

Celebrating Extension Homemakers Past 1935-1999

Beulah

In 1934, Miss Vera Stanton came to Surry County as a Home Demonstration Agent. We believe one of the first clubs was organized at Beulah and was known as the Tomato Club. Club members were Mrs. Ada Lovill, President, Mary Johnson, Emma Bunker, Rassie Watson, Jenny Beamer, Susie Hill, Rebecca Allen, Grace Cook and Lelia Hodges.

Later, the club name was changed to Home Demonstration Club. At the meetings, Mrs. Stanton did demonstrations of crafts, sewing and home canning.

A curb market was later organized. The women fixed baked goods and other items to sell at a down-town market at a designated place. Today, it is the Farmers' Market.

Mrs. Stanton was replaced by Mrs. Grace P. Brown. She continued the same type of programs and more clubs were added. In the beginning most of the meetings were held in members' homes. As membership increased, meetings were held in Beulah School. At present, we are meeting in the Beulah Ruritan Building. We now have (20) members. The Beulah Club has been represented on all levels of Extension work from the local club, county level, district level and state level.

Our club is very active in volunteer work, helping with bloodmobiles, the Surry County fair, 4-H projects, and we still learn a lot of new crafts. Some of the crafts we have done will be on display. The lessons we have each month are very interesting and educational. Members get training from the agents and present the lessons at our monthly meetings.

We are very fortunate to have the excellent leadership of the liaison agents who are dedicated to their work.

Busy Bees

A group of ladies met with Brenda Rose and Ann Tyndall in September 1978 at the First Baptist Church in Mt. Airy to try and start a new club in our area. Brenda did a presentation on sewing called "Everyone Has to Sew Sometimes" and Ann did a blender demonstration.

Our group met again in November at the Central Methodist Church. Officers were elected and our club was named the Busy Bees. Ann met with us our first meeting.

We started with (12) members and still have (5) charter members. Most of our members joined within the first year.

We remember our many classes in crafts. We still have beautiful needlework that we were taught to do. We have also held tours to Old Salem, Chinqua-Penn, Reynolda House and several museums. We've had classes on Japanese art, fashion shows, etc.

We are busy and active and donate lots to good causes. We have fun at our meetings and look forward to many more years with the county Extension Homemakers.

Copeland

The Copeland Extension Homemakers Club was organized in 1937 or 1938. There are no records available to know the number of charter members, but it is believed there was at least (5). The meetings were first held in the homes of the members. While school was in session the meetings were held in the Home Economics room after school or in the cafeteria. Miss Vera Stanton began as the Home Demonstration Agent in 1934. Ms. Grace Pope Brown was Home Demonstration Agent in 1938 and served until 1956. Ms. Brown was known to visit in the homes of members in order to help with any problems, or answer questions. When the pressure canner was introduced she visited to lend a helping hand as so many were reluctant to use a canner for fear of it "blowing up." Ms. Brown was a believer in using the most efficient equipment to save time and energy.

Earlier records indicate that the members helped with making knitted garments for the war, and as Mrs. Mary Ellen Graham stated, "this gave the women a spirit of being helpful in the war effort." The club members also made American flags for the Red Cross. A home nursing class was taught in 1949 by Ms. Bernard. Club members, as well as non-club members attended. In 1945 the club worked to help secure the library. Mrs. Mary Ellen Graham served on the historical study committee. Mrs. Grover Wood (a charter member who is now deceased) served as County Council President in 1943 and 1944.

Copeland (continued)

At one time the Copeland Club was among the largest in the county. We have been blessed with our current Agents having so much knowledge to share with our members, showing new methods, bringing current materials, ideas, and giving hands-on demonstrations.

In the 1960's Thelma Layne did a history of our club and it was reported on a Mt. Airy radio station by Mona Griffin.

Mrs. Billy (Peggy) Smith served as County Council President in 1967 and 1968. Our club had a state win in the 1979 quilt contest.

Our ladies always looked forward to putting on their "spring finery" and attending the spring festival in Elkin, and then the fall Achievement program in Mt. Airy. These were BIG EVENTS!

In 1964, we were proud to become half owners of the building known as the "Copeland Ruritan Building." This is where we now conduct our meetings on the second Tuesday night of each month.

Becoming half owners of the building did not come without a lot of hard work and dedication. When the building was completed to the point it needed a woman's touch, the ladies carried their sewing machines and made the draperies, began furnishing the kitchen with towels, cooking equipment, and whatever else was needed. A lot of fund raising projects were carried out in order to secure the funds we needed. We still are doing projects, all in an effort to maintain the building and carry on with our work. We use to prepare a buffet supper for the Elkin Kiwanis Club in the fall. We sold flavoring, cookbooks, had a grab bag sale, made quilts, and sold quilt tickets for the quilt to give away. We also prepared lunch for the Retired Teachers Association. You name it, we probably did it, or thought about it. Our ladies meet each spring and fall to do a complete cleaning of the building. Yes, WE DO WINDOWS TOO. We now sell pecans, prepare meals for the Ruritans six months each year, and do sonkers for the Berry Festival as our money-making projects.

