

ARKANSAS EXTENSION HOMEMAKERS COUNCIL

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Official transcript of:

Nora Jean Housley

Sixty-year member of Van Buren County Extension Homemakers Council

Original recording made 8 December 2011

at the Chimes Community Center, Van Buren County

Recorded by:

Katherine Bensuk

Highway 110 Extension Homemakers Club, Van Buren County, Secretary

Interviewed, transcribed and edited by:

Patricia T. Munson

Van Buren County Extension Homemakers Council Treasurer





Nora Jean Housley

ARKANSAS EXTENSION HOMEMAKERS COUNCIL

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Official transcript of:

Nora Jean Housley

Sixty-year member of Van Buren County Extension Homemakers Council

Original recording made 8 December 2011

at the Chimes Community Center, Van Buren County

Recorded by:

Katherine Bensuk

Highway 110 Extension Homemakers Club, Van Buren County, Secretary

Interviewed, transcribed and edited by:

Patricia T. Munson

Van Buren County Extension Homemakers Council Treasurer

Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council

Oral History Program

Patricia T. Munson, Van Buren County Extension Homemakers Council
Treasurer

8 December 2011

This is an audio recording of Nora Jean Housley, 60-year member of the Van Buren County Extension Homemakers Council. This interview is part of an Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council Oral History Program, and Nora Jean is answering questions asked by Van Buren County Extension Homemakers Council Treasurer, Patricia Munson.

Questions and comments by Patricia are in boldface type; Nora Jean's responses and comments are in lightface type.

I am Patty Munson. This is an interview with Nora Jean Housley for the Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council Oral History Program. This is being done December 8, 2011, at the Old Chimes School House, which is now the Chimes Community Center in Van Buren County.

The audio recordings and transcript of this interview will be donated to the David and Barbara Pryor Center for Oral, 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 Library, Fayetteville, and the copyright will belong solely to the University of Arkansas.

Nora Jean, 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.

Nora Jean Housley. N-O-R-A capital J-E-A-N H-O-U-S-L-E-Y, and I live at 1165 Housley Loop, Leslie, Arkansas, 72645.

This is going to be a informal interview. I want you to share your memories of your involvement with the Extension Homemakers program and the good times and challenges. And the first question they asked me to ask is, how did you learn about the Extension Homemakers program?

Well, the first, my mother belonged to a EH, a Home Demonstration Club in Oklahoma before we moved to Arkansas and in 1952, several of the ladies in the community got to discussing about the Home Demonstration Club, so we—the Extension officer was Emma Myers at Clinton in Van Buren County and so she came out and met with, several of the ladies in the community, so the club was organized with 10 members that day that she came out. So I am a charter member of the Chimes EH Club. There's only three living. One of them lives in Texas with her son. The other one lives in—she's in a nursing home in Russellville, Arkansas. So I'm the only one that lives in the Chimes Community that is a charter member of the Chimes EH Club.

Could you tell me who the other—what the names of the other two members were that are alive?

Her name at that time was Pauline Williams; she married again, but I do not know her last name. And then, Emma Miller. That's, that's the three that was left, that was charter members of the Chimes EH Club. Of Course, the Chimes EH Club now was the Chimes Home Demonstration Club, at that time.

Uh-huh.

And in later years, it went to the Chimes Extension Club, and then later it went to the Family Community Education Club.

Uh-huh.

And then back to The Chimes, back to the EH, Extension Club.

What were, what were some of the early projects that you did in the club?

Well, the first project that we had, as I stated my mother, her name was Eula Mathis that had belonged to a club in Oklahoma—and then the first project that was mentioned after we started our club was mentioned by my mother-in-law, Della Housley. And there was no building at the Liberty Cemetery, so she mentioned trying to get a building at the Liberty Cemetery for the purpose of decorations and funerals, because there was just nowhere, when the weather was bad, for funerals in the community and so we undertook trying to get a building. So that was started. She passed away in 1953. She didn't get to see the building completed, but at her funeral, which was graveside, there was some building materials on the grounds at the cemetery, so she knew that it was in the making. And the building actually didn't start until 1954 be—because most of the men were farmers and just didn't have the time to get it started, but it did actually start in 1954.

