

ARKANSAS EXTENSION HOMEMAKERS COUNCIL
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Official transcript of:

Wanda Hill

Member of Conway County Extension Homemakers Council

Original recording made 10 February 2012

at Morrilton, Arkansas

Recorded, transcribed and edited by:

Ashley Terry

Conway County Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agent





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Oral History Program

Ashley Terry, Conway County Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agent

10 February 2012

This audio recording of Wanda Hill, a member of the Conway County Extension Homemakers Council. This interview is part of an Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council Oral History Program, and Wanda is answering questions asked by Conway County Family and Consumers Sciences Extension Agent, Ashley Terry.

Questions and comments by Ashley Terry are in boldface type; Wanda's responses and comments are in lightface type.

I'm Ashley Terry. This is the interview with Wanda Hill for the Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council Oral History Program. This is being done on February 10, 2012, at the University Of Arkansas Division Of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service [Morrilton] in Conway 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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Are you willing to give the Pryor Center permission to make the audio files and transcript available to others?

Yes.

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

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Yes, Ma'm. I'm Wanda, Hill, Wanda Bostian Hill, and I live in Conway County.

Can you spell your first and last name for me?

Yes Ma'm.

W-A-N-D-A H-I-L-L, Conway, County

OK. Wanda, this will be a very informal interview and we just want you to share your memories of your involvement with the Extension Homemakers Club, the good time and the challenges. So what has been your association with the Extension Homemakers Program?

Well, I have been associated with the Extension Program since I was a child, when my Mom took me to the meetings, and I was born in 1930, so I'm sure I started going to the Homemakers Program since I was about, in 1935.

OK, so you have been pretty much almost a lifelong member [laughs].

Almost all my life.

So you learned about Extension Homemakers Program through your Mom, correct?

I did and Ms. Rogers was our home economist at that time.

How interesting, so what [was] the first club with which you were associated with?

Well, the first club that my Mom took me to was a Jacklit. It was called a Jacklit Club.

Jacklit, Uh-huh.

And it was—we were just about 5 miles out of Morrilton and I remember Ms. Rogers was our home economist, and then we moved to Overcup and it was known as the Overcup Community Club, now it's known as the New Horizon.

New Horizon, OK.

Yes, Ashley.

So about how many members do you think were in that first club that you attended with your Mother?

There were several. I would say eight to 10, at first because we did have—we were close to Morrilton, and we had several from around and in the Jacklit Community, too, there.

So during that time, do you think that a lot of people participated in Extension Homemakers Clubs? Was it something that was very popular, do you think, with a lot of mothers and lot of stay-at-homes.

Yes, there were not many mothers that worked back then. It was mostly stay-at-home mothers and we enjoyed the Extension Homemakers. Well, it wasn't the Extension Homemakers; it was Home Demonstration Club. So there were several that went and joined the club back then.

OK, so are you presently a club member and if so give the name of your current club, county, and current district.

Well, yes, and I am a member of the New Horizon Club, the one that I joined back several years ago when we changed from Overcup to New Horizons.

OK, so most of the time you have been part of the New Horizons?

New Horizon.

And that's part of the Ozark District, correct?

That's right.

Do you have any special remembrances of the first meeting of the New Horizon Club as an official member?

Well, we—we changed the name. It was changed from Overcup to New

Horizon, and I remember the day we changed the meeting. It was voted—it was voted to change because we picked up new members from all over the community and they didn't want it to be just Overcup.

That's very interesting and a very interesting choice of name to actually name a new club. So you talked about that you joined because your Mother was part of Extension Homemakers, but why do you think you have continued your membership?

Well, Ashley, I know I have enjoyed because I have gotten to know members all over the county and I learned so much about cooking, sewing, and all of those things I needed to know as a homemaker.

Right, so how involved have you become with Extension Homemakers? Have you been any offices or different type of committees or what are some of the special responsibility that you've held?

Well, I've held just about all the leadership committees and all that we have had and I was also a 4-H leader for about 12 to 15 years, when my children were all growing up and that was Overcup 4-H Club and all the county offices—so just about all of them.

Is there anyone in particular that you enjoyed more or worked with best?

We had several back then when we changed from the Overcup to the New Horizon Club. I know there was a couple that are deceased right now. I really enjoyed working with Wanda Laster, and let's see, Ms.—I can't remember just who our county agent was back then. They all have been really helpful and I have enjoyed most all our members.

Do you hold any office in your club now?

I'm just the treasurer. [*Laughs*]

That's a good position.

I just get to take care of the money. [*Laughs*]

Now there is a state meeting every year. Have you attended any of [the] state meetings?

