

ARKANSAS EXTENSION HOMEMAKERS COUNCIL
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Official transcript of:

Helen Wolf

Logan County Extension Homemakers Council Member

Original recording made 5 April 2012

at Scranton, Arkansas

Recorded and edited by:

Hilda Turner

Prairie View Extension Homemaker Club President of Logan County

Transcribed by:

Leigh Ann Askins

Logan County Extension Service Administrative Support Supervisor

UofA
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System





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Oral History Program

Hilda Turner, Prairie View Extension Homemaker Club President of Logan County

5 April 2012

This is an audio recording of Helen Josephine Wolf, a member of the Logan County Extension Homemakers Council. This interview is part of an Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council Oral History Program, and Helen is answering questions asked by Prairie View Extension Homemakers Club President, Hilda Turner.

Questions and comments by Hilda are in boldface type; Helen's responses and comments are in lightface type.

I am Hilda Turner. This is the interview with Helen Wolf for the Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council Oral History Program. This is being done April 5, 2012, at 628 Parks Road in Scranton, Arkansas, in Logan 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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Are you willing to give the Pryor Center permission to make the audio file and transcript available to others?

Yes, I'd be glad to.

First, I'd like you to say your complete legal name.

Helen Josephine Wolf.

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Now would you spell that for me please?

H-E-L-E-N, J-O-S-E-P-H-I-N-E, W-O-L-F.

Thank you. Tell me the city and the county in which you presently reside.

Scranton, Logan County, Arkansas.

Thank you. Helen Wolf, 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.

What has been your association with the Extension Homemaker Program?

[No response]

I would like for you to tell me a little bit about your association with the Extension Homemaker Program and tell me how long have you been associated with this program.

Sixty-six years. No, 46 years.

Forty-six years and you first joined in the year 1966?

Yes.

Yes. You joined in 1966 so that makes it a total of 46 years that you have been . . . What was your first club that you joined?

It was called the Prairie View Extension Club—Home Extension Club.

And you're still a member of that today. So have you ever been affiliated with any other Extension Homemakers Club?

No, I've always lived here in Prairie View.

And, so this is your home club for 46 years?

Yes.

Can you tell me anything about your very first club meeting? Do you remember the first time that you went to this club meeting?

Yes, I was thrilled because I already knew the members and I wanted to join them. And I liked them very much and it made me happy to be there [*laughs*].

And why did you join? What happened in your life that caused you to join the Extension Homemakers Club at that particular time?

Because my Mother belonged to it before I did and I always wanted and I visited with her a few times while she was going and I always wanted to belong.

And, prior to that, were you working or why did you not join until that time?

I stayed at home because I had 10 children to raise [*laughs*].

And so then you went to join and how old was your youngest child? Or why did you choose that particular time to join?

Because my youngest one started in school—first grade. I didn't want to go while they were still at home and would have to go with me. And the first day she was in school, the last of my children, I joined the club.

Can you describe for me what you did at the beginning or what type of meetings did [they] have when you first joined the club?

Well, we had business meetings like we have now for the Extension Homemakers deal in Fayetteville. But, we also quilted a lot. We would quilt all day and would raise the money to pay towards our club house.

So, tell me about the club house. The Prairie View Extension Homemakers has its own house, right?

Yes.

And, how did you acquire that?

Well, it was a home that someone was through with [*laughs*] and we moved it onto this property, which belongs to the Methodist Church—it's still on their property. And they've been nice enough to help us in a lot of ways.

So actually Prairie View Extension Homemakers and the Methodist Church share a house and you have that for your meetings?

Yes.

How did you manage to furnish that house and maintain it?

You know, I don't remember how we originally paid for it, but it probably wasn't too much. But we maintained it our self, of course . . . [*phone rings*]
[*pause*]

[Unclear words]. So your house was donated . . . We've started back after a pause. We had to pause for the telephone ringing. So now we're going again. We were talking about the house and your quilting to earn money to help maintain. Did you quilt quilts for other people or . . . ?

