

ARKANSAS EXTENSION HOMEMAKERS COUNCIL

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Official transcript of:

Bea Thompson

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





Bea Thompson

ARKANSAS EXTENSION HOMEMAKERS COUNCIL

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Official transcript of:

Bea Thompson

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

Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council

Oral History Program

Ashley Terry, Conway County Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agent

10 February 2012

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

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

I am Ashley Terry. This is the interview with Bea Thompson 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.

The recording, transcript, and any other related materials will be deposited and preserved forever in the Special Collections Department, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville, and the copyright will belong solely to the University of Arkansas.

Are you willing to give the Pryor Center permission to make the audio file and transcript available to others.

Yes.

First I want you to give us your complete legal name, spell it for me, and

then tell me the city and county in which you currently reside.

BEA THOMPSON. B-E-A T-H-O-M-P-S-O-N. I live in Morrilton, Arkansas, in Conway County.

OK. Bea, this is going to be a very informal interview I 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?

I've been with the Extension Homemakers almost all my married life, and I have enjoyed all of it.

So that's great. How did you learn about the Extension Homemakers Program?

My mother-in-law.

Your mother-in-law? So that's how you became a member, so how long has it been that you been associated with the program?

I've been in it 70 years.

Seventy years, I bet you have seen a lot of changes in 70 years.

Oh, my, I sure have seen a lot of changes.

What was the first club you were associated with?

My first club was called the Oppelo, and we were called Home Demonstration Club and then a few years later when we had children some of us decided we had to form a night club because we could leave the children home with the daddies and we could enjoy the club meetings. So we called it the Oppelo Twilight E H [Extension Homemakers] Club.

About what year was that?

It was in [19]'56, 1956.

So you are currently a present club member, correct?

Yes.

What is the name of the club, and county, and district that you are currently a part of?

I'm still in Oppelo Twilight E H [Extension Homemakers] Club and we are in Conway County.

And that is the Ozark District, correct?

Yes.

Do you have any special remembrances of the first meeting or that first club that you were in?

Well, back then, only the main thing I remember is that we met at a lady's house and she was a Mrs. Ware, I don't remember her first name, and I remember her saying that a monkey can't climb a greased pole, so don't grease your bread bowl. [AT *Laughs*] When you put your bread in to rise because it can't rise if you grease that bowl.

[Laughs] That's a good quote, I'll have to remember that. So you said you joined because of your mother-in-law, what was some of the main reasons that you kind of decided to keep going to the club meetings?

Well, I enjoyed the programs and I enjoyed the fellowship and was learning how to be a good homemaker.

So how involved have you become over the years, are there any offices, committees, anything like that you served on?

Well I've been present of the Conway Council twice, I've been secretary, I've been president, I've been reporter, I've been devotional leader a number of times over my 70 years, and in my local club I am presently reporter for the County Council.

So you have had quite your share of responsibilities over the years.

I sure have.

Have you attended any State Council Meetings?

Yes, lots of them.

Do you remember what the first time you went to a meeting?

I really don't; it was probably, it was probably in the [19]'50's, 1950's along there, I think.

Do you know about how many meetings you've been to?

[Laughs] Well, we used to meet in the colleges and I've been to Searcy, I've been to Fayetteville, Tech, I've been State Teachers at that time, I've been to Magnolia, Arkadelphia. I saw a lot of colleges I would not have seen otherwise.

So what is something you enjoyed during the state meetings, what is something you enjoyed the most?

Well, I enjoyed meeting the members of the other clubs over the state. I enjoyed and learning how they were doing in their clubs, what they were doing.

So meeting other people and seeing how other counties do things is a good experience. When you have been a part of Extension Homemakers for a while, so what is something that has touched your life about Extension Homemaker?

[Pause] Something that has touched my life?

Uh-huh.

Well, as I've said, it has made me a better homemaker, and I enjoyed sewing and enjoyed cooking. I really enjoyed that part of it.

So all aspects of Extension Homemakers has kinda [kind of] had an impact on your life.

On my life, uh-huh.

Is there a favorite, a favorite event or activity that kinda [kind of] sticks out in your mind?

Well, in one thing that I enjoyed when we started our night club was the fact that we could be able to sit there and enjoy the meeting and not have to be chasing our kids all over the house. And another thing we used to go to Petit Jean Mountain and spend the night at the CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps] Camp for our summer outings and we would go to the mountain and have picnics for our whole family and I enjoyed that.

That sounds like a lot of fun. So what has been your least favorite event?

[Laughs] Cleaning the fair building!

And that is a every-year event. [Laughter]

That's the one thing that I dreaded every year. [Laughs]

It's not hard to forget that, I guess, it's every year.

What are some changes that you have experienced over the years as an Extension Homemaker member?

Well, of course, for one thing we were H D [Home Demonstration clubs then and now we are E H [Extension Homemakers] and we use to do a lot of crafts, a lot more crafts than we do now. So to me that's one of the bigger changes that I see because we like to do those crafts.

So would you like to see more crafts incorporated,

I would, I would love to do more crafts.

Has EH [Extension Homemakers] taught you anything about just people in

general?

Well, yes, really, I find that some people want to work and some of them want to be part of the fellowship.

Uh-huh, I can understand that just seeing people you know all the time and meeting friends through [the] social part becomes a big part of that.

Yes.

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

Well, one memory that really sticks out was that when we were staying at Arkansas Tech [University at Russellville], one year for the State Meeting, the bed that I was in was horrible. The springs stood up and jabbed me in the back and I got up in the middle of the night and turned my mattress over and that didn't help any and that was the boys' dorm, and I feel sorry for that poor boy that had to sleep on that bed all year because it was terrible.

[AT Laughs]

So that's a big difference as far as the state meetings go, we are not staying in the dorms anymore, so that's a good thing.

But you know I enjoyed going from college to college, so as I said I got to see colleges that I otherwise would never have seen.

Good to see different campuses and different schools to see how some are different and have changed over the years. So is there anything else?

Well, some of the dorms we stayed in we had to walk up two to three flights of stairs and that wasn't very exciting. *[Laughs]*

I bet you got a lot of exercises.

We got our exercise all right!

AEHC Oral History Program
Thompson/Page 7

Well, thank you, Ms. Bea, for all your contributions to the Extension Homemakers and sharing your time and memories with us during this interview.

Thank You!

The Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service 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.