

ARKANSAS EXTENSION HOMEMAKERS COUNCIL
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Official transcript of:

Joann Thompson

Retired Extension Home Economics Agent and
Member of Oark Extension Homemakers Club, Johnson County

Original recording made 12 October 2011

at Clarksville, Arkansas

Recorded, transcribed and edited by:

Betty J. Davis

Johnson County Extension Homemakers Council Secretary





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Joann Thompson, member of Oark EHC and retired Extension Home Economics Agent

12 October 2011

This is an audio recording of Joann Thompson, member of Oark Extension Homemakers Club and retired Arkansas Home Economist Agent. This interview is part of an Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council Oral History Program, and Joann is answering questions asked by Betty Davis, Johnson County EHC Secretary.

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

I am Betty Davis. This is the interview with Joann Thompson for the Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council Oral History Program. This interview is being done October 12, 2011, at the home of Joann Thompson 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.

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.

First, I'd like you to give your complete legal name, and spell it for me.

I'm Joann Woodson Thompson. J-o-a-n-n (all together, no capital a)
Woodson W-o-o-d-s-o-n Thompson T-h-o-m-p-s-o-n I reside in Clarksville,
Arkansas, Johnson County.

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

Yes, I am.

Joann, 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?

In 1970, I began work with the Extension Homemakers, but because I was a Home Economist, a County Agent, and then in 1995, after 25 years, I joined the Oark Extension Homemakers Club. And that has been for 16 years.

How did you learn about the Extension Homemakers Program?

When I was very tiny, and it was during the Depression, 1939 approximately, we rented out a studio apartment in our home in Searcy, Arkansas. And the Home Demonstration Agent, Miss Agnew, rented that apartment. I remembered Miss Agnew so much because she was very special to me. I have clippings that my Mother saved where it said, “Little Miss Joann Woodson passed out the Christmas presents to all the Extension Employees at their Christmas Party.”

My association with the Extension Homemakers program was actually after teaching 15 years in big city high schools. I had a Master of Science Degree and came back to Arkansas after being out of state. And went to the Extension Office for an interview. They were looking for a good teacher! I was a teacher! I did not know anything about being a Home Economist, about the Extension Homemakers prob – program, but I did learn quickly. I first went to Ashley County in Southern Arkansas and down on the Louisiana line in the East side. And spent three years there. Then I went to Columbia County down on the Louisiana line, the Southwest corner. And spent seven years there before coming to Johnson County. In Johnson County I worked for 15 years before retiring.

As I retired, I wanted to be in the clubs. I loved the EH women and wanted to continue the work of the Extension Homemakers program. And, I had been working all the time I was in Johnson County on the history, with the Council officers. And we collected a large number of things to send to the

archives. Because in 1988 we were requested by the University of Arkansas, Special Collections Division, to collect anything we could on the history, any old scrapbooks, copies of anything, yearbooks, secretary books, anything that we could send to the University of Arkansas, Special Collections to put in their archives on the Extension Homemaker Program. We were able to collect a lot of things over the years that I worked, and since I've retired.

Have you attended State Council meetings, and what year did you attend your first one?

Well, the first one was when I started working for Extension. And, I attended every State Council meeting with the EH women, and enjoyed them all. We visited all of the colleges because they were glad to invite us. In the old days, old records that I had, they went to Camp Pike, 1933 women were setting up tents, staying in tents! And they thought this was a vacation! They loved it! They stood in line at the chow hall, and this was a vacation to them! They got away from the home and away from the kids for a few days. They went in trucks, the back of trucks, in dresses! And we have records of all those things that we have given to the archives.

Do you have a special remembrance of any particular event at State that you went to personally?

Well, there were a lot of things. I remember one time that we went to Searcy, to Harding College, and I took a woman that was in her late 90's from Columbia County. And so I had to park real close and while we were in the meeting I had one of the security guards come in and say that the President needed a parking place and could he move my car. And I gave him my keys and when he came back he said, "You're car wouldn't start." And I said, "Did you put on your seat belt?" And he said, "No." And he thought I was being a smart-alec. I wasn't. I said, "It has a safety device. It won't start unless you put on your seat belt." So he took my keys and he moved my car so the President could park in that place again. And I thought that was extremely funny!

One year in Jonesboro, I took my little 10-pound Chihuahua, and we stayed

in – on the fourth floor, we went up the back stairs and he stayed with us. I didn't have a place to leave him and he was real good about not barking.

