

Extension Service

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Extension when they changed their dairy barns.

Willis Esbenschade, Lancaster, agreed that there were those who were not sure about Extension because of the idea that they were "taught out of a book." A general farmer, Esbenschade served as president of the Extension Board from 1956-1959, and it was during that time that the Lancaster County Farm and Home Foundation was organized to begin to raise funds for the present Farm and Home Center.

Esbenschade was elected president of that Board and provided leadership for both for a while.

He says the Extension Board was solidly behind the idea of a new building, because "the Post Office Building was a little unhandy for farmers." He made numerous trips to Washington on behalf of the Board as they worked to get non-profit status from the Internal Revenue Service so that contributions could be tax deductible.

Esbenschade also recalls meeting with the Commissioners to get budget approval, adding, "Sometimes you had to do a little talking to get the money."

He was also president of the Farm Bureau during that busy time, and says with a smile, "People would call me to see if dates were open for a banquet."

Although Robert C. Groff was born on Walnut Street in Lancaster City, he was involved with Extension for so long it became natural for him to assume the presidency of the Extension Board in 1960-1963. About his tenure he says, "I enjoyed it. Extension has helped a lot of people." He was president during the fundraising years for the Farm and Home Center, but had no qualms about the need for a building. "We were so cramped and jammed in at the offices at the Post Office."

Groff's association with Extension came as a young boy living on his grandparents' farm near Strasburg, when he was encouraged in his 4-H projects by Earl Groff and Elvin Hess. It was through serving on the 4-H judging team that he met his wife Millie, a member of Dauphin County's beef judging team.

He became head tester for the Lancaster Dairy Herd Improvement Association, and recalls visiting farms throughout the county as he worked to train new testers. In those days it was customary for testers to stay on the farms, taking meals with families. In addition to doing the actual testing on the premises with a centrifuge and the bookwook, Groff recalls babysitting, filling silo and registering cows for people who normally wouldn't have bothered. He often attended church or prayer meetings with his farmer hosts, and he remembers learning to play canasta and pinochle. Groff also remembers getting lots of good food.

After being a tester he farmed "for shares" on a farm near Denver that was a neighbor to County Agent Bucher's farm. Groff recalls that his landlord always wished him to plant corn somewhat earlier than his grandfather's recommended planting date of May 20. Groff always held off planting and felt his reluctance to early planting paid off the year that Bucher was harrowing out his early planting and planting over because of the poor, grassy stand on the same day Groff was starting to plant.

Sam Dum, professor emeritus of agricultural economics at Penn State, has been on both sides of the extension service -- giving and receiving. As a 4-H'er in Perry County, he had projects in beef cattle, potatoes and flower. He eventually got his Ph.D. in agricultural economics from Purdue, and taught in Delaware for two years before moving to a farm at East Petersburg in 1952. It was during those years of milking 30 head of cattle, raising 700 layering hens and farming 12-15 acres of tobacco that he used advice from the Extension Service himself. "I used them extensively for various economic information. Extension was really depended upon quite extensively for technical information."

Dum returned to Penn State as a professor and is now retired and farming again, this time in partnership with his son on a dairy farm in West Hempfield Township. He says he feels that now many farmers are relying upon commercial suppliers of service such as custom sprayers, since it has become so difficult to apply your own herbi-

cides and insecticides.

Another Extension supporter in Lancaster County is B. Snively Garber, who served as president in 1953, and recalls the desire of the Board to get out of the Post Office Building, "instead of going up those stairs."

He started his association with Extension with a 4-H Guernsey project. Later, he remembers that he and his wife Barbara would have Harry Sloat come to the farm to help "finish up the books," and they would show their appreciation by giving him three dozen eggs.

Garber said that he remembers Extension leading the way in introducing new varieties of corn, especially, beardless barley, which averaged 15-20 bushels more than the old varieties.

He said he was often able to turn away a smooth talking dealer by saying he would check with Extension and State College before making a decision about a purchase. The greatest change, he says, is that "technically we find we have to put work on a different set of ail-

Conference Slated For Apple Growers

HERSHEY — More than 1,000 people from the United States and other countries are expected to attend the International Dwarf Tree Conference here on February 28 through March 1. The meeting, which will feature 35 speakers including three from foreign countries, is aimed primarily at apple growers.

The theme of the high-powered meeting, which is sponsored by the International Dwarf Tree Association, is "Customizing a System for Your Orchard. Speakers topics include the performance of apple systems, performance of advanced rootstock candidates from the

Geneva apple rootstock project, hardiness of peaches, and the hardiness of apple rootstocks.

The keynote speaker is Pierre Herman, an internationally known nurseryman and apple producer, who will discuss the French Axe system for producing apples. This system is thought by many to be the most efficient method of producing apples.

Another featured speaker is Dr. Sivero Sansavini of the University of Bologna, Italy. Dr. Sansavini will focus on high-density peach systems and dwarfing rootstocks.

The pre-registration fee is \$17 for entries postmarked February 18. Later submissions or registration at the door is \$34. Send a check to International Dwarf Tree Association, Michigan State University, Department of Horticulture, East Lansing, MI 48824.

ments." Extension's greatest strength, according to Garber, is sharing information among Universities. He concluded, "When you're running a farm and have a little problem, if you get a hold of those college boys, they can help you."

