

ARKANSAS EXTENSION HOMEMAKERS COUNCIL  
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Official transcript of:

Kaye Shrout

Montgomery County Extension Agent-Staff Chair

Original recording made 4 October 2011

at Mt. Ida, Arkansas

Recorded, transcribed and edited by:

Darlene Holliday

Montgomery County Extension Homemakers Council President

Vicki Brakefield

Montgomery County Extension Service Administrative Office Supervisor





**Kaye Shroul**

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Oral History Program

Darlene Holliday, Montgomery County Extension Homemakers Council  
President

4 October 2011

This is an audio recording of Kaye Shroul, Montgomery County Extension Agent-Staff Chair. This interview is part of an Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council Oral History Program, and Kaye is answering questions asked by Darlene Holliday, Montgomery County Extension Homemakers Council President.

Questions and comments by Darlene are in boldface type; Kaye's responses and comments are in lightface type.

**I am Darlene Holliday. This is the interview with Kaye Shroul for the Arkansas Extension Homemaker-Homemakers Council Oral History Program. This is being done on October 4, 2011, at the County Extension office in Mt. Ida, Arkansas, in Montgomery 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 am willing to do that.

**First, I'd like you to give your complete legal name and spell it for me, and tell me the city and county in which you presently reside.**

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My name is Kaye P. Shrout, K-A-Y-E, middle initial P, S-H-R-O-U-T. I live in Story, Arkansas, S-T-O-R-Y.

**This is going to be a very informal interview, I want you to share your memories of your involvement with the Extension Homemakers [paper shuffling] Program—and the good times and the challenges.**

**What has been your association with Extension Homemakers Program as a member or as a professional—agent or specialist?**

I've been a county Extension agent for 38 years, November 17 of this year will make 38 years—that's 2011. I was the daughter of an Extension Homemaker. My Mother was in the—in EHC [Extension Homemakers Club] in the [19]'50's and [19]'60's and [19]'70's, so I've had experience—a lot of experiences with Extension Homemakers.

**How did you learn about the Extension Homemakers Program?**

My Mother is the one who told about that and also I knew Mrs. Ola Mae Walton, who was the Extension agent and she also told me.

**How long have you been associated with the program?**

For 38 years

**What has been your association with the Extension Homemakers Program?**

I have been a county Extension agent for 38 years. And then I was a 4-H'er for 10 years and a lot of Extension Homemakers were judging the events that we had for 4-H. And then, as a child I went with my Mother to Extension Homemaker Club meetings because she was a member of the Story EHC [Extension Homemakers Club] Club.

**On this one it—it says “for members only,” but it asks “when was the first club that you were associated with and what year?” Do I need to ask that?**

I'd just go ahead. My mother was in the Story EHC [Extension Homemakers Club] Club and I went with her to meetings. She was a teacher and so she—I was off in the summer and so was she, so we went. And so that was in the early [19]'60's whenever I went to all those EHC [Extension Homemakers Club] Club meetings each summer.

**OK. Are you presently a club member?**

Yes I am. A couple of years ago it was determined that agents could also be EHC members and so I joined then.

**Please name the club and the county and the district that you belong to.**

I am a member-at-large of the Montgomery County Extension Homemakers Council. This is in the Ouachita District.

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

I remember as a child that my mother—we went to many different EHC activities. These were held at the Story school, and they did a lot of skits and games and learning activities. They did canning. But I remember they had a lot of fun. The women of the—the community just loved going to EHC.

They had an activity called Queen-for-a-Day that they recognized one of their EHC members each year. And my Aunt Cindy had lost 100 pounds, so the time I remember the most is when she was the Queen-for-the-day and they told all good things about her, and brought up things from her past, and made her a crown and a little cloak to wear, a robe, and so it was just a fun day for everybody.

**Why did you join?**

I joined because I believe the same values that EHC members have. I believe in

that—that the home is the greatest force that molds character. Things have to happen in the home. I believe in community. I believe the work that is done that helps other people is very important to making a strong community. And EHC people are committed to a strong community and a strong family life and I also believe that.

**Why have you continued your membership?**

Well, I have just started, but I plan to continue it because I love the projects that EHC does. They are always helping less-fortunate people. They are making the community a better place to live. I like those kinds of activities and that's why I like EHC.