Well, that's a big project, so you had to raise quite a bit of money. What ways did you raise the money for that project?

Well, we had pie suppers, we had sock suppers. The—the club member, the club ladies pieced quilts and quilted those quilts and then we sold tickets and then they would be given away at some of our gatherings, which the pie suppers or whatever we were having, and then we also quilted for other people in the community or wherever anyone lived and wanted quilts quilted and that was some of the ways. We also had plays and talent shows—whatever we could think of, you know, and I remember two of the plays was—one of them was “The Mock Wedding” and then one of them was “The Women-less Wedding” and then “Family Feud, Family—Family Feudin’,” I believe, was the name of one of the plays and outside of that I can't remember the other plays. But we just had, we had to think of a lot of things in order to get money for the cemetery building, but then a lot of people just gave their money. They donated their money to the building fund.

I was wondering how much you charged back then to quilt a quilt for somebody.

I think we started out at \$3.

Wow!

And then we raised it to \$5 and on up to \$7, and then from that it went on up to about \$15, something like that.

Now.

We quilted lots of quilts.

So you got the building built.

The building was finished in 1958, so there was four years that we were in the building—building the cemetery building.

Did it have electric and indoor plumbing at that time?

No, no it didn't. We had to, well, we didn't have electricity in it 'til [until] later years, and we had a funeral one day and it was raining and dark. The preacher couldn't hardly even see how to read the scripture.

Uh-huh.

So the club got together and we decided we needed electricity. So that's how we come about getting electricity.

Then did the club pay the electric bill each month, also?

Yes, yes.

So you had ongoing projects to make money?

We had to have the money coming in for that. We never missed a payment. The people were really good to come in and help with all these projects, you know. That one especially.

The other thing I haven't asked is who actually did the work? I guess you did say that it was the farmers in the community.

The—the men in the community volunteered all their work. We were out—we were out no expense for anything, any labor or anything like that

Then did the cemetery building and the cemetery itself remain a project through the years?

The cemetery, yes, the cemetery was a standing project all those years and the, excuse me, and then, of course, the building it, it went along with it a keeping up the inside and everything, but for a while there was not much expense there, because it was all new and so it, the cemetery was a standing project until later years and then they decided to—the community got together and voted to have a perpetual fund for it. So we dropped the cemetery as a project. But that came in later years. There was other things that happened before that.

Our next project—big project—was well, was to restore this Chimes Schoolhouse, which, it was built in 1935. And, and it was, I think, I told someone, it was not a WPA [Works Progress Administration] project, but it was. I found out from my husband that it was a project of the WPA and a man by the name of Cecil Jones was the contractor. So he was the one that saw that the building was built. And, so anyway, it was a big project. When the building was built, they put plaster all on the inside of the rock walls and through the years after, I think, the school— ‘course [of course] Chimes had their school here Grades 1 through 8 until 1954. I believe I’m right on that. And then they consolidated with Leslie School. So there was a number of years there that nothing was in the building. So it really did deteriorate. The plaster began to come off the walls and the a, of course, it was heated by wood when they went to school, and we were trying to have elections in it and it was so cold and bad and everything that we decided that it needed to be restored, that something needed to be done. So the first thing that needed to be done was get new stove pipes and we started tearing down the—all the plaster off the walls, which was a lot of hard work.

Window panes had been broken out, and the screens on the windows had been torn off. The doors were in real bad shape. So we really had a lot going on. And so we decided to, to do all that. And got the plaster off the walls and painted the walls and then we went for the new windows and the, the window panes that had to be put in. And the screens, and then that’s when we had problems. It’s

sad to say, but a lot a times, when some people see things going good, they don't like that, and they begin to tear things up. So we came home from the, from prayer meeting one night at church and the men had built scaffolds to fix the windows and everything. The scaffolds were torn down, and then the next thing the window lights were being broke. The screens were being torn off. The well had been blown up, where the water was furnished for the school, and we tried to keep on keepin' [keeping] on, but finally we decided we couldn't. So we had to give that project up. It broke our hearts, but we had to give that project up. So, that kinda [kind of] ended the project here, but during that time we still had our pie suppers and our, and our quilting and our plays and whatever to raise funds, you know.