But I enjoyed so much, I was really a teacher, I did not know anything about Extension, about being a Home Demonstration Agent when I started. But, the interviewer I had, convinced me that they wanted someone with as much education as I had and I wanted to be a teacher, and that – that was the right spot for me. And he was certainly right because over the years it has enriched my life so much. And I hope that I have enriched the lives of others that I've worked with.

In Ashley County, I had an assistant, who was a Home Economist, and we had 15 aides that went into the low-income homes. We trained them what to teach the homemakers. Nutrition, better nutrition for their children. How to improve their family life, how to improve the lives of their children.

And in the Columbia County, I also had an assistant Home Economist and we trained our aides – that – and we had 15 aides there, that went into the low-income homes and worked with them on improving their life and improving the lives of their children. And many times they did not understand how to buy, how to cook, what to – to improve the nutrition – how to improve the nutrition for their children. And they were thirsty for classes. And all the time – from the time I started, they were so thirsty for any kind of classes to learn. They loved to learn the classes. They had classes on sewing machine repair. They had classes on nutrition; they had classes on all the things that I had been teaching in big city high schools, a hundred and fifty students a day. And it was just as rewarding to work with homemakers as to work with students in high school. So I was really in my element.

I also enjoyed going to the homes, helping the homemakers learn ways to stretch their money, because their money was often so limited. And their lives were so limited. How could they improve their – their home situation? Their – outside of their home, inside of their home, planning a home, everything to do with – back then we even had many houseplants and we worked them on – worked with them on planning a kitchen and planning of their new homes that they were going to build. So it was really a wonderful job.

How has Extension Homemakers touched your life?

Well, I think that with every person that I worked with, I learned something, too. It may have shocked me – but I learned people live differently and even if they made a small improvement, it was a big one for them. And, I think, that this really was wonderful working with the different personalities, the different lifestyles, and the different counties because they were so different. Because when I moved to Johnson County, I was working with mountain people and even a – a few miles, makes a big difference on lifestyles. And what they consider important in their lives and ways that you can find to help them improve those things.

What has been your favorite event or activity?

Well, I think, probably teaching them sewing machine repair and repairing their sewing machines for them. In the big city high schools where I worked, the repairmen were paid the same whether they came one time or 50 times, so they were thrilled to teach me. And when I had a 150 students a day and another teacher had a 150 students a day, in that same room, on double session, the sewing machines could go down quick. And they needed to be repaired quick or there was a discipline problem. I could pick up the phone and have a part.

With the homemakers, I could teach them how to use that machine so it wouldn't do that again. I could also, fix it for them so they didn't have to pay someone to do it. And it was very – in these areas where I worked – it was very hard to find someone that was good at repairing sewing machines, even if you had to pay for them. So, it was a need that they had. Some – to meet their needs – I think that was probably – that was the thing I enjoyed the most, is if I could meet the homemakers' need, then that really improved my life.

Even now, as a retired person, I get phone calls to come fix their machine. And when I go, and I fix it, I say, “Try me first because I'm free.” And I also say, “If I can't fix it, it ruins my day.” But it really improves my day if I can fix it or if I can teach them something. I was recently called by an EH member who was in her late 80's, who was making bridesmaids' dresses for

her granddaughter's wedding. And I could not believe that she was using this crawly material. She had three machines that were broken because they had finally quit. She used one; it quit. She used another one; it quit, so she was down to desperation. I was able to fix two of the three, and the third, I know, was a factory part that was made wrong. It was a new machine that her daughter had had for a number of years and never taken out of the box. And I know that was a factory part that was not correct. And so if I told her – it just really improved my day. And it certainly improved hers – cause she got all those dresses made. I couldn't believe that she did that. I wouldn't have done that and I'm a lot younger! {laugh}

So all of these experiences even though, you know, they've been over the years, I think the enrichment of just improving someone's life – solving a problem for them – if I could just solve a problem for them. But I've got to tell one memory. My daughter, when I was in Columbia County, her little girlfriend said, "What does your Mother do?" And she said, "She's a Home Economist." And she said, "But what does she do?" Says, "Well she tells people what not to do cause she's already done it." And at the time it hurt my feelings so bad. {laugh} And the older I got the more I realized, she's right! {laugh} So I really appreciate that memory.

