

ARKANSAS EXTENSION HOMEMAKERS COUNCIL
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Official transcript of:

Betty Johnston

Independence County Pfeiffer Extension Homemakers Club Secretary

Original recording made 27 February 2012

Old Independence Regional Museum
Batesville, Arkansas

Interviewed by:
Linda Brooks

Independence County Extension Homemakers Council Past President

Transcribed and Edited by:
Laura Reed

Independence County Extension Homemakers Council Member-at-Large

UofA
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System





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Oral History Program

Linda Brooks, Independence County Extension Homemakers Council Past President

27 February 2012

This is an audio recording of Betty Johnston, Independence County Pfeiffer Extension Homemakers Club Secretary. This interview is part of an Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council Oral History Program, and Betty is answering questions asked by Linda Brooks, Independence County Extension Homemakers Council Past President.

Questions and comments by Linda are in boldface type; Betty's responses and comments are in lightface type.

This is the interview with Betty Johnston for the Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council Oral History Program. This is being done February 27, 2012, at the [Old] Independence Regional Museum in Batesville, Arkansas. And, Betty, this is going to be a very informal interview; I want you to share your memories of your involvement with the Extension Homemakers Program—the goods times and challenges. First, I'd like you to give your complete legal name and the city and county in which you presently reside.

Betty F. John-ston [Interviewee's Note: Emphasis on the last syllable.] not Johnson. [*Laughs*] OK, what else?

City?

Batesville, Arkansas.

And county?

Independence.

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

Well, how long? [*Laughs*] Well, I joined in December 1948. It was at that time, I think, it was a Reed or it may have been the Wade, but they changed it to Reed-Wade later on when I joined.

OK, that was a—you joined an Extension Homemaker Club?

Yes.

How did you learn about the Extension Homemakers Program?

Well, I had quit work, and just married. My sister-in-law was active in this club, and we lived next door to each other. And she persuaded me to go with her, and I've been goin' [*going*] ever since. [*Laughs*]

And, you've already given a date, but how long have you been associated with the program, the Extension Homemakers Program?

What would that be, 64 years?

Yes, 'cause [*because*] I was born in [*19*]'48, so . . . [*LB Laughs*]

[*Laughs*] Oh, dear, you know then. [*Laughter*]

What was the first club which you were associated with and what year, and you gave it earlier, so . . .?

Yes, it would be 1948, and it . . . I'm sure it was the Wade at that time.

OK, now are you presently a club member?

Yes, I am.

Can you give the name of the club and the county and the district.

That I'm a member of now?

Uh-huh.

It's the Pfeiffer Extension Homemakers Club, and I do not know the district.
It's Ozark.

Ozark, uh-huh.

And the county?

Independence.

OK. Do you have any special remembrances of that first meeting or that first club?

Well, [*laughs*] really that's been a few years. Yes, because practically all the ladies in the community were members and we met at in the morning and had lunch, and had, usually had a craft in the morning and then the meeting in the afternoon.

And you said earlier why did you join, but would you tell again why you joined?

Well my sister-in-law persuaded me to. [*Laughs*] But I had been a member of the 4-H Club before I married and I knew about the Extension. But then when I graduated from high school, I went to work. And then when I married and I decided I could retire [*laughs*] and let him do the work.

[LB *Laughs*] Why, why have you continued your membership in the Extension Homemakers?

Because I enjoy the meetings and the ladies that come. It's usually the only time we see each other is that one meeting. And we really have a ball. [*Laughs*]

Now how involved did you become? Have you listed the offices and committee chairmans [chairmanships]?

I've been the president, [*laughs*) the vice president, the treasurer, the secretary. And I can't remember the committees. I'm sure there was several that I've belonged to.

Let's see. Have you attended the State Council Meetings? And if so, do you know what year did you attend your first one or do you have any special remembrances of that event?

Well, I've gone one year, because I had children at home and I couldn't go off and leave them for that long. But my daughter is consumer science person [Editor's Note: family and consumer sciences agent] in Little River County, so she persuaded me to go after my husband died. So I went one year. And after that I said, I enjoyed it immensely because you see so many people from around the state and the arts that they had there were fantastic. And I tried to do the one embroidery. At that time I was having carpal tunnel, [*laughs*] so I couldn't do it.

Now how has Extension Homemakers touched your life?

Well, the friendship that we have with the other ladies is the main thing, and knowing they'll pitch in and do anything for you, so.

What has been your favorite event or activity?

Oh, dear. Well, we have been doin' [doing] our clubhouse. We've got grants the last four years to renovate it. And to me that has been more worthwhile than anything else we did. Of course, we spent a lot of elbow grease [*laughs*] doing the fund-raisers and everything.

What has been your least favorite event or activity?

[*Laughs*] Doin' [doing] the manual labor or doin' . . . [*Laughs*]

What changes have you experienced in the Extension Homemakers Organizations?

Well, from the time, I started until now, it is not the same. But, well, it's like everything else, you've gotta [got to] change or you're dying. And they have changed tremendously. The crafts, when I first joined—I mean the things that the Miss Crain [Interviewee's Edit: Ms. Blanche Crain was the Home Demonstrations Agent from 1935 to 1956] did. We, they, the food preservations with canning and anything to dryin' [drying] the fruit, and, of course, we didn't have home freezers—so, but it was always something different every time.

Has Extension Homemakers taught you anything about people?

Well, I suppose it has. [Laughs] It'd [It would] have to. Some are born leaders and the others are followers. And don't put a follower in a leadership because it does not work.

Any other memories, experiences or thoughts that you'd like to share?

[Laughs] I've got a good one, but I wouldn't dare share it!

[LB Laughs] Ahhh. Well, since you don't want to share on recording, thank you for all your contributions to Extension Homemakers and for sharing your time and memories with us.

Thank you. Now turn that off.

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