In addition to our work, we take a trip each year. We have contributed to many, many useful charities. We give showers for those who have had their homes to burn and have sponsored dinners and suppers for cancer patients to help with their financial needs. We prepare meals when there has been a death in the community. We help with the bloodmobile, do volunteer work at the Agent's Office, do shoe boxes for the Samaritan's Purse, do Red Cross bags, baby dolls for Brenner Children's Home, send food to the Food Bank, and prepare food and work at the Eldora Handicamp.

Copeland (continued)

Our talented ladies have conducted workshops teaching wood finishing, pine needle baskets, tole painting, knitting, CPR, sewing, macrame and many, many more. In the 1950's the ladies made pig skin gloves (they were priceless).

So many of our faithful and dedicated members have passed away, and as our culture and lifestyle changes, it seems hard to recruit new members; however, we are attempting to carry on the work to keep our club as active as it once was. We have a lot of dedicated, talented and faithful members who strive and go the extra mile to keep our club strong. The names of those who have passed away come up often in our meetings, so they certainly have not been forgotten. Beatrice Hamlin, a former member, is a patient at Hugh Chatham Nursing Home, paralyzed as a result of injuries received in an automobile accident in 1989. We presently have (21) members on roll.

We hope the year Y2K and the future years will be as prosperous as the past years have been, and our members will continue to learn and be an inspiration to others.

Dobson Early Birds

From the beginning of its organization the Dobson Early Birds have been involved in many facets of community life. One of our members led in a project to develop a collection of Historical Period dressed dolls which was very popular around the county. Members have taught crafts, given food and cooking demonstrations, placed exhibits in the Extension Office and local library, in addition to fair exhibits. Various members have worked with the bloodmobile, given birthday parties at a rest home, collected stamps for disabled veterans, made "caps-for-kids," puppets and stuffed animals for needy children, knitted afghans for the homeless, and given many hours as volunteers in schools. Four of our members present the annual German Christmas Tea.

The club formed in the early 1970's and Hester Jackson was the first President. It was decided to meet in the homes of members at 7:00 a.m. on the third Wednesday of each month. The business session and program are followed by a covered dish luncheon where good conversation on innumerable subjects helps the close fellowship of the group to continue to grow stronger.

The club has been generous in supporting community programs for the less fortunate people. There has been strong interest in improving the local library. During the early years the club raised funds by cooking meals for civic groups and helped pay for the Dobson Community Building. Many club exhibits entered in the County Fair and the Dixie Classic Fair have won

Dobson Early Birds (continued)

cash awards. The club has sold sonkers at the Berry Festival, and served breakfast and lunch for the Extension Homemakers Bazaar, donating the proceeds from the Bazaar to the Dobson Community Library.

Some of our members have won awards and certificates as Outstanding Leader, Outstanding Volunteer, Master Gardener, Master Food Preserver and Master Knitter. The Early Birds now have (15) members. Faye Edwards is the President and Sally Johnson is the Vice-President.

Good Neighbor

Our organization began in 1945 when the New Hope Home Demonstration Club was formed. Mrs. Grace Pope Brown, Home Economics Agent, picked up the club members in her car and took them to the meetings. This was in the days of little gas and few cars. Mrs. Brown presented programs on canning, cooking, sewing and many other homemaking skills. Surry County women were introduced to pressure canners by Mrs. Brown. Frances Lawrence, a charter member, recalls that her sister-in-law, Elizabeth Lawrence, was Mrs. Brown's secretary and also a charter club member.

The club grew and began to include members outside the New Hope Community. In the 1960's the club name was changed to "Good Neighbor" to reflect the philosophy of the club members.

Although the club has never been extremely large in membership, it has been an extremely active club, being recognized as honor club and club with 100 percent reading at many Achievement Day programs. Members have served as County Council Presidents and in other county and district offices. Six members have been selected for the coveted recognition as county "Outstanding Leader of the Year." The club has been involved in many community projects and activities, including sponsorship of a 4-H club in the 1960's. The club's culinary skills came into prominence in 1966 and again in 1992 with the publication of two Good Neighbor cookbooks.

The club has had a tradition of mother-daughter memberships and at one time there were four mother-daughter combinations. Club members' families are included in summer outings and at the traditional Christmas gathering.

As our club looks at the new century, we see our roles as women becoming more important as we serve as leaders not only in our club work, but in the workplace, our churches, and communities as we each continue to be the "Good Neighbor" that our name reflects.

Long Hill

I would like for you to join me as we take a journey into the past to learn about the history of the Long Hill Demonstration Club. The club either began in 1959, 1960 or 1961. Mrs. Joyce Redman Simmons helped to get the club organized. When the club met for the first meeting, it was held at the home of Mrs. Joyce R. Simmons. Mrs. Ruby Cook, from the Westfield Club, came with the Extension Agent, Mrs. Grace Brown, to organize the club. There were (12) members at the first meeting. Mrs. Joyce Simmons was elected the first President. There was no community building for the club to have their meetings in, so they met in the homes of the members. The meetings were held in the afternoon at 2:00 p.m. Then they changed the time to one month the club met in the afternoon at 2:00 p.m. and one month at 7:00 p.m. The Long Hill Community Building was built in 1963. So the club began meeting at the building the first Thursday night of each month at 7:00 p.m. One member shared with me two projects that she remembered from the very first year. The members drew names and everybody had to make their Christmas present to exchange. In the spring they had a fashion show. Each member had to make their dress from a chicken feed sack. Over the years the club has had as many as (25) to (30) members. The club has had many projects to help make the Long Hill Community a better place to live.