Then it was eventually fixed up, the school house though . . .

Yes.

. . . to completion?

Yes, but it wasn't the club.

It wasn't the club?

No.

It was the greater community?

Yes.

Are you presently a club member? And if so please give the name of the club.

No, I am not. [Editor's Note: Though Nora Jean is no longer an active member, the Chimes Extension Homemakers Club has kept her on the roles as a member-at-large.]

These are questions that I need to ask. Do you have any special memories of your first club meeting?

Well, no, not really. I was put in as president. I didn't know anything about it. *[Laugh]* I was really new. I didn't know, but with the help of Miss Myers, she was really, really good. We all loved Miss Myers. And she helped us a lot with our club. But we just worked at it and eventually at one time through the—in the scrapbook that my mother kept—I noticed through the first 12 years, we had as many as 50 members, here and there you know. Some of them married and left and that sort of thing. But we did at one time—there was 50 members that had belonged to The Chimes EH Club, in that 12 years.

We had lots of fun. We'd go to, you know, each one's home at a club meeting each month. And maybe they would like for us to do something for them that morning, then we'd have our club meeting in the afternoon or maybe we would meet for an all-day thing just for quilting. So we had a lot of fun along with our hard work. *[Laugh]*

What kind of things would you do for the individuals that you were, the hostesses?

Well, most of the time it was piecing quilts. Yeah, that was the mainest thing that we did. And, also, we in 1956—I noticed from the scrapbook—if it had not been from the, the scrapbook that my mother kept, I would be lost in the dates and things. But in 1956, we put a new, just a woven wire fence around the cemetery and, of course, in—it doesn't take fences long to go to gettin' *[getting]* bad and all that, so in 1977, we got to talking about putting a chain link fence around the cemetery and, of course, that was going to take quite a bit of money, too. And we started on that and, but we got a lot of donations. People mailed in.

My mother was a, a correspondent for the Chimes Community for years and through that she would report, you know, what we were doing and get people's attention to what . . . And a lot of people had an interest in the Liberty Cemetery at that time and they would send in donations, so we got lots of donations for that fence, the chain link fence. And that, that really did help us. And that was 1977.

Um.

As I mentioned while ago, the club started out as Home Demonstrations Club then it went to Extension Homemakers, Home Demonstration Club. I'm sorry. It was the Chimes Home Demonstration Club. And then it went to the Extension Homemakers Club. And then it went to the Family Community Education Club. It just stayed that for a few years. I never did really like that name. *[Laugh]* Some way or other, it just didn't fit. But anyway, it went to FCE—that's the way we would do it and then it went back to the Extension Homemakers Club.

Uh-huh, and your, your mothers name—who was so active in the EHC—what was her name?

Eula Mathis. She was also a charter member and was a member until she went into the nursing home. And was therefore, after she left the Chimes Community to live with my sister, she would come back to my house every month that was possible for her to go to the club meeting with me. And so after she went into the nursing home, of course, she wasn't able to come then. Her heart was always with the, with the club.

Yeah.

She did lots of work for the club.

So you continued your membership for over 50 years?

Fifty-three years. [Editor's Note: She was an active member for 53 years, but has been an at-large member for the last seven years, so this year she has been a member for 60 years.]

What was the reason you would continue your membership? What did EHC mean to you?

Well, I think the AHCE, [Editor's Note: AEHC—Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council] the EHC Clubs, I think they helped our community. I think they—I know probably if it had not been for the EHC Club—I don't know if we would a had a building at the cemetery and a lot of other things. We even bought markers from Coffman Funeral Home for the unknown graves. I mean the graves that didn't have markers, and a lot of them we found out who

they were and some we didn't, but we bought markers for that and then we made Valentines for the residents in the nursing home. Margaret Hackman was a big hand in that and kept that going, but we would go down there sometime around Valentine's day and we would take refreshments and go down and give out our Valentines that we had made and we would do some singing and we would just have a little program for the residents in the, in the nursing home. So I feel like that the EH Club has helped me in lots of ways, helped our community in lots of ways. And I have nothing against the EH Clubs.

