

ARKANSAS EXTENSION HOMEMAKERS COUNCIL
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Official transcript of:

Brenda S. Vick

Retired Sebastian County Extension Agent – Staff Chair

Original recording made 4 November 2011

at Fort Smith, Arkansas

Interviewed by:

Freda L. Parker

Sebastian County Extension Homemakers Council President

Recorded by:

Paula Resch

Sebastian County Extension Homemakers Council President-Elect

Transcribed and edited by:

Brenda S. Vick

Retired Sebastian County Extension Agent – Staff Chair





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Oral History Program

Freda L. Parker, Sebastian County Extension Homemakers Council President

4 November 2011

This is an audio recording of Brenda S. Vick, retired Sebastian County Extension Agent – Staff Chair. This interview is part of an Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council Oral History Program, and Brenda is answering questions asked by Sebastian County Extension Homemakers Council President, Freda L. Parker.

Questions and comments by Freda are in boldface type; Brenda's responses and comments are in lightface type.

I'm Freda Parker and I'm interviewing Brenda Vick. This interview is being held at the Reynolds Cancer Support House in Fort Smith, Arkansas, in Sebastian County on the 11th, 4th [Editor's Note: November 4] of 2011.

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.

Would you please state your name and spell your name and indicate that you are willing to give the Pryor Center permission to make the audio file and transcript available to others?

My name is Brenda S. Vick. That's B as in boy R- E-N-D-A. Last name is V as in victory, I-C-K, and yes, I am willing.

So we will go ahead and proceed with the interview, Brenda.

This is the interview with Brenda Vick for the Arkansas Extension

Homemakers Council Oral History Program. This is being done on November the 4th, 2011, at the Reynolds Support Cancer House in Fort Smith Arkansas, Sebastian County. I am—Freda Parker. This going to be a very informal interview, and I want you to share your memories of your involvement with the Extension Homemakers program—the good times and the challenges.

First, I'd like you to give your complete legal name, and the city and the county in which you reside.

I'm Brenda S. Vick. I live in Fort Smith in Sebastian County.

What has been your association with the Extension Homemakers program?

I was an Extension agent.

You were a professional agent. OK.

How did you learn about the Extension Homemakers Program?

Between my junior and senior year in college, I worked for the Cooperative Extension Service in a summer program they had called Junior Field Assistant Program. I worked in Union county in El Dorado, and it was during that experience that I learned about the Extension Homemaker Program.

How long have you been associated with the Extension Homemaker program?

Thirty-five years.

What has been your as—well, actually this is kind of a repeat—what has been your association with the Extension Homemakers Program?

I served as the adviser to the Extension Homemakers Program for 21 years.

And then . . .

And . . .

OK. And then, you were the adviser for 21 years and then you became . . .

Well, after that point, I was in an administrative position and was not directly involved as an adviser.

Have you attended the state Council meetings?

Yes.

What year did you attend your first one?

I really don't remember; it's possible that I went as early as 1975, but during that time I was working primarily with the 4-H Program so I'm not sure, but I do know that I probably attended every meeting annually from 1984 to 2007.

Do you have special remembrances from one of those events?

Not anything that stands out, other than I always did enjoy them. I enjoyed being with the Extension Homemakers and—and participating in the programs and activities right along with them.

How has Extension Homemakers touched your life?

Well, Extension Homemakers welcomed me to Sebastian County as a new college graduate and they immediately called me friend and family. I was six hours away from my birth family and as you can imagine feeling quite lonely—never really even been to this part of the state. Yet, Extension Homemakers were there, they were very caring—they offered me a lot of love and friendship. They were there when I married a local man—they were there when I gave birth to my two sons and really just became a very special part of my life.

What has been your favorite event or activity?

Well, actually I have a couple. And so, I will mention one. I always enjoyed an

activity that Extension Homemakers in this county did, called Share O'Rama—and that was where they would—do booths, exhibits and activities, hands-on activities, for the general public to kind of show them what they had learned during the past year as a part of their monthly club programs. The second one I like is we used to always do a holiday foods program and that evolved into an event where we had professional Extension agents from surrounding counties, as well as Extension Homemakers that did food demonstrations and other holiday items that were of interest to the general public that gave us a lot of visibility and it was always a lot of fun for me to work along side of the Extension Homemakers.

And now, Brenda, I am going to ask what your least favorite event or activity has been?

I have thought a lot about this and I really couldn't think of one that I would say would be the least favorite. I've enjoyed everything that I did connected with the Extension Homemakers.

That's good. What changes have you experienced in the Extension Homemakers organization?

I guess to me in thinking back over how it's evolved in the—in the—35 years that I served as an Extension Agent in one role or another, it would be the development of leadership that I've seen in Extension Homemakers. In the very beginning, I observed a lot of local club leadership doing what the program was designed to do, taking a leader training lesson from a professional agent and going back and presenting it to your club, but that evolved into a whole lot more over the years. I've seen Extension Homemakers take projects and run with it on the county level, on the state level and even to participating at the national level when Arkansas hosted the National conference. So it's basically the leadership development that I have seen develop over the years.

Has Extension Homemakers taught you anything about people?

Yes, they have. People need to be involved in the planning of a project or an activity in order to feel ownership of that. People will respond if they believe a project is good for them, good for their family or of benefit to the community

and they're provided with the necessary resources to carry it out. So, I really feel like that's a key in getting a volunteer group like the Extension Homemakers to be a part of a project is to give them some ownership of it.

Are there any other memories, experiences or thoughts that you would like to share with others? And you can just go with this however far you want to go with it.

Well, I guess, if anything, it would be that the Extension Homemakers organization because of the start that it gave me in the county and because of the number of years that I was involved with them, they are very dear to my heart because as I said earlier, they have become friends and almost like family to the point that I've participated in some of their family activities; they've participated in some of mine, so it truly—they—they've just become a part of me over the years.

Since my retirement, I have missed, you know, being with those people that I worked with as a professional agent. And I still do see some of them from time to time, as you would imagine, as I—as I go about the county. So, they're just very, very dear to me.

Thank you for all your contributions to Extension Homemakers and for sharing your time and memories with us. Now then, before we stop this are you sure there is not anything else that you want to contribute? Because now is the time to put it here. [Laughs] She doesn't.

OK.

Thank you.

I do remember one thing. During my career as an Extension Agent, in the very beginning, there were two Extension Homemaker Councils within this one county and we worked to merge those two, so to speak, so that we would have a combined program. Previous to the merge of them there were two different sets of officers, and two different leader training programs, and two different Councils, and everything was separate and it just seemed that we needed to be one since we live in the same county. So that is a structural change that took

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place in Sebastian County during the time in which I served as an adviser to the Extension Homemakers Council.

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