Yes.

Oh, OK. So you had quilting and you quilted all day and earned money to help maintain this house?

That's right.

That is an interesting part. Why have you continued your membership with this group for the last 46 years?

I enjoy the meetings very much, the people that belong to it and I don't know I just enjoy it—always have.

Do you have any special memories of members who were there when you joined the club 46 years ago?

Oh, yes, I knew them personally. They had just retired—four of them—as teachers at the time I joined the club. But there were others that belonged, too. We had a nice-sized little club. We had enough to go around the quilts you know and quilt [*laughs*].

So quilting was really a major part of your Extension Homemakers Club?

Yes.

What other activities did you have?

I don't know. I guess we exchanged recipes or if anyone knew something new they might have showed us, or, I don't know, a new way to make a dress or just anything [*laughs*].

That's good. What about when electricity was introduced into this community? Did the Extension Homemakers play a role in that?

[*Laughs*] They certainly did! They showed us how to use—what are the things we cook in?

Pressure cookers?

Showed us how to use a pressure cooker and to use the electric irons and just anything, any new appliance you know because we weren't use to any of the new appliances—of the electrical appliances.

That's good! Were [*unclear words*]? Have you been involved in holding office or in committees or any special responsibilities?

Not any that amounted to very much [*unclear words*].

But you have participated in all the meetings, the county council meetings?

And we voted on everything. I always voted, you know, but I didn't really take part otherwise.

Any state meetings? Have you ever attended any of the state Council meetings?

I don't believe so.

OK.

I can't remember right now.

Can you think, or tell me, in summary, how Extension Homemakers has touched your life—any impact that it may have made on your life and you and your family?

Well, I guess it's gotten me interested in all the things that I wouldn't have been interested in before that we discuss all those programs. you know, and so forth. And I enjoy going to all of our local meetings, as well as our county meetings—a few of those. I don't know.

The meetings have—at one time it was called Home Demonstration Club and now it is Extension Homemakers Club. There has been an evolvement from demonstrations and doing to more educational programs involving other topics. What do you see as some of the major changes along that?

Well, we've always had someone to take these programs on and describe them through other meetings to the rest of us. That's part of our program, you know, to use the programs we get from Fayetteville from the Extension office.

So are there any other changes that you have experienced in Extension Homemakers organization?

[Laughs] I don't know. If so, we made changes so slowly I don't remember.

Can you tell me what Extension Homemakers has taught you about people?

[*Laughs*] I don't know. But all I know is I've enjoyed every one of the meetings and the people I've met there that I wouldn't have associated with otherwise. You know, it was just, they weren't my closest neighbors or anything. I don't know. All I know is that I enjoyed them all.

So diverse group of people and they're all nice?

That's right [*laughs*].

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

[*Pause*] I don't know of anything.

Are there any particular memories that you have? You mentioned that your Mother was a member of EHC [Extension Homemakers Club].

She taught basketry once that I think had to do with the club. She could make baskets, split baskets from . . . She could take a small white oak tree and cut it down herself and split it open and make these little—until she had these nice little thin strips and weave baskets with them. I think I have one over there on that deal over there that she made. She taught that once.

And you also mentioned earlier to me that your Mother helped make or learned to make mattresses?

Oh, yes.

Could you tell us about that?

Well, I wasn't there when she made them, but she brought two of them home and we loved them. They were excellent. They were just made perfect. They had plenty of filling in them, you know, and they were made real nice. And I still have the needles that she used to make them with [*laughs*].

Are there any other comments that you would like to make about Extension Homemakers?

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I can't think right now [*laughs*].

Would you mind to tell us how old you are?

I'm 96 [*laughs*].

You are 96 and you remember when your Mother was an Extension Homemaker and it was a part of your life when you were growing up and then it became a major part of your life later on?

That's right [*laughs*].

We thank you for all your contributions to Extension Homemakers and thank you for sharing your time and memories with us today.

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