You have mentioned that you were the first president of this Chimes EH Club. And what other positions did you carry, you know, through the years? Were you, like, in the county, were you part of that, were you . . . ?

No, I never was an officer in the county, but I've been, you know, I've been about everything in the *[laugh]* the Chimes Club. The president, the secretary-treasurer and just about everything we just—sometimes we didn't have many members, and we just kind of back and forth, you know. But, yeah, I was, I was the first president. Like I say, I don't know, I didn't know much about it, but we just kinda *[kind of]* all learned together, you know, what it was all about.

Have you ever attended the State Council Meetings?

No, I haven't. I don't think I ever have.

What would have been your favorite event?

Pardon?

Your favorite event through the years or what activity that you like to do?

Well, I just didn't. I enjoyed it all. I enjoyed getting together with the ladies quilting. We could spend just all day quilting and having fun and visiting and it was all clean fun. We've been real fortunate in that, having real nice ladies in our club. No one ever, you know, really caused any, any problem or anything, but I, I couldn't tell you my, you know . . . I just enjoyed it all. I looked

forward for the fourth Wednesday in each month. *[Laughs]* I just looked forward to it.

Now, I looked through the scrapbook and saw some of the things that you did way back when and one of the things that I was really interested in was the sunshine bags where you would . . .

Oh, Yes.

Tell me more about them.

I had that in my notes, but I had forgot it. Oh, yeah, we got a lot of thrill out of that. We would keep sunshine bags for the ones that had to go to the hospital or if they were real sick at home and couldn't get out and attend things, you know. But they weren't supposed to open but one gift a day. When we delivered them the sunshine bags, that was just one gift per day that they would take out of that sunshine bag.

What kind of gifts?

Oh, I don't really know, Patty. It was just so many different kinds of things. Kleenex, things that they could use, you know, and maybe a new pair of socks, or just whatever.

Comforting type things?

Yeah, right, and we usually always got thank-you notes and everybody always enjoyed the sunshine bags.

And I also noticed that, at least one year, you didn't meet in July for the potato harvest. Did a lot of people around here grow potatoes that they harvested?

Oh, yes. Oh, yeah, that was a big thing *[laughs]* at that time, I didn't; I hadn't noticed that. *[Laughs]*

Now, did they raise the potatoes for sale or for their own use?

Oh, they raised the potatoes for sale! They had big crops of potatoes. One year we planted 30 sacks—100-pound sacks of potatoes. And a lot of the rest of them raised potatoes and what didn't, they would hire out, you know. We would hire them to help us. And then several of us planted a lot of potatoes, and we'd just switch out helping each other dig and workin' [working], you know. That was—in the summer time was—a busy time. Potatoes and beans and all of that went to the market in Little Rock

Another thing I noticed in the scrapbook was that there were ribbons just about every year for a booth at the county fair. Was that pretty much every year that you would do that?

We did that almost every year for a long time. We won lots of ribbons at the county fair. Yes, we did.

Were you active in the county fair in other ways? Did you, did people go to the county fair?

Oh, yes, and almost every year, some of us would take vegetables down and enter in the fair and most of the time we would get blue ribbons or red ribbons or something on them. *[Laughs]* Oh, yeah, we took part in the county fair.

Um.

We also made road signs. I think they called them directional road signs and put it—we had some out here at this, at this road, you know, pointing to where everyone lived. At the end of the road we would put who lived on that road. It took a long time to do that—a lot of hard work and time and everything, but and like everything else, they finally just, you know, got bad and we tore them down.

There was a lot of things that we did—that a—really they weren't big projects, but like I said a while ago, we always had the cemetery as our project, and the ladies would get together and when the leaves would get bad in the fall and fall off the trees or winter, we would get on the phone and we would call and say, "Well we need to rake the leaves at the cemetery." So we would get everybody that we could in the community to come and help. Not just the club ladies, but

everybody that we could get to come and help, so we kept the cemetery in real good shape at that time.