Salem Fork

The Salem Fork Extension Club was among the first organized in Surry County by Miss Vera Stanton in 1935 with (6) members. Mrs. R. J. (Kizzie) Martin was the first President. Members met in the homes for several years. We found there was a need for a better place to serve our needs. In the early fifties a member gave land to build our club house.

To raise funds we have had several projects, including selling sandwiches during court week, land and house sales, flavoring, greeting cards, dolly duzits, furniture polish and food cutters. We have an annual harvest sale and supper and we have served other organization's meals.

Members did roadside clean-up, helped the needy, worked with the bloodmobile, gave an annual radio program, and gave donations to the Red Cross, Salvation Army, Polio, Heart Fund, Cancer Fund and Joy Ranch.

Shoals

It was in a packhouse stripping tobacco in the fall of 1955 that Ozell Scott and Dolly Hauser first talked about organizing a club in Shoals. Dolly had been a member of the Mt. Zion Club for one year. So on March 20, 1956, Ozell and Dolly, along with Mrs. Grace Pope Brown and Charlotte Bridewell, Agents, organized the Shoals Home Demonstration Club with (10) members. Our motto was "Today's Home Builds Tomorrow's World." We met monthly in the school lunchroom and in member's homes until the Ruritan Community Building was erected in 1975. The first officers were Ozell Scott, President; Dolly Hauser, Vice-President; Mrs. Wayne Woodward, Secretary and Elsie Spainhour, Treasurer.

A glimpse backward reveals the diversity with which our club has endeavored to reach outward including: sponsorship of 4 H clubs, school projects, etc. We feel if we have helped a young person along the road to responsible adulthood, we have helped the community to a better way of life. For the housewife and young adults, we have developed a three-fold program designed to interest and aid in continuing education. We have always had home, family and community in mind when offering special interest programs. Members have spent countless volunteer hours aiding other charitable groups such as: March of Dimes, Red Cross, Cystic Fibrosis, Handicapped Campers and many others. For our seniors we have met many needs, visiting and having birthday parties in rest homes, sewing items for residents and supplying transportation to church, hospitals, doctors, etc. We have sponsored the Handicapped Camp for the past 28 years. As we spread our love over the community, we believe we play a definite part in building understanding and Christian ideals to make a better place in which to live.

Siloam

The Siloam Home Demonstration Club was formed in 1935. The officers were Mrs. Alpha Taylor, President; Mrs. Opal Hardy, Vice-President; and Mrs. Ola Atkinson, Secretary/Treasurer. The membership included Mrs. Kate Marion, Miss Dixie Miller, Mrs. Floyd Bass, Mrs. Nellie Matthews, Mrs. Pearl Pendry, Miss Lela Flynn, Mrs. Floyd Hardy, Mrs. Stella Matthews, Mrs. Nina Miller, Miss Maggie Miller, Miss Maggie Brown, Mrs. Mae Whitaker, Mrs. Katie Eads, and a Mrs. Adams.

The monthly meetings were held in the homes of members. Each program included a lesson related to rural life including such topics as food preservation, home improvement, sewing skills and gardening. Each meeting included a group song and often a

Siloam (continued)

game. *Siloam Club meetings were occasionally held at the Junior Order Hall and at the Siloam School.*

Twelve years after the club was formed, the report of club activities for the year 1947 revealed that club members had sewn (119) items including clothing and household accessories; preserved (2,831) cans of fruits, vegetables, and meat; and cured (4,755) pounds of meat.

The club has remained active for sixty-four years. The current Siloam Extension Homemakers Club has (22) members and (4) honorary members, many who descend from the families of charter members. The club meets monthly at the Siloam Baptist Church and sponsors an annual Fourth of July Fun Day for the community. Club funds support an annual scholarship to Surry Community College for a Siloam resident.

White Sulphur Springs

On Saturday, October 22, 1938, Home Demonstration Agent, Mrs. Grace Pope Brown, met with women of the community in the home of Mrs. Harvey Cotton, and formed the White Sulphur Springs Club. Mrs. Rastus Poore was joint hostess. The following members were elected to serve in these offices; Mrs. Harvey Cotton, President; Mrs. Ed Jarrell, Vice-President and Song Leader; Mrs. Ella Sparger, Secretary and Treasurer.

Now, as then, we endeavor to learn and in turn and to teach to build a better home and stronger community. Some of our lessons include but are not limited to; gardening, foods, clothing, travel, medications, and home decoration. We often work with other organizations to benefit our community.

Anyone who is interested in these goals is invited to attend our monthly meetings. Meetings are often held at the Mt. Airy Library and usually on the second Tuesday.