I do want to mention that when Miss Agnew was a Home Economist, she had to be single. They did not – if you got married – they just didn't hire married women in the first place and if you got married, you didn't have a job. And I don't know what year that they changed that. But, it was changed over the years. And, also the titles of the Home Economists were changed over the years. And the title I had in – when I first started working in Ashley County was County Extension Home Economics Leader. In Columbia County, it was County Extension Home Economics Leader. In Johnson County, it was County Extension Agent-Home Economics. But, regardless, the old term was – regardless, the old term was Home Agent for Home Demonstration Agent. And in those times they did not work with anyone except Home Demonstration members. Now, of course, as the times change, they work with the public and Extension Homemaker members. But the majority of my work, really, as far as the number of people, was with the public. I gave classes for the public and we had members that attended.

Do you remember a least favorite event or activity?

Well, I experienced in my open jeep, in Ashley County, a large group of approximately 20 razorback hogs, wild razorback hogs. I was going to a EH woman's home out in a very desolate area on the Louisiana line, and down a little, tiny dirt trail in an open jeep with my foot hanging out and there were woods on one side and this large number of razorback hogs all snortin' and screaming ran across in front of me and scared me to death. I remember that very vividly, in Ashley County.

What changes have you experienced in the Extension Homemakers Organization?

Well, since 1970, I've been – since I was in different counties and I had assistants in two counties and not in Johnson County, I think that one main change is Home Economists can now be County Agents. They can be the Staff Chairman. They were not back then. And I think that's one major change that I've noticed. Also, many counties have 4-H Agents. We had a 4-H Agent in Ashley County; we had a 4-H Agent in Columbia County and a 4-H Agent later on in Johnson County. So I think this – these are changes. I think titles have changed over the years. Partly I – because of – of necessity and partly just trying to make new improvements. They have changed the title of Home Demonstration Agent or Home Demonstration – just the club. They have changed this over the years.

They tried to change the name Extension Homemakers to {laugh} another title and the Extension Homemakers revolted. And they said we want it called Extension Homemakers. And so we went back to Extension Homemakers. But, regardless of what we're called, there is a Home Economist, there is an organization and whether they're called Home Demonstration, whether they're called Extension Homemakers, we are clubs within a county, in a council that is made up of all the clubs within a county, and all of the organizations in that county try to improve their community.

The original goal was to improve the family and to help the homemaker to be educated and to improve the family life. Because if you im – if you teach – and help a homemaker with education, you're educating a whole family.

But now it's gone with the public, also, and I think that this is a change in times and as we continually change, our lifestyles over the years, it will continue to change.

In 1988 when they asked us to start saving things for the archives at the University of Arkansas, I was thrilled because we had been working so hard to have all the Past Presidents listed in our EH yearbook, each year. To have all the past County Extension Home Economists listed in our EH book each year. To have some history about our county because the older people were dying off. And as these older members died off, our history was being lost.

Has Extension Homemakers taught you anything about people?

Well, I just like to work with people. I guess that's part of it. I don't guess I ever found anyone that I didn't like to work with. I remember Ms. Gardner at Hagarville Club calling me one Saturday morning and saying, "I'm canning green beans and I can't get the pressure to come up on my canner." "What can I do?" And I said, "I'm bringing my Mother's canner that I use and we will use it to can your green beans if we can't figure out what's wrong." And I went to her house and we canned green beans. She needed a new seal. I told her where to go to buy a new seal to fit her antique canner because I was used to using an antique canner. Also, I held regular sessions at Wal-Mart to test canners for people to make sure they were working correctly. But I did a lot of home food preservation help with people in their homes.

I remember one homemaker in the Oark area that was new to canning. And she said, "Something's happening to my corn." "I don't know what." So I went. She had been cutting the corn off the cob. It had been sitting long enough that it was souring. Then she was canning it in the pressure canner. It didn't work. It was exploding. And I had to tell her that her 30 jars of corn had to be thrown out. And that real – it not only hurt her feelings, it hurt my feelings. {laugh} I felt so sorry for her, but she learned that she could not can that way.

And every homemaker that did not have a canning book, if I had a canning book from a previous year, I would give them a book, because I did not

know if they would buy one. If it was a person I knew personally and knew she would go buy one, I would tell her to go buy it. But, if it was a person I didn't think would buy that or couldn't buy that, I would give them a canning book. And I also had all of the food preservation publications that we had in the Extension Office in an envelope and we had this packet ready for them. And we would hand out the packet and we would say, "Everything Extension has is USDA approved." "Read it." "Study it." "Do what they say." Everything in the canning book, Kerr, and Ball and Bernardine, at that time, is USDA approved. And they also recommend Extension publications.