And then it also mentioned that you did activities for The, The National Home Demonstration Day—put exhibits out.

We put signs or exhibits in the stores. It was about usually one store in the community that we would put it in. And then sometimes we would do it at Clinton, put—put an exhibit in one of the stores down there. And that's the way we—and then also during that week we had the bake sale at Clinton that we helped with the County Extension Council raise money. And we would go down and help with that and do our baking and then take it down there and work at that, so, just different, different smaller things that we did participate in. But we, we really had something a going. *[Laughs]*

In one of the photos in the scrapbook it showed all the members holding up big nine patches.

That was for the biggest quilt in the world.

Did we win some type of thing for that?

Well, I don't know if we won anything or not, but anyway we just tore that all apart and each one of us that wanted a quilt, we got enough to make us a quilt out of it. I don't really know what the purpose of that was. But, *[laughs]* I guess, there was a purpose of a doing it. I know we got down there at the fairgrounds somewhere down there and I, I don't know if it was the fairgrounds or just where, had that quilt laid out on the, the ground, and some of the women around, you know, around the quilt before it was torn apart.

And it was all nine patches?

Yeah, I think so.

You said that you didn't have any particular activity or event that was your favorite. Did you have any particular activity or event that you didn't enjoy in EH?

No, I don't think so.

And what changes, through the years, what changes did you see in EH?

Well, like I said before, during a 12-year period we had 50 members, but then it just started—it seemed like—just going down. And that wasn't good. But that's what happened and I don't remember when I, when I was in the last club, the last meeting I went to in the club I don't think there was but about 10 members or so like that. I don't really know what's in there now, but anyway, but a lot of people died and that happens, you know, and people that's interested in the community. And a lot of the young ones married and left or left for jobs and first one thing and another, but we could see that the club was, people just didn't seem to be interested. And some people, they would just not even talk about joining the club. It was like it was something bad. And there was nothing bad about the EH Club. It was nothing only to help our community a—to help our homes to be better homes and a better community to live in.

When you started EH, you were real young?

Yes, I was.

Were there young people in the EH most of the time you were in it or did that?

A lot of the time. I had a quilt that, it wasn't one that the club, the club made, I don't think. It might be. They, they made the, they made the blocks and then my mother put the names in it. But it's the friendship quilt. And she gave it to me and there's a lot of young people in it then. I had my sister; I had two sisters in it, two sister-in-laws, and just a lot of other young people that were in the club at that time.

Can I get your sisters' names?

Ida Cart, a [Interviewee's Note: Her last name had been Cargile.] Ida Smith now. And then Carlene Hodge. [Interviewee's Note: Carlene Mathis] And then I had two sister-in-laws, of course, one of them Jolene Housley died—she passed away —and the other one moved away. And we had a lot of, a lot of

young people that were interested in the club, but they married and moved away and whatever, you know,

Did the EH teach you anything about people?

Well, I suppose it did in some ways. You learn to give and take—that maybe my way is not always the right way and I should be willing to, to listen and you just learn to love each other and to be more like a family. When you meet with them once a month and then you have your activities, you're with them a lot, so you're just more or less like a big family.

Are there any other memories or experiences or thoughts you would like to share with us?

Well, I can't really remember just what—had a lot of fun in the, in “The Mock Wedding” that we had and also “The Women-less Wedding.” It was, I can look back at the pictures, and it was so much fun doing that, but it took a lot of work. You know the men all worked at something, and you could just get them up here ever once in a while to practice and it took them forever to learn their parts. *[Laughs]* But anyway we had a, we had a lot of fun.

Are there any projects that you would like to see the EH Club doing in our community at this point?

I can't think of any right now. Anything, anything that will better a community is what people needs to work at. And that's the way I see it. And if someone is doing a good thing, help 'em [them]. Help them with it instead of trying to tear down, you know. Because it takes working together to have a good community, the same as it does a home. You have to work together to have a good home, and you have to work together to have a good community.

