

ARKANSAS EXTENSION HOMEMAKERS COUNCIL

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Official transcript of:

Betty Stivers

Newton County Extension Homemakers Council Member

Original recording made 19 October 2011

at Jasper, Arkansas

Recorded, transcribed and edited by:

Linda Chappell

Newton County Extension Family and Consumer Sciences Agent





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Oral History Program

Linda Chappell, Newton County Extension Family and Consumer Sciences Agent

19 October 2011

This is a tape recording of Betty Stivers, member of the Newton County Extension Homemakers Council, This interview is part of an Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council Oral History Program, and Betty Stivers is answering questions asked by Newton County Extension Family and Consumer Sciences Agent, Linda Chappell.

Questions and comments by Linda are in boldface type, and Betty's responses and comments are in lightface type.

This is the interview with Betty Stivers for the Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council Oral History Program. This is being done October 19, 2011, at Betty's home [Editor's Note: in Newton County]. 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.

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

Betty Stivers; HC 70, Box 232; Jasper, Arkansas.

What has been your association with the Extension Homemakers Program as a member?

I have been a member for quite some time, I have also served as secretary, vice president and president of our club.

How did you learn about the Extension Homemakers Program?

A very dear friend invited me to go to one of their meetings. I taught school and the only time I could go was in the summer, so I attended three summer meetings with her.

How long have you been associated with the program?

Since early 1990, I'd say [19]97.

What was the first club with which you were associated and what year?

Jasper Pioneers.

Are you presently a club member? If so, please give the name of the club, the county and district?

Yes.

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

I remember it all a lot of fun, a lot of social activities, a lot of food and very little planning or programs or volunteer work.

Why did you join?

Well, I didn't join until after I retired from teaching, and then I joined because I needed an outlet for my energy.

Why have you continued your membership?

Well, I just enjoyed it, and I feel like we are making a contribution to the betterment of our county and the girls in the club are very nice and we have a good time and it's just a fun thing.

How involved did you become? Please list the offices, committee chairmanships and special responsibilities you held?

Well, I've been secretary, vice president, president, and I served on the Council

and just wherever I've been asked to do something, I try to do it.

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

I went to one meeting and I think it was a Ferndale, but I don't remember what it was, but I remember it was two days and I went with Janet Voshell, and we had a wonderful time.

How has Extension Homemakers touched your life?

Well, for one thing I have met a lot of nice ladies and I can say that I now have 90 to 100 friends that I probably would not have had, had I not joined, so it's enlarged my friendship circle.

What has been your favorite event or activity?

Well, I really enjoy the style show and luncheon that we do every year for Angel Works—that's my favorite.

What has been your least favorite event or activity?

My least favorite has to be the birthday party at the nursing home. It only lasts an hour, but it just depresses me. Even though I know for an hour we are bringing joy to those people, it just depresses me.

What changes have you experienced in the Extension Homemakers organization?

Well, when it first started out, it seemed like we had more educational programs and projects and it's tended to become more a volunteer-type projects. And when I first joined there were ladies of many different age groups and now it seems like we've lost so many of the young ladies and it's the older ladies now and it seems very hard for the young ladies to join our club; most of them are working.

Has Extension Homemakers taught you anything about people?

Well, I think it has taught me that our ladies are kind, charitable and they certainly are hard workers. They are very, very resourceful, we don't have a lot of money, but we always come up with a project to get the job done.

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

I remember one time when Libby Kelly was our President, she asked me to raise money for the Alice Cooper Education Fund, so one person from each of the seven Extension Clubs got together and we each chose a color. Each club had a different color. My club's color was blue, and we each had to make seven or eight quilt blocks with blue in them. And half of the block was white and Julie McElhaney down at Low Gap, she embroidered the names on. We sold signatures for \$10 each.

And we made quite a bit of money on that quilt, We made \$3,400. Part of it came from very generous donation of a lady—one lady. And we auctioned, we sold chances—no we didn't, anybody that had their name on it paid to have their name on it and their name went into the drawing, that's it. And Nancy Dechant won the quilt and to this day—we—there is still money in the Alice Cooper Scholarship Fund from that quilt project.

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

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