

ARKANSAS EXTENSION HOMEMAKERS COUNCIL
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Official transcript of:

Doris Welborn Smith

Madison County Extension Homemakers Council Member

Original recording made 24 February 2012

at Huntsville, Arkansas

Interviewed by:

Susan Sanders

Madison County Extension Homemakers Council Member

Recorded, transcribed and edited by:

Madlyn Carolyn Mason

Madison County Extension Homemakers Council Member





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Oral History Program

Susan Sanders, Madison County Extension Homemakers Council Member

24 February 2012

This is an audio recording of Doris Welborn Smith, a member of the Madison County Extension Homemakers Council. This interview is part of an Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council Oral History Program, and Doris is answering questions asked by Madison County Extension Homemakers Council Member, Susan Sanders.

Questions and comments by Susan are in boldface type; Doris' responses and comments are in lightface type.

I am Susan Sanders. This is the interview with Doris Smith for the Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council Oral History Program. This is being done February 24, 2012, at the Madison County Cooperative Extension Office in Huntsville, Arkansas, in Madison County.

The audio recordings 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.

The recording, transcript, and any other related materials will be deposited and preserved forever in the Special Collections Department, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville, and the copyright will belong solely to the University of Arkansas.

Are you willing to give the Pryor Center permission to make the audio file and transcript available to others.

Yes, I am.

First, I'd like you to give your complete legal name and spell it for me, and then tell me the city and county in which you presently reside.

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My name is Doris Welborn Smith. I did not include that in my—I live in Huntsville, Arkansas, in Madison County, Huntsville, Arkansas.

Can you spell your name for me?

Capital D-o-r-i-s, capital: W-e-l-b-o-r-n, capital: S-m-i-t-h.

Thanks.

Doris, this is going to be a real informal interview, I want you to share your memories of your involvement with the Extension Homemakers Program—the good times and the challenges.

What has been your association with the Extension Homemakers Program? As a member?

I have been a member of the Marble Extension Homemakers.

How did you learn about the Extension Homemakers Program?

Being out of town, I came into this area to settle down, but I needed a house, so I contacted a Realtor who was Virginia Sprott. And Virginia Sprott was one of the very first organizers of the Marble Extension Homemakers. She and I became friends. but in the mean—through those years there we had friends—and she told me of—she told me about the Extension Homemakers and invited me to come to Marble—see, so I did go and haven't regretted it at all.

Great. So a friend invited you to come and you have been attending ever since?

Yes.

So how long has that been?

Only 15 years.

Only 15 years. But that's a long time! So that was the first club that you attended, was the Marble Club?

Yes, yes, the Marble Club was the first.

And that—what year was that?

1997. Probably the Fall of 1997.

And so you are presently an Extension Homemaker Club member.

Correct.

And the Marble Club is the only club that you have been a member of.

Correct. I did visit the Huntsville—Huntsville Extension Homemakers one time just to see what it was all about, but I didn't enjoy it.

You— you just stuck with the Marble Club because that's where your heart was.

Right. Right.

So you belong to the Marble Club in Madison County and that is also in the Ozark District, I believe. Is that correct?

Right. Correct.

OK. Tell me if you have any special remembrances of that first meeting at the Marble Club.

Well, I remember that this group of—there were over 20 members—probably 27. And the ladies were all happy and sunny and very industrious and they were friendly and I thoroughly enjoyed them—that first meeting. I don't recall what they were doing.

Tell me a little bit about the Marble Community. I've only passed through there on the highway.

Well, I live in the city of Huntsville. And—but Marble has its scenic highway going through. I know there are a number of people that live out in the hills around there. And I don't know any people there except Theresa Yeakley, who has the Marble Store. And many people go there.

I've eaten breakfast there.

Uh-huh.

Why did you join the Marble Club?

Because of the happy people. All the—it was just come, come, and just such a warm atmosphere. I couldn't help but join up.

I find the Madison County is just that way. Don't you?

Yes it is. I came here in December 1967. When it was cold and snowy and foggy. I and my two sons drove over the hills down to Huntsville. [*Laughs*] Here I've been all these 40 some odd years. I've enjoyed it so much.

