

# 100-year-old ran grocery, grew fruit and vegetables

BY LORI VAN INGEN  
Staff Writer

For Ralph Shupp, the winning combination is hard work and good genes.

The Brethren Village resident, who will celebrate his 100th birthday Sunday, is following in his mother's and brother's footsteps. His mother lived to 100, and his brother Arthur to 102. His other brothers and sister lived into their 80s and 90s.

Hard work also is part of the equation, he said. Shupp began working at age 16 and continued his labors long past retirement.

"He loved life. He was active, strong, healthy and loved to work," Shupp's daughter, Nancy Rohrer, said. "He hummed while he worked, and he thoroughly enjoyed being outside."

Born on April 17, 1911, in Red

Run, Denver, Shupp was the sixth of eight children of Henry and Mary Taylor Shupp.

When he was 5 years old, the family's house burned down. "I had to sleep in the pig stable" for one year until they could build a new home, he said.

Their home had no running water and no refrigerator. Instead, they used a dry sink, a wood stove and a spring house.

But, Shupp said, "We had good eats. My mother was a good cook. We butchered four pigs every year for the hams, and sometimes we butchered beef."

They also raised corn, tobacco and some oats, he said.

Shupp attended the one-room Red Run School through eighth grade. "I walked about a mile," he said, "but my dad took us in a one-horse sled when it snowed, and when it rained, he put us in the

spring wagon."

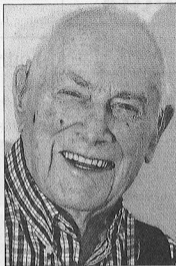
Shupp was unable to further his education because he was needed to go to work to help the family earn money. "Things were pretty tough," he said.

He met his wife, Evelyn Heisey Shupp, on Main Street in Denver through a cousin who introduced them.

"She was a good pianist," Shupp said. "She could make the keys rattle."

The couple, who married on July 6, 1940, had five children: Barbara Shupp, Nancy Rohrer, Susan Morrow, David and Michael; 10 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Evelyn Shupp died five years ago.

Shupp was baptized and confirmed at Muddy Creek Reformed Church, but joined Mohler Church



Marty Heisey / Staff

Ralph Shupp

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of the Brethren when he married.

The Shupps had a grocery store on Walnut Street in Denver for about 35 years. "Then we lost out to the big boys," Shupp said.

In addition to the grocery, Shupp purchased 10 acres of woodlands near Schoenck and transformed it into a productive orchard, which included apples, peaches, pears, apricots and cherries. Shupp said he enjoyed experimenting with grafting. He also kept sheep and goats in the orchards to keep the weeds down.

Shupp also cared for a large garden, producing carrots, tomatoes, cucumbers and other vegetables, which his wife canned.

The couple were quick to give away their fruits and vegetables. "You never left home without anything," Rohrer said.

Shupp had numerous other hobbies, like hunting antiques at sales, a large coin collection he started from the coins he received at his grocery, and fixing grandfather clocks from parts and pieces he bought at sales.

Shupp also hunted rabbits, squirrels and "anything that moved" and fished for sunfish, suckers and a few bass.

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