



For Immediate Release:

HISTORICAL 4-H CLOTHING EXHIBIT SET FOR JULY 10-SEPT. 7

COLUMBUS, Ohio -- A short-sleeved, monogrammed dress made in 1922. A pin cushion, stuffed with hair, made in 1947. A patchwork denim jacket made in the 1960s. These are just a few of the items made by 4-Hers over the years that will be on display July 10-Sept. 7 in "A Century of Style, 100 Years of 4-H Fashion."

Announcement of the exhibit, made earlier this year and designed to help celebrate 4-H's centennial year, hit a note with 4-H alumni, said Joyce Smith, one of the organizers and clothing specialist for Ohio State University Extension.

"We probably heard from over 300 people from all over Ohio, and even from Indiana and Iowa," Smith said. "Some of them have kept their 4-H sewing projects from the 1920s -- that's 80 years they've held onto them. That shows the importance they put on their projects and their years in 4-H."

The exhibit will be shown in the Gladys Keller Snowden Galleries located in the Geraldine Schottenstein wing of Campbell Hall, 1787 Neil Ave. on the Ohio State campus. It will be open to the public Wednesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Group tours are possible by contacting curator Gayle Strege at (614) 292-3090.

"We accepted virtually everything offered from the 1920s through 1950," Smith said. "But we got so many

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offers of garments and other projects from after 1950, that we really had some tough decisions to make." Smith, Strege, and Extension associates Mary Forster and Bridgette Sloan reviewed all of the submissions to select what would end up in the exhibit.

"We wanted things that would be a good representation of 4-H projects from that time period and of fashion in that decade," Smith said. Many potential donors had stories to go along with their submissions, she said.

"One submission, from someone who's now a county Extension agent, made a very colorful, neck-to-floor caftan in her loungewear project in the 1960s. It won a blue ribbon, but she couldn't model it in the style review that year because judges looked at it as 'private wear' and didn't see it as proper to model in public."

The oldest garment in the exhibit will be a short-sleeved dress made in 1922. The 4-H'er monogrammed her initials on the dress. Two other school dresses from the 1920s will be part of the display, as well as a collection of tea towels -- a standard beginning 4-H sewing project that called for hand-stitching, Smith said.

Three of the submissions were made by male 4-H members, Smith said. The earliest is from 1974, in which a young 4-H'er made a suit, complete with a polka-dot blue and white shirt. (Unfortunately, the shirt is missing, Smith said.) The other two are both from the 1990s.

The Jackie Kennedy look was popular with 4-H sewers in the 1960s, as were shift dresses with matching kerchief-type scarves. Wide bell-bottomed pants and bicentennial-related clothing were popular submissions from the 1970s. In the 1980s, quilted vests and "Gunne Sax"-type dresses were standards. In the 1990s, more outer wear and active sportswear were being made, probably because those types of fabrics and notions became available to home sewers then, Smith said.

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One family submitted items made by three generations of 4-H'ers -- grandmother, mother and daughter -- Smith said. "The grandmother sent in an olive-green dress with hand-stitched crewel work that she made in 1939 on her mother's treadle sewing machine," Smith said. Some of the submissions came complete with the ribbons won at county and state fairs. Some had their original entry tags still attached.

"What's been best about this project is the obvious warmth and good feelings these alumni have about their years in 4-H," Smith said. "Some people still had everything they ever made in 4-H. I think it says a lot about the program and the people."

The exhibit will be free to the public. Parking is available on most Saturdays (except football Saturdays) in the lot north of Campbell Hall. On other days, parking is available in garages on 12th Avenue or 11th Avenue between Neil Avenue and High Street.

Ohio 4-H is marking its 100th birthday throughout the year, including a "Weekend of Celebration" scheduled for Sept. 6-7 on the Columbus campus.

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