So, if you're going to do food preservation, don't waste your food or your time not doing it correctly. There were many, many classes on food preservation. There were many classes on all the things that they were interested in and one thing was making things that they could use as gifts to stretch their family income because they were over stretched with gifts.

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

I'm trying to think, because there were so many. Many times I had an elderly woman call me and say, "My sewing machine won't work." And I would get to their house and always I would take a machine apart and clean it and put it back together before I ever used it. And sometime, I didn't know what I did, but it would be fixed. But then I would teach them how to take it apart, and if I thought they had the ability to do it. Because I had taught classes in school on doing this. I thought maybe they would learn to do it, and many did. And many taught others. And that was the whole thing of our program with Extension Homemakers, is they would learn from me, and later on leaders.

Originally the Home Demonstration Agent did everything. She did not work with the public, she worked with you as a member. That's why they had enormous numbers of members, because they wanted the Home Demonstration Agent to help them. And also, they – over the years, they changed this so that the Home Demonstration Agent did not go to every club

meeting and give every lesson. They changed this so that they had AEHC Extension Homemaker leaders.

I remember that when I first took the job in 1970, I went back to Searcy and I told my Dad that I did not take a job with the Little Rock School System, that I had taken a job being a Extension Homemaker Agent, and also at that time County Extension Agent-Home Economics Leader. And he was so upset. He said, “Why did you do that? I can’t believe you did such a thing!” “I can’t believe that you want to make mattresses, they make mattresses, you don’t want to make mattresses!” “You have a Master’s Degree, a Bachelor of Science Degree from the Uni – Oklahoma State University, you have a Master’s Degree from Arizona State University you have 25 hours past your Master’s, why would you take this job? They make mattresses!! You don’t want to make mattresses!” Well, he remembered Miss Agnew made mattresses in 1939. She demonstrated to people how to make mattresses. And that’s what he remembered that a Home Demonstration Agent did. So for many years I said, “Daddy, I haven’t made a mattress yet.” And I love this, I loved that – being able to tell him that.

Well, I’m trying to think of other memories I might have. Many times when I worked with these elderly women, on their sewing machine – experience of not working. It would simply be the needle was in wrong. And one time I took a class of seventh graders, I believe it was. I had a – I had a class come in from study hall from another school, and, they were seventh-grader boys. And I taught them how to take a sewing machine apart, clean it, put it back together and test it. I only had one boy, out of seventh grade – now that is really low, because I was used to high school teaching. But I taught this class how to take that machine apart, how to clean it, put it back together and test it. I only had one boy that the machine didn’t work, and it was – the needle was in wrong.

Well, 9 times out of 10, the elderly women had the needle in wrong. And they would say, “But I’ve used this machine for 50 years.” But, somewhere along the line they got that needle in wrong. And that was why their machine didn’t work. And I was always glad it was something that simple.

One time I walked in and the woman handed me all the parts to her upper

tension that had come apart – all the springs, everything {laugh} loose. A couple of times I told the woman, “You have worn this machine out. You need to get a new sewing machine.” Because I knew they could afford it, and they needed a new machine! They’d worn it out. But most of the time I loved the old machines. The ones with the brain, you can do very little with. Fortunately very few people had the machines with the brains that did everything – and all the embroidery and everything. So, you know, I was working with older products and these people were just so thankful. They would buy a machine at a garage sale and I’d get it working for them. I kept a rose stone to file the parts down where people had beat the parts to death having the needle in there wrong.

I really enjoyed my time working as an Extension Home Economist. We had fairs every year in every county. In Ashley County our fair was fairly small, but they worked very hard on it. They cared a lot about their history. And when I left there, they bought a beautiful, antique brick home for their museum. Hamburg is a very small place. And I could not believe they had raised all this money to buy this home for a museum – they keep it up. And they have put all of their history in there. I have sent things to Ashley County, and to the University Archives on Ashley County, that I had left. There are so many things I threw away. I’m so sorry that I threw them away because at the time I didn’t think they were important.

