

ARKANSAS EXTENSION HOMEMAKERS COUNCIL
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Official transcript of:

Helen Emilea Rooney

Member of Sylvania Tri-Community Extension Homemakers Club
of Lonoke County

Original recording made 14 December 2011

at Lonoke, Arkansas

Interviewed by:

Jeraldine E. Brown

Member of Lonoke County Extension Homemakers Council

Recorded, transcribed and edited by:

Dianna Bowen

Lonoke County Cooperative Extension Family and Consumer Sciences Agent





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Oral History Program

Jeraldine E. Brown, Lonoke County Extension Homemakers Council Member

14 December 2011

This is an audio recording of Helen Emilea Rooney, member of the Sylvania Tri-Community Extension Homemakers Club of Lonoke County. This interview is part of an Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council Oral History Program, and Emilea is answering questions asked by Lonoke County Extension Homemakers Council Member, Jeraldine E. Brown.

Questions and comments by Jeraldine are in boldface type; Emilea's responses and comments are in lightface type.

I am Jeraldine Brown and I am here interviewing Emilea Rooney. This interview is being held at the Extension Office in Lonoke [pause] County Arkansas, in the county of Lonoke on December 14, 2012.

An audio recording and transcript of this interview will be donated to the David and Barbara Pryor Center for Arkansas Oral and Visual History at the University of Arkansas.

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Will you please state your name and spell your name, and indicate that you are willing to give the Pryor Center permission the make the audio file and transcript available to others.

I am Emilea Rooney. E-M-I-L-E-A R-O-O-N-E-Y. [Pause] And I give my permission to record this.

Emilea, how are you associated with Extension Homemakers Program? Are you a member or are you a professional?

I am a member of the Lonoke County Extension Homemakers. I have belonged

to the Extension Service since 1979 and I am [still]—past president of the Extension Homemakers now.

All right, have you held any offices in your local unit?

Yes, I was president and secretary of the Sylvania Community, Tri-Community [pause] Homemakers Club.

[Mumble] Have you every belonged to any other clubs besides the Tri-Community?

No, I haven't. [Pause] Well, now let me see, I started out with the Butlerville Club, but I couldn't be in the club all the time and do the things that they did because I was still presently working.

OK. Are you still a member of the Sylvania Club?

Yes, I am still a member of the Sylvania Club. In fact, I was the one, along with Gale Sikes, that started that club.

All right, and. Do you have any special remembrances of that, the first meetings of the first clubs that you attended?

Yes, we met in the old comm—schoolhouse that was the Sylvania Schoolhouse out in the Sylvania Community.

Emilea, why did you want to join?

Why did I want to join? There was a time in my life when my children were getting ready to leave home and I knew that I, as being a mother, I couldn't stand to be alone by myself with my husband without my children around.

Why have you continued your membership through all the years?

Well, it is a good thing to be in because I like—enjoy doing the things we do in the community, working in the county fair, and being with, with the good people that do work in Extension Homemakers.

Well, Emilea, you are involved on the local basis. Are you—have you ever

gone to the state Council meetings?

Yes, I went to the state Council meetings for a number of years until I got where I couldn't walk and keep up with all the [*laughs*] all exciting things that was going on.

While you were there, did you ever present a program or one of the work projects?

When we had the national convention that came to Little Rock, I helped on the committee that was doing one of the luncheons. And we made [*pause*] the Arkansas Blossoms flower, and I made several of those and we—we decorated for that and I have given programs in other counties.

[O]K, Emilea, how has the Extension Homemakers touched your life?

This is one special group that is always been—be special to me because it is a learning and teaching organization.

I know that you're very interested in the history of Lonoke County Extension Homemakers. Is there anything you might want to tell us about that history?

Yes. The history of Lonoke County began in 1930 but it was presently, they was working in the clubs—they started the clubs then in 1930 but 20 years before that they were having clubs around, It wasn't really clubs, it was just learning how to make mattresses and canning, and they have poultry clubs, and better home club programs.

Emilea, I know that you've have worked with a lot of people in the county fair and with the ladies here in our organization. What have you found out about working with other people?

Well, you deal with all kinds of people when you work in the county fair. But working here with the Extension Homemakers, it is a great organization to be working with because, like I said before, we're all a learning and teaching group and working with different people you just, that is one of the things that I have learned most, how to work with different types of people.

Is there one activity that you would say that you've really have enjoyed through the years more than others?

The most activity that I really got in is when we was doing a tailoring workshop. And I really got involved in that. And I went on and I was learned to be a teacher in [*mumble*] sewing.

What you have learned here in Homemakers Extension Council has been able to go ahead and teach to others?

Right

I noticed you are also been involved in 4-H Clubs. Can you tell us some of the activities you've done with them?

Well, the thing, the summer camp has been the biggest thing and working with them at the county fair. Helping them get involved in the educational booths and things like that.

What changes have you noticed that have taken place in the Extension Homemakers through the years?

Well, I see that we're getting less members. That is one of the big problems that we have and, [*pause*] I think that all young women should [*pause*] get involved because this is where they learn a lot of things that they haven't been taught before about how to manage their homes and manage their finances.

Are there any other memories or experiences that you might want to share with us?

Well, there is so many memories over the 40—37 years I have been in the Extension Service, but I think some of the most memorable things is, when working at the fair and seeing people that have never accomplished anything can come and accomplish something themselves.

Well, Emilea, we do thank you so much for your contribution to the Extension Homemakers, and we really thank you for the time that you've spent, with not only the clubs, but with the 4-H'ers. And we thank you so

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much for sharing all of that with us today.

You're welcome.

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