do some every year. At one time he sold many grafted trees, but now doesn't have a lot of stock to sell.

It takes some special knowledge to know exactly when to graft the tree. He said the scionwood should be cut in March, and then kept damp in plastic in the refrigerator until it can be grafted.

He noted that it can take up to six years to produce nuts, although grafted trees generally produce after four or five years.

Last year's dry weather caused the nuts not to fill out well in the shell, but this year was good, and

nuts are plentiful throughout the state.

Miles points out that nut trees don't require too much attention. "They don't need any pruning unless you want to shape them," he says. What they do take, however, is fertilizer, if you want to get nuts every year. They also need plenty of water, and Miles says he likes to keep the weeds away.

Squirrels are the worst problem for nut growers, although Miles says he is not bothered by them because many of his trees are near buildings, and dogs and cats tend to keep the squirrels at bay. Birds will pick into English walnuts when they are green, causing damage.

Harvest begins in the fall when "all the boys come home and help." One son usually climbs up the tree and shakes the nuts off, then there is a lot of stooping and bending to gather the nuts. "That keeps you lumber," Irene notes. The Nolts use egg baskets to carry the nuts, and Miles lets them dry a few weeks before beginning to crack them.

To get the husk off black walnuts, he has adapted his corn sheller, and he has two small instruments to help crack the nuts as he sits at a card table.

Miles usually has about 100 pounds of kernels to sell. He says, "That takes a lot of cracking." He adds that customers begin calling before Thanksgiving, as they begin to think of extra holiday baking. "We could sell a lot more nuts," Miles says, and adds that in a few years they will have more nuts since some trees are just beginning to produce.

He says there are a few kinds of trees he would like to have yet, but says realistically, "I can't do everything."

As a director in the Nut Growers Association, Miles is eager to talk about his hobby, and he says members are a good source of information. He and Irene have enjoyed the associations they have made through the organization, and look forward to the meetings of the group. "We've met a lot of interesting people," Irene said.

They are active members of Erisman's Mennonite Church. Irene is a member of the sewing circle and also participates in a

neighborhood bible study.

Irene doesn't mind sharing her recipes which helped make her a blue ribbon winner. Below are some of her winners that you might enjoy.

### BREAD

1 3/4 cups scalded milk  
1 tablespoon salt  
3 tablespoons honey or sugar  
2 tablespoons shortening  
2 packages yeast in 1/2 cup warm water, let stand 5 minutes  
7 cups flour

Combine salt, honey and shortening with milk and cool until lukewarm. Add yeast and half of flour. Mix well. Add remaining flour. Knead until smooth and elastic. Place in greased bowl. Turn once and cover. Let rise until double. Punch down, turn and let rise again until almost double. Divide in three 1-pound or two 1 1/4 pound loaves. Shape and grease. Place in greased pan. Let rise about 1 hour. Bake 10 minutes at 400 degrees, then 30 minutes at 300 degrees. Take from pans and cool on wire racks. To make whole wheat bread use 2 cups whole wheat and 4 1/2 cups white flour.

### PECAN PIE

3 eggs  
1/2 cup sugar  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1 cup dark corn syrup  
1/2 cup melted butter  
Mix above ingredients well. Put 1 cup chopped or broken pecans in 9-inch unbaked pastry lined pie pan. Add the mixture. Bake at 350 degrees for 50 minutes.

### GLAZED NUTS

Beat one egg white stiff. Add 4 cups nuts and use fork to coat with egg whites. They have 1/2 cup sugar, 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1 teaspoon cinnamon mixed. Add to nuts and toss to coat. Spray cookie sheet with non-stick coating. Spread nuts out thinly. Bake at 250 degrees for 30 minutes. Stir once. Watch very closely.



These are just a few of the many garments that Irene Nolt has made both for herself and others. She enjoys making anything from suits to wedding dresses.

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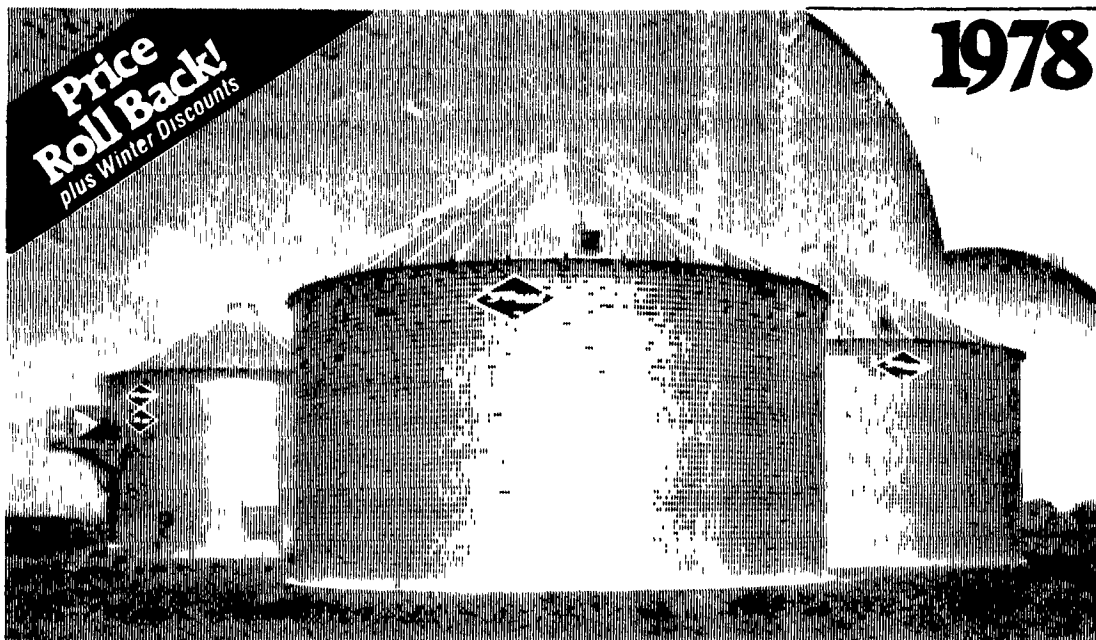
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