Now did you, how did you go about recruiting members? You said you had a lot of people. Did you go actively ask people or recruit them?

We were, yes, we asked people to . . . We'd be glad for them to come and join our club and they could see the activities in the paper that we did 'cause

[because] that was always reported. And, yes, we, we invited people to come to our club!

And what do you think of the hundred years of EHC that we're celebrating this year?

I think it is wonderful. I think it's great that it has been going on that long. A lot of things don't happen like that. I think it's great that the EHC is, cause they're still going.

What would you put in a time capsule right now if you thought it was going to be opened in another hundred years? What do you think would be important to put in a time capsule?

Boy, I don't know. Just, just work at it and talk to people about it and try, just try to keep it going for another hundred years, as time goes on.

Now who was your favorite Extension Agent through the years? And when did they serve?

Well like I said, Miss, Miss Myers. We all thought a lot of Miss Myers. And we all thought a lot of Mary McKnight. She did a lot of, a lot of work in the community. I mean in the clubs. And she was more or less like one of us. When she came out, she was more like one of us.

Well, Mrs. Myers was in it when you first started. Was she in it for very long?

Yes, and I just don't know for how long she was in it. I just, I don't remember. I don't think too many years, that she had it.

And then . . .?

I liked them all that I had any dealing with.

Was McKnight an agent for quite a few years?

Yes, she was. I don't know for how many.

Do you know about when she was in?

No, I don't know. She was in it through the, probably the [19]'70s and [19]'80s, along in there. Maybe the early [19]'90s. I just can't remember.

So for quite a while.

It was several, several years. Yes, yes, she was. But we all, I mean I never did know of anyone in the club that did not like Miss [Editor's Note: Mrs.] Mary McKnight. She had a family. Miss Myers had never been married. She was a single lady, but she worked hard at it. And we all liked her.

Do you have any ideas about why membership dropped in the clubs through the years? There were 30 clubs at one time and now there are seven clubs.

No, I don't. I don't.

Why do you think the, the Extension Club has been active for so many years throughout the nation? It's still, it's still a successful club going, but not as big.

The only answer I can give is people working together and wanting to see more things done in their communities.

Did this club ever host the Spring and Fall Council Meetings?

Oh, yes. Oh, yes. We, we hosted those several times. Even had one at the cemetery, I remember, had tables down there. That was during the time that this building was not in any shape to have anything in it and we asked for it and we had it down there. And we had the meals spread on the tables outside and had a good time, had a good turn out. But we had several Council meetings in our club. We always enjoyed them.

[Pause]

[Beep of recording equipment]

You were saying you hosted several County Council Meetings. How can you remember the difference between the early Council Meetings and the more recent ones that you attended?

Well, not really in the way they were carried on. Seemed like there were more members that were interested in the County Council back in the earlier years than in the last. But the way they were carried on, not really a lot of difference except like when we had the County Council at the cemetery instead of having the food on a nice table in a building, ours was outside on cement tables with the tablecloths and everything on them. But everybody enjoyed it; it was a nice day and everybody enjoyed being outside. But as far as the programs, I can't remember them being to much difference in what they are now.

Mh-hmm.

Or the last one I attended.

You were talking about how it was here. When you went to other communities, did they have similar types places to have the Council Meeting?

Yes, they did. They had that—in the community building or whatever building was available for those things.

One thing I did notice in the scrapbook, there were often educational programs at the Council Meetings. Was that common?

Yes, I think most of the programs were planned, were planned to be educational programs. And we would exchange gifts at Christmas time, you know, and the, each one of the clubs would bring a covered dish to help the host club with the meal and therefore it wasn't a big problem for everybody. The host club would furnish the, the bread, the plates and cups and that sort of thing, but the other clubs would bring in a covered dish to help out with the meal.

You mentioned earlier that there were 10 members that started the club. Could you tell us the names of the 10 different members?