And in Columbia County we had big fairs, very big fairs. And the EH women did the work. The Fair Boards ran the show, but the EH women did the work. They were the superintendents. They saw the exhibits got there. They had fabulous workers and the Fair Board even had a banquet for the superintendents in Columbia County, every year. So the fairs were a big thing with the public. And all the clubs tried to have educational exhibits that would be interesting to the public. Now you might think they were trying for blue ribbons or sweepstake, because there were some people that that was the most important thing. But the most important thing to me was that the public learned something and that they enjoyed it. Because there were people that came out of the woodwork that you couldn’t believe lived in that county. That was the only time they ever came to civilization – was at the fair time, in all three counties. And, they learned things at the fair. We had handouts everywhere. There were food preservation canning

handouts and information on the Extension Homemaker Clubs. They may never join a club, but they may get to know someone. And the whole purpose of the Extension Homemakers Organization over the years has been to make improvements not only in their life, their family life, their children's lives and anyone they're in contact with, but with the public. And I think that this is – has really been a blue ribbon event. So actually the fairs have been a big part of the Extension Homemakers Program.

When I retired in 1995, the Extension Homemakers in Johnson County made me a quilt. It is a friendship quilt. The clubs made blocks and every member embroidered their own name within that block. And it took several blocks. My quilt ended up being 10 feet long. {laughter} I have a king-size bed but it's even big on my king-size bed. But they have every member's name embroidered in it. And I plan to give this to the Historical Society because they have managed, in Johnson County, to have a museum of their own. I have tried to give copies of everything to the Archives and to the museum, if not the originals.

In – around 19 – no, around 2001, one of my elderly EH clubs retired. They had gotten too old. They had to live with kids, they were in nursing homes, and they didn't have but a few active members left. And one of the women who was – who is now 103 years old in 2011, called me and said, "We have all of this stuff that we had in the building, in the trash. Do you want it? If you want it, I'll save it for you, in a box." And I said, "Yes, I want it," because I didn't know what it was. She didn't know what it was. They were just emptying the building out, because the building that they'd been leasing all the years, was an old school building and it was sold eventually as a home – Sulphur Springs Club.

And so, I eventually got around to going through that box, and I found treasurers. I found a fair program from 1937 when they had it at Legion Island. And it just happened that this woman, Aulda Meek, had the picture of the baby contest, for that program. And it was when she had Dale, her baby that was in the contest. And her comment was, "The woman that won that, had a fat, fat baby and she wasn't even from this county." And that tickled me to death. And also – it was – in a – in that box of stuff was a

State Meeting program. And the State Meeting program had Miss Agnew's name in it! I was so thrilled to see Miss Agnew's name in that program. I found programs, and all the EH ladies knew that I cared about history, so they would say, "I'll let you copy this. You can't have it, but you can copy it." And I would copy it. And even since my retirement I've collected another enormous container for the museum. So, I've loved to do this over the years.

But we enjoyed our companionship. I think the club members enjoyed the companionship of going to club and getting to know members better. And everyone has different lifestyles, everyone has different values, and everyone likes different food, but they like to share recipes. And from the time I came to Johnson County in 1980, we started publishing members' recipes, at least once a year. There were a few times, twice a year, where we had the name of the member and the club she belonged to, and her recipe. And so, I had a total collection of that for the museum in Johnson County, and that's in Clarksville. And so I hope that they will be able to afford to rent the building for the museum and keep this open. So far they're keeping it open with volunteers. And I think that this is real important, for people that come into the county, to visit the county, to go to the museum. They may be trying to find a relative, trying to find a cemetery, yeah.

In 1960 (sometime), before I started working, the State asked at a State Meeting – they asked them to go into the cemeteries in their communities and write down the names on the tombstone and the information. There were no records of anything, anywhere. And so the EH women went into the cemeteries and made records. They sent them to Little Rock. Now there was a record in the office, but it was kept in Little Rock. Well, after I came up here, and it was around 1985, they asked if we wanted our records, because they were going to throw everything away or make it available to anyone that wanted it – if we didn't want it. So some counties said they didn't want it, they had a record in their county, but they weren't going to publish it. And they didn't go down there and get it. And it was left open to anyone that wanted it. And so some of the Historical Societies and counties got it and published it, and made money off it. Well, it wasn't up to date, and there were cemeteries that were missing. So when we took it in '85, we started trying to get – and we did have officers that went down to

Little Rock and got it, and brought it home. And we started trying to figure out what we were going to do. Well, we didn't have any money, but we were determined. And the Council officers, and I remember Ruth DeMoss was the Council President at that time, and she was determined they was going to be published in this county. She was a retired teacher. And so we – we really worked at it.

