

ARKANSAS EXTENSION HOMEMAKERS COUNCIL

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Official Transcript of:

Joyce Green

Member of Hilltop Extension Homemakers Club
Baxter County Extension Homemakers Council

Original Recording made 30 November 2011

at Mountain Home, Arkansas

Recorded and interviewed by:

Barbara Summers

Baxter County Extension Homemakers Council President

Transcribed by:

Lila Kusch

Member of Oakland/Promise Land Extension Homemakers Club
Baxter County Extension Homemakers Council

Edited by:

Joyce Green





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Oral History Program

Barbara Summers, Baxter County Extension Homemakers Council President

30 November 2011

This is an audio recording of Joyce Green, member of the Baxter County Extension Homemakers Council. This interview is part of an Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council Oral History Program, and Joyce is answering questions asked by Baxter County Extension Homemakers Council President, Barbara Summers.

Questions and comments by Barbara are in boldface type; Joyce's responses and comments are in lightface type.

I am Barbara Summers. This is the interview with Joyce Green for the Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council Oral History Program. This is being done November 30, 2011, in Mountain Home, Arkansas, at 2006 East 1st Street for Baxter 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.

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Yes.

First, I would like to give you—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.

Joyce Lafay Green.

And you reside?

In Baxter County.

And the town?

Mountain Home.

OK. What has been your association with the Extension Homemakers Program? You're a member, correct?

Yes, ma'am.

OK. How did you learn about the Extension Homemakers Program?

Well, I started 4-H when I was still in high school and that kind of got me going. And then I graduated high school, went to college, got married and there was still no EHC Club available for me. And so in [19]51 we moved to Little Rock, where my husband's job was. And then I stayed home with the children and no club was available there yet. I did work in the church and in the community.

And in 1955 we moved over into the Meadowcliff Addition in Little Rock. And I had a cousin who lived there, too, and she had seen some of the work the EHC had done in different areas around Pulaski County. She said, "How would you like to start an EHC club?" And I said, "I'm all for it." I couldn't keep my mouth shut then, [*BS: laughs*] so she called Mrs.—I think her name was Mrs. Olds, who was the county Extension office person there and she came out to our house and we asked some of the women around our area because there was a big housing development and so on the day that she was there, we organized a club. We got all organized then met the next month as a full-fledged club.

The Home Economists at the time gave all the lessons. If they needed props, she brought them with her. And then later on they got to where they would call one in from each club to give the lesson and then to pass it on to the club. Some

of the clubs weren't very prompt about getting the props back to the home economist and all that so that kind of went by the wayside. Then, we get lessons through the computer and on different subjects.

We moved out of that house in 1960 and over to Jacksonville, Arkansas, so I kept driving back and forth to go to club meetings in Little Rock and then on May 20, 1963, we moved to Baxter County, Mountain Home, Arkansas.

Before then, we had made a couple of trips up here to look the job over and everything, and we decided we could make a go of it here. So we went by and saw the church and little stores and all and I thought well having come from Little Rock I guessed I could get enough food bought to feed the family and I was sure they had to go to school without any clothes because of not having J.C. Penney here.

He came home while the kids were still in school, and he brought home a Baxter Bulletin, which the Baxter Bulletin at that time was near their office building and it was a weekly newspaper then, and I was reading the news and I saw where they were going to have an EHC meeting and they were going to have it at Margreete Jones's house on 16th Street, where now is the Monroe House.

So, I didn't know one street from the other when we came here, so my husband drove me down there. He'd been all around, so he drove me down and showed me where the house was. I didn't know anyone in town when I moved here. Of course, that was just one of many other times. So I went that day to her house at the club there and there sat, oh close to 20 people in that club, and when I walked in everybody looked at me as though where did she come from? [*BS: laughs*] So I introduced myself. The county Council president was out of that club at that time. She came over and introduced herself and I introduced myself. She took me around and introduced me to every one there.

What was the name of that club?

It was Hilltop then—and now.

Oh, OK.

I belong to it for 49 years.

OK.

I am the only one that's left that was there when I joined. Arlene Moses has the next oldest club membership in Hilltop Club. Everybody else is gone or died except Margreete Jones. Margreete is still alive in assisted living housing somewhere. We had that meeting and then I came to two or three other meetings. Thelma Gregg was the county Council president then and she said, "I need somebody to help in the kitchen." And I said, "I had never done that." She said, "Well, if you're willing to do it, I'll meet you there on the day the fair opens."