Yes, yes, mam, I can. Pauline Williams, I might tell you their maiden names if I know it. It was Pauline Hefner Williams. Emma Hefner Williams. Della Hefner Housley. Laura ?Hardeister? Hefner. Nora Jean Mathis Housley. Daisy Clutts Housley. [Interviewer's Note: Her name was never Daisy Clutts Housley.] Pardon me, Daisy Clutts Loard. And Hollis Clutts Clayton. Eula Hefner Mathis. Della Gray Hefner. And Carl West Smith. That were the 10 charter members. [Interviewee's Note: Add Ola Hefner Mathis as an 11th charter member.]

And they all went to the same church at that, at that time?

Yes, just about it.

Were they all mostly relatives of yours?

Most of them. There was a few that weren't.

Are there any other women through the years that you'd like to bring up, that were important in the club?

Margaret Hackman was a one that led in lots of, of a projects. I guess you'd call them projects. She was over the Valentine making. We made the Valentines and then took them to the nursing home. And then her mother, Adah Pray, was over the, sending the Christmas cards to the prison. And I, I believe that was Cummins Prison, but I'm not really sure on that. There was just some of them that was more outgoing, you know, than others doing all these things, and then the rest of us all helped. But a lot of the ladies have passed away and have moved away, and so I guess that's about the ones that was more active. And I've already mentioned my mother. She was, she was really active in it. She went to a lot of State Meetings and all those different kind of things. And a so just down through the years it's just been different ones a doin' [doing] different things and all of us a helping out and working together that's, that's kept it goin' [going].

Some of the other projects you did—the one thing I’ve been impressed with is your scrapbook. And who did that and . . . ?

My mother, Eula Mathis. And she just, she didn’t start it for the purpose of the club. I think she just did it for her own self. She cut out all reports that came out in the paper, which that was sent in every week, and any activities that we had she would take pictures and maybe write a little article under the picture telling what it was all about. And she just enjoyed doing that and even after she moved to Clinton in 1998, the scrapbook stayed at my house and maybe she’d, some mornings, she’d get up and, or some afternoon, and she’d start putting things in that scrapbook. So she did that even after she moved to Clinton and she worked at it. She spent hours a working at that scrapbook, but she was just mostly doing it for herself and to have a history of the, of the club.

Several years ago, one of the ladies was secretary-treasurer, and for some reason unknown, she decided that there was no reason a keeping all the—well, all the records of the club and she destroyed them. So had it not been for the scrapbook, that mom had kept or started for herself, all that would have been lost. So don’t ever, *[laugh]* don’t ever do away with records! Because who knows when something might come up that you need them. But that happened in our club.

Another thing that I saw when I was looking was in the scrapbook was the wreaths. Or maybe I didn’t see it in there. I remember that at one time the club made wreaths that they sold all over the county—that they made with, pine cones and that kind of thing. Do you remember that? Made ‘em [them] to sell.

No, I don’t

No?

I don’t remember that.

And then another project that I saw that, that the club took on was highway maintenance.

Yes, we did. The club voted to clean the highways for two miles, I believe, to get all the litter on the side of the highways, meet a certain time of the month and to do that and, and we did that for quite a long while.

Did you do that each month? Or several times a year?

It might, it may have just been two or three times a year I'm not really sure on that. I don't think we did it each month.

And some times you sent off cards to prisons?

Yes, we did that at Christmas time. I believe that Mrs. Pray would, she made the envelopes and well, cards—whatever. I don't remember if we made the cards ourselves or, I believe, she took old cards; she kept the old cards and made Christmas cards for the prisoners, out of those. And, I think, she made her own envelopes; maybe we helped her some. I don't remember that, but I know we sent cards to the prisoners.

And you sent cookies to service men, once?

Yes, I think so. Maybe, I don't know just how long we did that, but, yes, we did that.

Has that spurred any other memories that you would like to share with us?

I believe that I've about shared all that I can actually remember.

Well, thank you, for all your contributions to the Extension Homemakers and for sharing your time and your memories with us. This has been very enjoyable.

Well, I have enjoyed it myself and hope I have been some help.

The Cooperative Extension Service is part of the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture and offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, marital or veteran status, or any other legally protected status, and is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.