We went into the cemeteries ever – went all over the county and recorded things that weren't recorded, tried to update it, tried to get cemeteries that weren't on record and we really did the best we could. Then we fed the District Rally, and that made us a lot of money. So we were able to pay a secretary to type it legal ready, or actually printer ready so that the printer could take it and just print it, just like it was. And so we used that money and then we started making other money. We had fund-raisers, we had homemade quilts, we had clubs that would donate club top – quilt tops, and then other clubs would quilt them and then they would have {unclear word} – sell chances on them at the fair, And we made enough money to pay a printer. He did the printing on a handshake. He printed our cemetery records in 1986 on a handshake. And within a year, we had him paid.

I really think that the cemetery records, even though the book was not real substantial. It was just a {exhale} really soft paperback – {laugh} a soft paperback book and it did – and it didn't stay together real well. At least we got one in the Archives under Johnson County, at least we gave one to the Museum, at least we had one in the library, at least we had one in the Extension Office, and we sold them to everyone that came for their cemetery celebrations in the spring or fall or their graduation celebrations, so they – people would know that we had them. We sold all those old books down to nothing. And then also, I people come in and say, "I want you to put this in the next book." So I kept all of the updates or requests or mistakes. Because I – there were mistakes where we'd left someone off, you know, in a cemetery. And people were very upset if that was done. But we did the best we could. We had women come in these cemeteries, nothing was laid out, nothing was done {laugh} correctly, like taking a cemetery record. You know, we had women just writing down names and the information that was on the stone.

And one special memory I have of doing a cemetery. An elderly woman came in and she said, "You don't have my cemetery. It's just a little ways past Yell Cemetery and Yell Church, up in the Oark – Oark area, just a little ways past it. And it's on the left and it's down this little lane." She told me what it looked like, you know. And so I got in my little, tiny old Toyota with my big black Lab that weighed a 115 pounds and we went up there to take the cemetery. It was 15 miles to the cemetery past where she said it was just a little ways. But it was well kept up; it had a chain-link fence around it. But the chain-link fence was three-feet high, and it was down in the woods, close to the river. And, I went down there and I was writing all of the information down, and my Lab was in there with me, and all of a sudden, all – all the hair stood up on my dog. Awww, it scared me to death. And I held my hand up for her not to make a noise, and she was frozen with every hair standing up and I was scared to death and there was all this rustling of leaves and rustling of leaves all around in the woods, and we were frozen. It was getting close to dark, but it wasn't dark yet. And my – my old Toyota was too far from the gate for me to make a run for it. And so we just stayed there, real still. It was a bear and he ambled off.

And when I got in – we got in the Toyota and I took off for {laugh} my first EH members house. And it was all gravel, of course, I had a flat. It was a back tire and I drove on that flat 15 miles, and when I pulled up in Ann Pfeifler's yard, her husband was out there changing a flat on his jeep. And I told him my experience. And he said, "Don't you know you're not supposed to drive on a tire when it's flat?" And I said I wasn't stopping for anything as long as this thing would go. {laughing} And luck like a woman, I didn't ruin the wheel or whatever I was supposed to have ruined. {laughing} But I did love it. You know, him saying, "Don't you know you're not supposed to drive on a flat?" {laugh} If he'd had my experience, which he didn't seem to think that was very scary, it was very scary for me! {laugh} I didn't want that bear, he could come under that – that fence that was three-feet high. And I assume they had that so that if wild animals got in there, it was so desolate in that area, that they could get out. That was the only thing I ever came up with.

But their {laugh} – their ideas of just a little ways, I found out wasn't always

true. I knew the county like the back of my hand. I had a jeep that I kept open. I ran the heater in the winter, but most of the time I didn't close it up. And I loved going all the back roads. I knew all the back roads. As soon as I'd get off from work, my dog and I would – would start riding the back roads. And we would learn every single road in this county. So when someone would start telling me where they lived and how to find it, I knew exactly where they were. Now after being retired 16 years, I don't know anything. And it hurts because I enjoyed doing that. I have a dog – I still have a dog, a different dog, the third Lab, but I don't have an open Jeep anymore. {laugh}

Joann, I want to thank you so much for all your contributions to Extension Homemakers and for sharing your time and memories with us.

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