I drove down there, and she was standing in the door. She came out and greeted me and took me in and introduced me to Willadean [Perry]. That was the first time I knew Willadean as such. [BS: *Laughs*] She was with a group of people. And so I said to Willadean, "I don't know anything about this. You're going to have to tell me everything because I don't know anything about it." She did a good job, I guess, [*laughter*] because she kept me on for many years.

And so we worked teaching others at the old building that the tornado blew away until we got the new one. By that time, we had made enough money that we bought two refrigerators and two stoves for the new kitchen. Since then, the Fair Board has bought and replaced those, but the first ones were put in by EHC.

Willadean and I were called on to do the shopping. [*Laughter*] We were kind of used to that by then because she had taught me how to buy for the kitchen—about how much hamburger meat and about how much of this and how much of that we needed. And what she did do was—we had a little refrigerator at the old kitchen about maybe 4 feet high and maybe 24 inches wide. The ladies from 311 Club brought pies; we tried to keep the cream pies under refrigeration as best we could, but we had one lady who brought her cow to the fair and so she always milked her cow every morning. She brought her milk over there, which really did tighten up the space real quick. [*Laughter*]

I am assuming you didn't have air conditioning, right?

We hardly had electricity. [BS: *Laughs*] No air conditioning. We didn't have air conditioning until we got into the new building. We didn't even have a fan. You're right, we didn't even have an air conditioning.

However, the tornado in one way did us a favor inasmuch as it took away the old building, which wasn't nearly as good as the new building was. They built us a nice new building. It had a worktable in the middle where people could get around and work. Before that, there was hardly room for two people back there.

But at that time, the clubs donated the pies. Each club was responsible for three pies and then about that same time we moved up there, the health department decided that it wasn't healthy enough for us to serve those pies that came out of the home and so they made us start doing otherwise. But all that time that we had that kitchen, there wasn't anybody ever got sick, and so we must have done a pretty fair job of keeping people from getting sick.

What did you charge for a slice of pie, do you remember?

Thirty-five cents, I think, and we cut the pie in six slices. We were up there by the cattle barn and all those people that brought their cattle and all who smelled all that Southern cooking and resulting in us having had good business there. We never did have business that good when we moved down to the other building.

We had people decided that our menu wasn't good enough so our successors changed it. What Willadean did not tell you awhile ago about cooking utensils, she brought spoons, pots, pans, serving dishes, cups, salters, and everything we used. And at that time, they had to wash all those dishes because there wasn't any plastic or paper items and so it took one person that came from each club a full-time job washing dishes. We first started with just one hot plate that had two burners. We had hot water in a teakettle over here [*gestures with hands*] with boiling water and over here we had our Sloppy Joes going and then we'd scoot this over and put our hot dogs on it and warm them up so we could serve the hot dogs. And in there somewhere, we got another stove that had a little bit more to it than that, and we did better. How we got the dishes sterile is we scalded them. We put them in a pan of water and then we put a tablespoon of

bleach or a teaspoon of bleach in it and then rinsed them in hot water and somebody dried them.

Before I got to Baxter County—I was in a club I organized—helped organize, and I was a charter member in Pulaski County, Meadowcliff Club. When I moved up here, we came from Pulaski County—there we were more into cooking and some smaller things. When I moved up here, we had a Home Economist that was really a go-getter. We had lessons on upholstering furniture, making shades, making drapes, and one of the most unique things that, I think, I've ever come across in my time was that she taught each one of us to make us a pair of pants that fit just us.

She took this pattern—you had a basic pattern and then she took this pattern, which she modified it. If you had more back here than somebody else, she added to it. If you had more here than somebody else or down here, and when she did that she took the paper pattern that we had and she would make it—a slit it and if it needed to be wide, she'd pull it out and if it had to be took in, she'd put a piece of tape on it. And it was quite a show when we'd go down to the Fair building—it would be quite a show to see all those gals running around there in their petticoats and underwear. [*Laughter*] But we had lots of fun. Hard work, but lots of fun.

And the hardest thing we ever had to do was upholstery. I never did learn to be very good at upholstery. But she would call me and Willadean to go to whatever place she had scheduled to teach upholstery class. She taught how to make pull drapes, and then she taught how to make just plain curtains and then the pants I was telling you about.

Then she also taught us another thing that I thought was kind of unique. That's when double knit had just come in. She took a piece of double knit and she folded it and made a skirt out of it. You had one seam in the back. And then on the top you put elastic and then on the bottom you hemmed it with . . . What is that sticky stuff? Velcro. [*BS: Laughs*] No, it wasn't called Velcro, was it, maybe so! You cut the length you wanted your hem to be.

Mh-hmm.

And the hem you cut at least an inch so it wouldn't ravel out in time, and you hemmed it with a hot iron.