Yes, I have, Yes.

Do you remember [when] your first one occurred?

It's been six or seven years ago. I haven't been going recently because my husband was sick and I didn't want to be gone.

Are there any special things that you remember about going to the state meetings or any type of memory that you can think of?

I remember the meetings and learning some of the crafts and then when we got home we did enjoy making some of the crafts in our club.

Well, that's good. So you said that you have been in the Extension Homemakers most of your life, so what do you think has touched you most about Extension Homemakers?

Well, I've enjoyed all the services that we have enjoyed at the meetings; I enjoy meeting all the new people in the county at our county meeting and also state meetings that I have attended.

So do you think you've met a lot of friends through Extension Homemakers that you wouldn't have met otherwise?

That's right, for sure.

That's good. It's always a good way to meet new people and have lasting relationships with other people. So what has been your favorite event or activity as an Extension Homemaker?

I think my favorite would be our county council meetings. We get to be with the rest of the Homemakers in the county and then I enjoy helping—having projects our club having projects and helping with the community events that we can help with.

So what do you think has been your least favorite?

Oh! Oh! [*Laughs*] Well, I've enjoyed all of it, but I guess the least enjoyable would be fund-raisers; we have to have fund-raisers to have money so that we [can keep] our projects going to help other people in our community. So I guess my least favorite would be fund-raisers even though we do it.

Right, right, some people that just isn't their thing, I guess, to ask for money or do things involving money, so I can see where that can be a least favorite. With anything that you know goes on for a long time there are going to be different changes that are going to take place, what changes have you experienced or noticed in the Extension Homemakers' organization?

Oh, I have experienced a lot of changes since I first started going. When I first started going, I went to learn how to feed my family, [*laughs*] how to cook, and sew and can and now I go mostly to meet our friends and to—to have an association with the council and so I think there is a lot of difference.

And then with the change of the name and different county agents.

I also remember when we had canning kitchens, and we had one at Overcup at the Overcup Methodist Church. We made cotton mattresses so I'm going back there.

So do you have pictures of you making the mattress?

No, don't think my Mom had a camera. I think we just didn't [have] any cameras back then. I remember meeting and I was pretty young then and I remember beating the cotton to make the mattress and each family got a new mattress, a cotton mattress, and that was exciting back then, so.

So that's interesting, so that sounds like a lot of work. Was it actually fun to make those mattresses?

It was fun for me. It might not have been fun for the parents, but I remember beating the cotton and the big long needle that we sewed the mattress up with. That was really astonishing for me.

So how long would it take to make one mattress?

Well, I know we would make about two in a day.

Wow!

But there were several working and you were allotted according to the amount of people in your family. You were allotted that many mattresses and I know our family got two because there were seven of us kids [*laughs*] and we got to make two of them.

That's interesting. I would never—I never thought about how long it might actually take to make a mattress.

It was fun. It was fun then because we would just beat that cotton. I remember that so vividly—that cotton. We had fun and we would have some kind of paddles that we beat the cotton with and they would put it on the form and then sew it up.

So where did you get the cotton from and all the materials?

Well, it was furnished through the Extension Service, and I don't know and all that material was finished and you were allotted so many. And I don't know how they got it. I guess it was a government funding.

Uh-huh. That would go in along with the changes the Extension office . . .

It would.

. . . is not providing services any more. So has Extension Homemakers taught you anything about people in general?

Oh, sure—uh-huh. It's taught me a lot. It's—I've learned to love all. All—everybody—everybody that wants to join is welcome, and we just have fun along with learning and I have enjoyed it or I would not have kept going.

Good, so are there any other experiences or memories you would like to share with us today?

Well, I can remember when I was really small we had a—well, it was a session on how to dress to go to school. Back then people didn't dress up to go to school like we do now and the boys wore overalls and my Mom made me a pretty little dress out of a feed sack.

Wow!

And I modeled it in front of the Homemakers at the Central Ward School that used to be here in Morrilton, but we got on stage and I remember that so well that I modeled that pretty little dress and I thought it was so pretty made out of a feed sack.

So how old were you?

I was probably 5 because I was fixing to go into school. I was between 5 or 6. I'm not sure which, but I know I walked across the stage with a little boy that had on a pair of overalls and that was the appropriate wear for boys and girls wore dresses then.

I think things have changed.

Have changed so much.

Is there anything else you can think of?

I don't think of any—anything exactly any more. I think I've said enough.
[Laughs]

Well, Wanda, we thank you so much for all your contributions to Extension Homemakers, and we certainly thank you for sharing your time and memories with us today.

You're just welcome. Glad to be here, Thank You.

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