**How involved did you—did you become? It says, list the offices, committee chairmanships and special responsibilities you've held.**

As an Extension agent, I have not been active—that active on that aspect of the work. But my Mother was a club officer and my mother-in-law, who was my aunt, was the Council president. So I—I have seen first-hand the leadership that it develops, the opportunities that it offers to empower women, especially women in rural communities.

**Have you attended state Council meetings? And if so, what year did you attend your first one. And do you have special remembrances of that event?**

I only attended state Council meetings, state EHC meetings when I became an agent. But one of my first memories was whenever they had it in Fayetteville, I had just had my baby. And so they gave an award to the—the person attending who had the youngest child and I won it [*laughs*]. I had just had my baby and I lived next door to that and that's the reason why—why I was there.

**How has Extension Homemakers touched your life?**

EHC has touched my life many ways. One is that I have seen the result of kind, caring, community people, who are EHC people, help the less fortunate. And I have seen the difference that it has made in their lives. One of the programs

that we that did was called “Care to Share,” and this was reaching low-income, young homemakers and their children. And I saw the difference that coming to that program made in the lives of these young people. I saw—saw people being encouraged to go to college and completing their college degree. I saw people learning to preserve food for their family. I saw them learning to—learning parenting skills that helped them with their children. So I have seen a lot of wonderful things that EHC has done.

**What has been you favorite event or activity?**

I have a lot of favorites [*laughs*]. But I think the “Care to Share” program was one of my favorites. But the quilt show that we do each year, the “Quartz, Quiltz and Craftz” Festival that is held at Mt. Ida and the spelling on that festival is Q-u-a-r-t-z, Quiltz, Q-u-i-l-t-z, and Craftz, C-r-a-f-t-z. That is a wonderful opportunity for the community to come together.

I also enjoy “Operation Santa Claus,” which provides Christmas presents to approximately two—two to three hundred children in our county each year. I love that, because I know it’s important for children to know that people care about them. And I like the food pantry. Extension Homemakers provide most of the resources, as far as volunteer labor, for the food pantry. And I think that is so important that we have to keep food on the table especially for our children so that their brains and their bodies can develop.

**What has been your least favorite event or activity?**

Actually I have liked it all. I suppose reporting [*laughs*] is one of my least favorites.

**What changes have you experienced in the Extension Homemaker organization?**

When I started 38 years ago, a lot of the work that was done, the—the agent provided the training for the ladies, and gentlemen. And now I see that EHC leaders are talented, very well-educated people and they do not need someone to train them. Actually they are training others, so the leadership—the leadership aspect of it has changed. I think diversity is another change. When

EHC started it was primarily for women, farm women, and now I see that men are involved and I also see that it—it's not just for rural, farm women, it's for any woman that would like to—any woman or man that would like to join.

**Has—what, what have I—did I ask you that about the changes or did I? [Laughs] Extension Homemakers taught you anything about people? It's a good thing I'm not doing this [laughs].**

Extension Homemakers has taught me a lot about people because it is a people organization. So I've learned from EHC. My first county was Madison County, and I was a young agent. I was a young woman right out of college. And they taught me a whole lot actually. They say they trained me and that's right [laughs]. They did. So I have learned a lot of things.

**Any other memories, experiences or thoughts that you would like to share?**

Well, in growing up, my Mother really thought a lot of Extension Service and she was a devoted EHC member. Every year we had to participate in all the things that EHC did. We had to participate in the county fair. My mother would help put up the EHC educational booth at the fair each year and then she would be there to bring me so that I could help put up the 4-H educational booth at the county fair. And she believed that everybody should participate in the fair.

And so each summer we—we worked really hard to make jars of canning to enter in the county fair for my Momma and for me. And she'd make me get in there and she'd say, "Get in here, you've got to make your [laughs] jars of canning for the fair!" I probably was not as motivated as I would have been, but my mother was determined that I was going to make that jar of canning for the fair [laughs]. And so she would get me in there and teach me how to do it. So I—I have a lot of good memories of Extension. And my Mother wanted me to be a county Extension agent and I have been, so I think that is one of the biggest things that has happened as a result of EHC.

**Thank you for all your contributions to the Extension Homemakers and for sharing your time and memories with us.**

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You're welcome.

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