What was her name? What was the agent's name?

Willadean. Then after that we got Nina Sue Coffey. She was from Fayetteville. And we helped her raise two children. She got us on more modern stuff. Twenty-nine years she was here. Willadean and I were on the board that helped select her, I guess was a good way to say it. Then she got eligible to retire, and we didn't care that she was retiring because she had earned it. And then we got another one that changed things still yet, got another one changed things again, and then got another one and she didn't stay very long and now we are scheduled to get yet another one, so I'm sure we're in for another change, which change is good if it's for the better.

We also have tried to get younger people involved in the club. We've made two or three extensive efforts. The ladies that are younger have to help make a living and when they get home, they still have laundry to do and cleaning to do and kids to bathe and put to bed, so they don't have time for a meeting. We tried giving them some quick recipes that they could use, but it was much easier to come by McDonald's and get a bag of hamburgers because they'd worked all day, and I can understand that it's always just the same.

We still don't have many young members. I guess the youngest one we have in our club is about 62 or 63—that's my daughter and she's 63, so I think that's about the youngest one. So then we've just kind of gave up. And then we've got into computers and how to prepare your will and how to set up finances for a deceased mate and all of that is very valuable and it's come in very, very handy, but a lot of people aren't interested in that, as well as other things.

So we've about quit the cooking and sewing, but in our club we have a workshop most every month and that keeps our girls coming because they all love to come and make things and take something home that they've made.

I like that, too.

You like that, too?

Yes, its one of the most fun things to do.

Well, we don't do that like we used to. We used to do a whole lot of that. What else do you need to know since I've been talking all day?

[Laughter] That's OK. You did really well. I don't have to ask you about most of these questions. I do want to ask you—you are a club member now?

Yes.

And you belong to?

Hilltop EHC.

And it's in what county?

Baxter County.

In Ozark District, correct?

Right.

OK. Do you have any special memories of the first meeting or the first club that you ever went to? You kind of went through that already.

I helped organize and am a charter member Meadowcliff Club, which was something I had never gone through before. When I got here, everybody was strangers, but I've got a lot of good friends and made a lot of good friends.

And at that time when I was Council president, the Home Economist, if she had 15 clubs in the county, she made all 15 of them and taught the lessons, and she always took Willadean and I with her a lot, so we got to meet a lot of people and do a lot of things. One time I thought we were going to get killed. We went over to Big Flat and it was deer opening time [laughter] and we went to this woman's house and somebody—I don't know how she found out that they were not eating well enough and so she told her—the only thing that I ever heard that

was derogatory that ever come out of her mouth. She told this lady, she said, “You know what that old man likes. You cook it and you put it on the table.” *BS: Laughs*] So we left her with some literature and then she offered to feed us. At that time, they was raised the chickens for Tyson and so she—if they had 300 chickens, they always gave extras to feed—well, she had extra chickens, so she wanted us to stay and she was going to fry some chicken. We told her no we didn’t come to eat and we got out of there. [*BS: Laughs*]

You didn’t think she was going to cook right, huh?

We always said whenever we went to Big Flat, we went all over the world and if you’ve never been to Big Flat, you haven’t been all over the world.
[*Laughter*]

Is that it, do you think?

I got a lot of memories.

They are mostly good, too, it sounds like.

Yes. You were asking about state meetings. Yes I’ve been to state meetings, several of them, and after they quit having them in Little Rock, they started having them on the state college campus upstairs and downstairs and so they did that for quite awhile. But then our ladies like myself got older and couldn’t take a lot of those stairs, so they quit doing that and now are going down to Hot Springs to that Convention Center.

Mh-hmm. Its still a lot of walking down there, though.

Yeah, but not near like it was when you had to go upstairs because you had to go down and eat in the cafeteria and go up there and go to bed.

Are you thinking about trying to go this next time?

Oh, heavens, no. I can’t sit up more than three hours at a time with my back.

OK. We'll miss you. We'll make sure that they remember you there, though.

I hope they don't tell any of this down there though because I've been in so many different counties in this state. [*Laughter*]

Finally found a county that would keep you, huh? [*Laughs*]

No, they didn't have clubs, but I got acquainted with some people there after they started clubs.

The only other question I wanted to ask you is what Extension Homemakers taught you, if anything, about people?

I have found that most people will treat you the way you treat them. If you're nice to them, they'll be nice to you. And I've never had a problem with getting along with people. I taught school, and I worked a lot of church organizations and I worked a lot of community organizations and I've never had a problem getting along with people. And I am very, very careful to never say they worked for me. I'd say we worked together.

That's right. Thank you very much. You've been wonderful.

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