

Sadie Stoltzfus Would Rather Braid Rugs Than Dust

LOU ANN GOOD

Lancaster Farming Staff
MORGANTOWN (Berks Co.)

— While 78-year-old Sadie Stoltzfus laced together an 8½ x 10½-foot rug, she talked about rug making.

"Braided wool rugs are really like having two carpets," she said, "because they can be flipped on either side."

With quick and nimble fingers, Sadie demonstrated the steps to braided rugs.

"If you don't make a nice braid, you don't have a nice rug," she explained. "You must keep the ends turned in and braid it tightly."

Her rugs never come apart she said because she doesn't stitch them together; she laces the braids together with nylon cord that cannot be seen after its put together.

"Some people have trouble with the rugs not laying flat, but I don't," Sadie said. "It's all in the lacing."

Last year she made 67 rugs. "I don't count all the chair pads that I made," she said. She works from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., every day but Sunday.

"The best part of making a rug is getting it done," she said. "I always have a list of rugs to make for other people so I'm always trying to finish it."

She estimates that it takes her two weeks to make a 9x12-foot rug.

Sadie always uses new wool that she buys in 1,000 to 1,200 pounds remnant lots from a factory. It takes about 100 pounds of wool to make a 9x12-foot rug.

She does all the work on her kitchen table, which she calls a "farmer's table." The table stretches to hold the 12-foot length rugs.

Although braided rugs are in demand, few people can make them.

"It's hard work," Sadie said. "I have 'sisters day' to make it easier."

According to Sadie, "sisters' day" means that she has her three sisters, two daughters and one niece get together for a day. They help her tear the wool in strips, stitch the strips together and roll it. They do 300 rolls in one day.

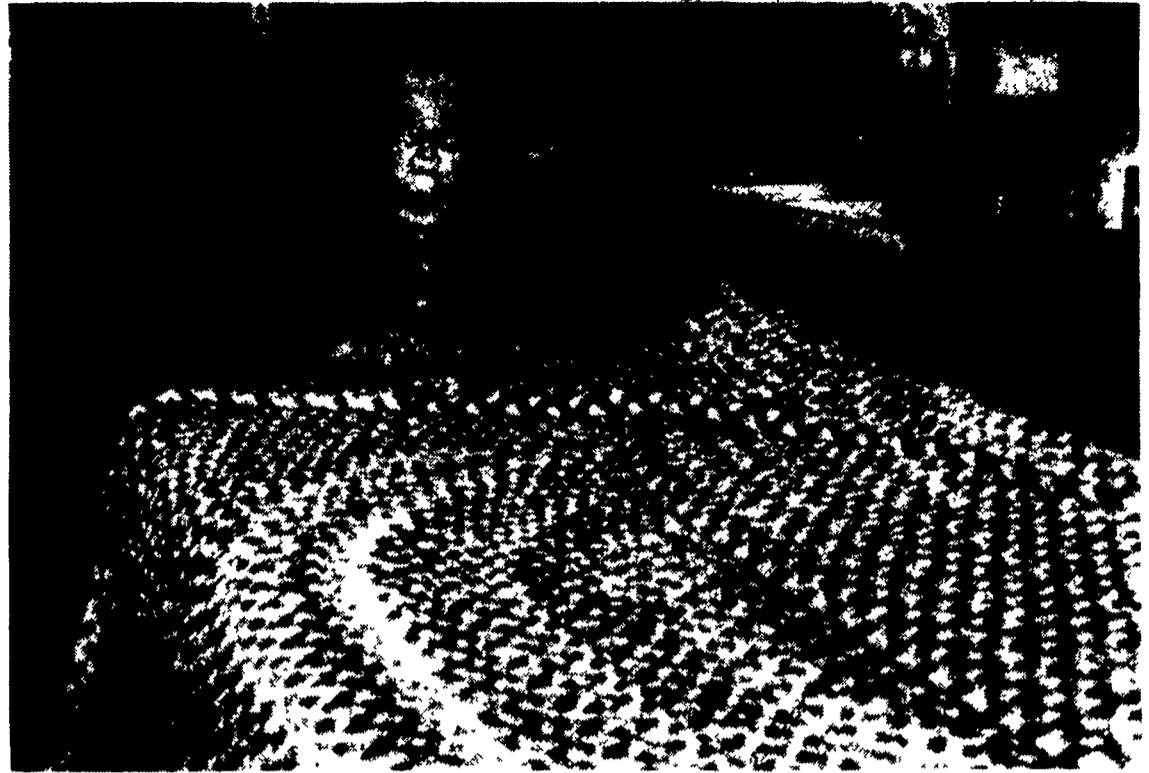
In exchange, Sadie goes to their homes to help quilt when they have "sister's day."

"We've been doing it for 14 years — in winter, not in summer." During the month of January, the women enjoyed three "sisters' days."

"It's a time for us to visit while getting something done," Sadie said.

All her rugs are sold by word-of-mouth or by passerbys who see her sign along Route 23 in Morgantown.

