

STAGING A HISTORICAL 4-H DRESS REVUE

Bicentennial 4-H Action group in Iowa initiated a look at 4-H history through the 4-H girl's uniforms. We've researched boy's uniforms as well and hope you'll have fun finding old uniforms or making replicas to help tell the history of 4-H in your State.

1920's: "Toot, Toot, Tootsie, Good-bye" was a favorite song. It was the roaring 20's -- prohibition was called "The Noble Experiment," and the Charleston was the rage. The girl's 4-H uniform was a two-piece dress of soft, jade green cotton with long sleeves; a detachable white collar and narrow white cuffs. Green knickers, white crepe-de-chine tie, white stockings, black or white low shoes and a white felt (crusher) hat completed the outfit. The boy's uniform was olive drab knickers and jacket, hat of the same color, white soft-collared sport shirt, black tie and socks, and dark tan oxfords. Incidentally, the boy's jacket cost \$2.50 and the knickers, \$1.75.



1930's: Glenn Miller's band played "Why Do I Love You?" and "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man." The 30's were marked by the depression and the New Deal. Glenn Miller's band was listened to by many on the radio. The girl's uniform consisted of a soft green broadcloth dress and jacket with a detachable white collar, and white crepe-de-chine tie. It was suggested that pearl buttons be used on the sleeves of the jacket and the dress belt have a matching pearl buckle. The outfit was finished off with a soft, medium-sized, white felt beret, white stockings, and preferably white shoes. The boy's uniform included white duck trousers, white knitted cloth jacket made of "sweat shirt" material, white felt crusher hat, white soft-collared sport shirt, black four-in-hand tie, and white or black shoes or oxfords. A 4-H chevron was worn on the left pocket of the jacket.



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1940-46: Big hits were the Mills Brothers, with "Paper Doll" and the Andrews sisters' "Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree." 4-H girls had a new uniform dress of light green slub broadcloth with a white collar, white front zipper, short sleeves, and patch pockets on the bodice. The dress was complemented by a white leather belt, white felt sport hat, natural beige hose, and comfortable white walking shoes. The boys' outfit consisted of white duck, linen or Palm Beach trousers with pleats, white soft-collared shirt and black four-in-hand tie. They wore the 4-H chevron on the left front of the shirt. Jackets, preferably dark, were worn for evening events. The biggest change was that a hat was no longer required for boys.



1947-55: Guy Lombardo - the Birth of the Blues. Back when your parents were probably in high school and bobby socks, saddle shoes, and slicked-back hair were "in," the 4-H girl's uniform was a green and white striped seersucker short-sleeved jacket and six-gored skirt with white blouse. A white crocheted beanie, natural beige hose, comfortable white walking shoes, and a shoulder bag made of the seersucker completed the outfit. The boy's uniform consisted of white trousers, white soft-collared shirt, and black four-in-hand tie. The trousers were made of white duck, linen, or Palm Beach material. Coats, preferably dark, were worn in the evening and on cool days. The 4-H chevron was worn on the left side of the shirt.



1956-60: Elvis was singing "Don't Be Cruel" and Bill Haley brought in "Rock Around the Clock." The 4-H girl's uniform took on a new look to fit the times. A short-waist dress of green and white cord with short puff sleeves, an open collar, button front and pleated skirt was worn with a white crocheted beanie, white walking shoes and a white shoulder bag. The dress was accented by the official chevron on the left side. The boy's uniform had changed somewhat in that the new non-pleated pants were fashionable. These were worn with a white shirt, dark green tie, dark shoes and belt. The white shirt sported the official chevron on the left pocket and the "official" 4-H jacket was worn in the evenings and on cool days.



1960: Taste of Honey was being played by Herb Alpert and the classic 4-H shirtwaist dress continued as the official girl's uniform. A white crocheted bandeau replaced the beanie. Quite a change was made in the boy's uniform. They wore charcoal gray slacks, white shirt, and dark green (classic) necktie. The official green 4-H jacket topped out the outfit for evenings and cool days. By the mid-sixties the 4-H blazer had replaced the official jacket for important occasions, evenings and cool days.





1968-72: "Up, Up, and Away" was ringing over the airwaves, and the 4-H uniform for girls had streamlined into a basic A-line skimmer in a green and white striped chambray. The dress had a jeweled-neckline and could be short-sleeved or sleeveless. The optional jacket of the same fabric had a 3-button closing, wrist-length sleeves and pocket flaps. The official 4-H chevron was worn on the left side of the jacket or dress. The boy's uniform continued to be the same as the one introduced in the mid-sixties.



1972 - ?: We've been dancing to "Stairway to Heaven," "Joy to the World," and many other free-spirited songs and the 4-H uniform reflects the times. The uniformity is found in the familiar green color, of either double knit or green and white seersucker. 4-H girls today can create their own uniform using any style of pants, blazer, jacket, skirt or dress. The boy's uniform still includes the 4-H blazer, dress slacks (preferably dark), and compatible colored dress shirt and tie. Turtle-neck or mock turtle-neck shirts and sweaters are also worn with the blazer at non-official functions. The official 4-H chevron is worn on the left side by both boys and girls.