Me, too, I wish I'd found Madison County sooner. [*Laughs*]

I do, too. [*Laughs*]

Why have you continued your membership in Extension Homemakers?

Well, I think it is a wonderful organization. And I enjoy the family—the family. Well, it is sort of a family. I enjoy all the ladies there. I enjoy our meetings. We meet at 12 [noon\ and—and each lady brings a special dish of food that they enjoy. And so then we eat and then we share the recipes. It's just a wonderful time.

So you always learn something about food and . . .

Life—Uu-hum—course the meeting—of course.

What do you do at your meeting?

We discuss. We have the regular reading of the minutes and the treasurer report, and—and singing of a song and having a little—a reading of some sort, and then, of course, we sometimes have the—the lesson—lesson each week that has to do with some—some particular subject that we need to know about in life. It could be—it could be canning. I never had canned. I came from Ft. Worth, Texas, and I never canned anything. Nobody in my area canned. So I've learned so much. And then I've learned more, more subjects that we share every month.

There is a great educational aspect through Extension Homemakers that comes from the University . . .

Yes.

. . . Land Grant Universities to the people. It's really the pipeline from the Land Grant College to the—to the people. Extension has been wonderful to get research information to—to all the people.

Yes.

How involved have you become in Extension Homemaker groups and have you held offices in your group?

The first one was vice president, and then I became president, and then I became secretary, and then I became secretary-reporter, and then I became secretary-treasurer for them because I live in Huntsville and I can go to the bank, and I can go to the [Madison County] Record office, the newspaper, to turn in the reports. And that saves those ladies from having to come 12 miles into—to make the trip to Huntsville. But it's worth it.

Of course, and you being a schoolteacher have all those skills that they like to employ. Have you attended any State Council meetings?

No.

You need to take an opportunity, this year is the 100th year celebration. Would be a really good time to go to a State Council meeting. How has Extension Homemakers touched your life?

Well, it certainly strengthens me. It certainly—I've learned so much in a way, as I said canning, bread. Just—strengthen me to know that I can do things that I couldn't do before. It's opened up a new avenue.

What has been you favorite event or activity?

I guess it has been the Huntsville meetings. And . . .

By Huntsville meetings what do you mean?

Like—I'm sorry, Marble.

Oh, Marble. OK, I thought maybe you meant the Spring Council meetings or the . . .

. . . oh, the Spring Council meetings are good and the Fall Council meetings are good. In the past we have more members than we do today and we used to—perhaps we still do and I just missed it. But we used to have sign-ups that you could sign-up for to paint rocks or— which I enjoyed or to create something.

Some of the cultural arts or some of the food preparation, the food nutrition lessons or some of the other educational activities.

Correct.

What has been your least favorite event or activity?

Well, now that I'm of age. [*Laughs*] I don't enjoy at night time—the night time, Country Store. Being in the Country Store, going to the fair, on fairground and the—I don't enjoy that any more. But I used, to. It's . . .

It becomes harder to travel at night when we don't see as well.

Yes.

What changes have you experienced in the Extension Homemakers organization?

Well, as I said we have less members and we do less in the way of—of arts and crafts.

And what do you attribute this to?

Some members have died and some members have moved away and—and some people just are not interested, and I don't know how to get them interested but—but then it's really just such a wonderful organization. I—I need to go out and beat the band and be—encourage people to come, ladies to come.

Has Extension Homemakers taught you anything about people?

Oh, yes, you learn how to be—not everybody thinks alike or speaks alike, so I have learned how to work with different people, to have patience and listen to what they have to say. And so it's a learning situation dealing with all kinds of ladies from all different backgrounds, from different cities and states, etc.

Have you had any opportunities to work with youth, with 4-H'ers or young people?

No, I haven't.

Are there any memories, experiences or thoughts that you would like to share that I have not asked about?

Well, I've enjoyed doing so much. I don't have any exciting experiences to share because I'm older I just . . .

Well, we want to thank you for all your contributions to Extension Homemakers and for sharing your time and memories with us, as well as the Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council and the Pryor Center for

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Arkansas Oral History and Visual History. And I want you to know that we are going to provide you with a copy of this interview transcript and later a copy of the audio recording in a few weeks. Thanks you so much for your time today.

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