Sadie learned rug braiding from her aunt. After two heart attacks in 1965, Sadie didn't expect she



Sadie Stoltzfus braided 67 rugs last year. She always uses new 100 percent wool that she buys in 1,000 pound lots from a factory.

would ever be able to braid rugs again, but today she believes it's the ideal hobby for her. She said, "When I quilt, I mind it in my shoulder, but I can braid rugs all day and it doesn't hurt me."

Two of her daughters, Reba Yoder and Anna Mae Eby, also braid rugs to sell.

Her daughter, Anna Mae, won first prize at the Pennsylvania Farm Show this year.

Sadie braids rugs in whatever colors that customers order. Her most unusual was a completely white wool 8-foot round rug.

"The best way to clean a rug is to put it outside when its snowing," Sadie said. "After it has about an inch of snow on it, take a stiff broom and sweep it off."

The colors will be bright and clean. According to Sadie, the nit-

rogen in the snow brightens the wool.

As proof to the durability of her wool rugs, Sadie has had one inside her door for 30 years. It still looks like a new rug.

How many rugs does she hope to braid this year?

"At my age you don't make too many plans," she said. "But I'd rather make a rug than dust any time."

105-Year-Old Still Goes To Work

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LITITZ (Lancaster Co.)

— "I can't talk long," Barbara Moore apologized. "I've got to go to work in a few minutes."

To work? When you're 105 years old?

Barbara nods. "I've been working for the doctor ever since he first set up practice in Lititz. Now he moved to the medical center. I started out as a stenographer working fulltime, but now I only work a few hours every other week."

The Lititz centenarian doesn't

remember how many years she has been working. "I'm getting old, you know," she said, "and I can't remember things like I used to. But it was a long, long time ago."

Born in 1884, Barbara says she was the oldest of 12 children. "None of the others even reached their 80s," she says. "I can't tell you why I lived so long except that God Almighty has his hand on me and I just lived."

Barbara still lives on the Lititz farm in which she was born. Several years ago, her homestead received the Century Farm Award.

Barbara has sold the place to a grandson, but she maintains her own separate living quarters in a section of the farm house. She still climbs the stairs to her bedroom each night.

"I go to bed at 11 o'clock and get up at 6 o'clock," she says. "If I get tired, I can rest during the day anytime I want."

Age and declining eyesight don't keep Barbara from reading the many books and magazines stacked near her chair.

"Recently I started using a magnifying glass," she admits. "And I can still play Parcheesi® and some other games."

She says, "I used to take a walk on the porch every day, but lately I don't."

She continues to cook her own meals, but mostly it's warming up food previously prepared by her daughter who lives in West Chester and visits weekly.

"I had Meals on Wheels for one week," Barbara says. "It was good, but it was too much for me to eat."

Barbara prefers a light diet of fruits and vegetables with a little meat. She eats eggs several times a week.

Her husband, Martin Arthur Moore, passed away in 1960. Three of her five children have also died.

She recalls that her husband was the first to have electric in the Landisville area. He owned a feed mill and used the water wheel to furnish the East Petersburg and Landisville areas with electrical power.

After he sold the mill in 1913, the Moores traveled to California where they lived for six months.

On the trip back to Lancaster County, the Moores purchased a self-starting car so that Barbara could drive it.

"I was the first woman that I know of who got her driver's license," Barbara says. "There might have been one that got her



Barbara Moore uses a magnifying glass to continue her favorite pastime — reading.

license before me, but I don't know of any."

That was in 1914. She doesn't remember the make and model of the car, but she does remember that she needed to stop whenever she met a team of horses on the road; otherwise, "the horses would go wild."

Barbara drove until she was 102. She recalls, "I never had an accident, but I figured that if I was ever involved in one, they'd automatically blame it on me because of my age. So I gave up my license."

While she recounts stories from her past, Barbara often remarks, "I've seen a lot of good in my life."

When asked if she had any disappointing events happen to her, she thinks a few moments, then remarks, "Oh, I guess I must have had some bad things happen to me, but I can't remember any. My life is full of good things."

She likes to talk about her former tating and rug making talents. "The prettiest rug I ever braided was 12-foot oval-shaped, but I can't do that any more — too hard on my hands," she explains.

Although her fingers are a bit

gnarled, her fingernails are strong and beautifully groomed.

She is proud to continue her membership as a part of Farm Women Society 1.

"I was a member from the beginning," she says. "And I still attend the meetings if they are in a home." She does not accompany the society on sightseeing tours.

"I don't have any aches or pains. I feel fine," she says. She pauses, her fingers touch her cane, and her eyes cloud, "I guess I'll need to give up working. I'll miss the association, but I'm getting old, they tell me."

She has nine grandchildren, 21 great-grandchildren, and 5 great-great grandchildren.

"Being a farmer's wife was the most important part of my life," Barbara says. She sums up more than a century of living with the words, "I saw a lot in my life time — some better, some worse."

Last week she had a health checkup. "The doctor said that I'm in pretty good shape," Barbara reports. "I've never been to a hospital in my whole life, and I hope it stays that way."



After 105 years, Barbara Moore still finds the world an exciting place in which to live.