

ARKANSAS EXTENSION HOMEMAKERS COUNCIL
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Official transcript of:

Wanda Pearson

Member of Hagarville Extension Homemakers Club, Johnson County

Original recording made 11 October 2011

at Clarksville, Arkansas

Recorded, transcribed and edited by:

Betty J. Davis

Johnson County Extension Homemakers Council Secretary





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Wanda B. Pearson, member of Hagarville EHC

11 October 2011

This is an audio recording of Wanda Pearson, member of Hagarville EH Club. This interview is part of an Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council Oral History Program, and Wanda is answering questions asked by Betty Davis, Johnson County EHC Secretary.

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

I am Betty Davis. This is the interview with Wanda Pearson for the Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council Oral History Program. This interview is being done October 11, 2011, at the EHC office in Clarksville, Arkansas in Johnson 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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First, I'd like you to give your complete legal name, and spell it for me.

Wanda Pearson – W-a-n-d-a (initial) B. P-e-a-r-s-o-n

What city and county do you presently reside?

Lamar, Arkansas, Johnson County, Arkansas

Wanda, are you willing to give the Pryor Center permission to make the audio file and transcript available to others?

Yes.

Thank you. 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 good times and the challenges.

Has your association with the Extension Homemakers program been as a member or as a professional or in some other capacity?

As a member. and, also as President of the County, as well as Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and other committee chairs.

How did you learn about the Extension Homemakers program?

Well, I was a 4-H member when I was a kid. And it was at Ludwig and Ludwig had a Home Demonstration Club. And those ladies helped the 4-H'ers, and I just, you know, I just went out of 4-H into EH.

How long have you been associated with the program?

Umm, for 60 years. I've been a member for 60 years in the Hagarville Club. And – and I spent 30 years working with the 4-H youth.

What was the name of the first club you were associated with?

Hagarville Home Demonstration Club.

What year did you join that club?

In 1951.

Are you presently a club member?

Yes.

Could you give me the name of the club you are a member of now?

Hagarville EHC Club.

What county and district is your club in?

Johnson County – Ozark District.

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

Well, umm, I have some memories. I don't have anything really specific. But, some of the older women reorganized and – and most of the, most of us in the area, we joined the club.

Why did you join?

Well, because my Aunt Martha wanted me to! Along with friends. And – and it was something to do, I guess. I had always been interested in – in learning more and more about canning, and I pretty well knew how to sew, but. And, I did give demonstrations in the club on particular installment of zipper. They was – it was – it was learning. It was fun, but still it was a learning. {unclear words}

So your Aunt Martha was a member?

Yes.

What was her last name?

Morris. Aunt Martha, she – she really – kept us going. And she was pretty bossy, but you know, it was all good. And we, we never, we always did what our Aunt Martha wanted us to do, and – and it worked out real well. She was just a good – good teacher, good friend.

Why have you continued your membership?

Well, we just keep learning. There's always – and it's – and we as a club, we help in community projects. And – and we have – things for the young people. And we're, we're really busy all time doing some project or other. And the most recent project that our club did was making pillowcase –

dresses out of pillowcases and they sent them to Africa.

How involved did you become? Could you tell me, like the offices you held?

Well yes, I – I was really involved for a time. When I was younger, I was more involved than I am now. But, I was President and – and we – we, well we met in homes to begin with. And then we, there was a need for a community building and some of us really worked toward that. And along with the District Fire Department, we built – we built a building, and it's the Hagarville Community Building. And our club, as well as community and Fire Department, share this same building. And we'll be having a Halloween party for – for the kids this month. And we're having a fund-raiser this – not a fund – not a fund-raiser this Sunday. We're honoring the Fire Department with a potluck lunch for they and their family.

What about committee chairmanships or any other responsibilities that you held?

Well, I was on lots of committees. And one of the things we did do, in 1976, we sponsored a Bicentennial celebration. And there was various projects. Quilting, historical documents were on display, we had a buggy ride around the neighborhood, and we – we had two or three historical homes and – and it was – it was really an interesting time. And we had like over 200 people that visited with us. They came and – and took part in a lot of it – and some just to – to see what we were doing.

Have you attended State Council meetings? And if so, what year did you attend your first one?

I – I really don't remember the first one. But I was – I was pretty young.

Have you been to several?

Yes, I've been to several. I haven't in recent years, but I have – I used to go every year.

Do you have any special remembrances of one of the events?

I just remember that – that one of our older members, Aulda Meek, she would – she would get me to drive her car and – and we would go to State meetings as well as District meetings. And – and we just – we just really enjoyed it and – and they were all – all so educational, too.

How has Extension Homemakers touched your life?

{whispers unclear words}

Well, it's just been a part of my life for 60 years. It's been a part of my life, and – and I – I've loved every minute of it. It's been a learning experience and we still have workshops and lessons monthly. Some of it's on health and decora – decorating and just numerous things. There's always a lesson every month.

What has been your favorite event or activity?

Probably the Bicentennial Celebration.

What's been your least favorite event or activity?

Oh, I don't think I had any.

So you just enjoyed it all.

{whispered a question}

What changes have you experienced in the Extension Homemakers organization?

Well, there's been lot's of changes. When – when I was first in EH – Home Demonstration Club work, we didn't have a fair building yet. And, they used tents. The women would – would cook and sell food out of tents. And the 4-H'ers had a little building where they did their exhibits. And so, of course, we started working toward having a fair building. And there was a promotion. And the 4-H club, as well as EH club – we could buy bricks. So

much a brick. And so we did. I don't remember how that project turned out, but I know we bought a lot of bricks. And then we were able to have – after the building was built, we were able to have a kitchen. And each club had – had a duty, a shift. But each club always brought pies on their shift. Ever shift they brought pies. And we did that all through the fair. In the fair kitchen we served stew, sloppy joes, hot dogs, tea and coffee and soda pop to the public. And, it was a busy time and we did lots of work. But – but we made money for other projects.

Has Extension Homemakers taught you anything about people?

Yes. There's some that do, and some that don't. {laughter}

Are there any other memories, experiences or thoughts that you would like to share?

No. That's – I guess – that's all.

All right. I want to thank you for all your contributions to Extension Homemakers, Wanda, and for sharing your time and memories with us.

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