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1982

Interview with Ruth Irwin

Ruth Irwin

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This is an interview with Mrs. Phillip Irwin, Mississippi in April, 1982 by Mrs. E. R. McKnight.

Mrs. Irwin I know you have been a member for over 50 years and there is something about the program that you have really enjoyed to make you stick with us this long. Tell me about your beginnings with Extension work.

Really I have no words to tell what Extension work means to me. For 70 years I have loved the work. In 1911 Miss Susie B. Powell originated Tomato Club work for girls in Mississippi. She was allotted by the state \$150 for this work. When the program reached Warren County I became a member. Girls grew tomatoes on 1/5 acre of land and were required to do the work themselves. Canning in tin canners on a wood burning outdoor canner. As years passed Tomato Club became a part of 4-H. I became a leader and worked with girls for 20 years, going with them to camp, to district meetings and to state. Three girls went to Washington and many were winners in the county, district and state. When the women first became interested in Extension work, there were no clubs but someplace would be appointed in which to meet and a demonstration would be given about some phase of home improvement. In 1920 when the first state council was held about 20 women from over the state attended. From this the women became interested and this was great news to me. The organized work reached Warren County in 1929 and I became a charter member of Cup and Club in April of 1930. I loved the program and have tried to give it my best, serving as council president, vice president, secretary-treasurer, better homes chairman

garden leader, program chairman, food preservation and 4-H advisor. I was a director of the Miss Lou fair all the years of its existence and many other places I have enjoyed the work. To better prepare myself I went to state council each year for some time. I attended two national councils as well as district meetings. In 1953 I was chosen as the first outstanding woman in Warren County. That year I received my five ruby pin. Gardening and food preservation have been my favorite projects and I have received many ribbons in the county, district and state. But these awards, not even being written up in Farm Ranch magazine in 1952, have not been the most important thing to me. You see, after 52 years in this program I am still learning and to me that is important. Home Extension work means painting, sewing, and fixing things beautiful to see. Growing food for health, profit and charity, gaining knowledge of my state, nation, world and community, developing poise, confidence, pride and responsibility, letting the Heavenly Father use this knowledge to make me what I ought to be -- that's what Extension Homemakers work means to me.

That sounds real interesting. What topics did you have in the early days of your clubs, your leader training meetings in your club?

Food preservation was always prominent. The Kerr Jar Company and the Ball Jar Company would give a dozen jars as prizes at our county exhibit and the leaders there would be chosen to go to state fair, and then those jars that won at state fair were carried to state college. I was the first Ball Jar winner in Warren County. Everybody raised chickens in those days. There was much stress put on having healthy, beautiful chickens.

Did you can the chickens too?

Yes they did. Every year their home agent would go to one club where one woman was canning beef in those days in your house.

Can you imagine spending a whole day just canning beef? It's really changed through the years when everybody puts their beef in the deep freeze now, don't they? I bet there's not any beef canned is there?

I don't think so, not for years have I heard of it.

Is there any particular topic that you think was most interesting to you that you enjoyed the most?

Gardening was something that I loved. I had a little son who was undernourished and did not love to eat but following me down the rows and watching the tomatoes get so red and ripe and things looking so good he began to eat and his health developed and it meant a lot to me.

Just watching him grow and develop along with the vegetables.

That's right.

What has been the reason that you have continued through the years as a member?

It seemd that every year there would be something new that I hadn't heard of before. I've always been eager to learn. Then, another thing besides all the programs that was so wonderful, I had a chance to learn and to know the things that were going on in my county and to learn about the women in other neighborhoods. I don't think I would have had as many friends if it hadn't been for this Extension work. But I've got friends all over Warren County and they don't fail to let me know it even though I've grown old. Another thing, the work doesn't just stay with one group of women. You have young women; you have middle aged women; you have old women, all working together for home improvement.

There was something of interest to everybody then.

That's right.

I know things have changed a lot in your lifetime. Did you grow up in the country?

Right on the plantation where I'm living now.

In other words, this has been your family home for years and your parents too.

My father bought this land when he married my mother in 1888, and when his children married he gave to each one their portion of land. He first bought a 1000 acres of land and he got it for \$1.00 an acre. Several years ago I sold eight acres of my part and for one acre I got much more than he paid for the 1,000.

Times have really changed, haven't they? In growing up out here then, I'm sure you depended on yourselves for dealing with a lot of your problems and dealing with the world in general. What about some folk cures? You didn't run to the doctor every time you had an ache or pain.

My mother was very anxious for her family to be healthy and we had a country doctor named Dr. Austin. We had a phone that belonged to the people in the county. You could ring each other on that phone. Every time one of her children got real sick she rang Dr. Austin and you could hear him coming down the road. He lived eight miles from us and you could hear him coming down the road his old horse's hoofs going clap, clap, clap. He'd say one of the Tucker children is sick.

You made do with what you had, too I'm sure. You didn't run to the grocery.

We bought salt and flour and pepper and vinegar. Otherwise we had everything at home.

What about sugar?

Well, sugar, that's right. But you know, my father had 11 working families on his place and they raised molasses and put it in wooden barrels and as the molasses got further down the barrel it came out in a hole with a little spout. Sugar would form on the sides of that barrel and a lot of times when the weather was bad and you couldn't get to town, great lumps of that rock sugar would be taken off to use.

How did you use it?

It was just like rock sugar now. Just like lump sugar.

Did you pound it up to use it?

You could melt it in an iron kettle. It seemed to me that we didn't have as many problems then. We weren't so thickly populated in the country and as the population grew thicker the problems grew more. I don't understand that. They should have grown better. But we didn't have robbing and killing then like we do now. We heard about it off in some big city away from us and when it did happen it was a disgrace and a distress that everybody felt. It hurt the whole community.

I'm sure the neighbors were all dependent on each other, too. If you needed help you could run to the neighbors.

Absolutely. Everybody came. And in those days you didn't just pop in to see somebody and you didn't have to ring them to let them know you were coming. When my mother saw somebody turn in our driveway, she would run put on a clean apron and she would go out to the gate and say, "Oh, I'm so glad you've come." You didn't have to let people know you were coming. They knew you were coming to spend the day when you saw them drive in.

Maybe you weren't so busy with so many different things as we are now.

I don't know what you call busy then. My mother helped my father to milk 15 cows. She churned butter in a dasher churn for sale. After we got a separator to separate the cream she sold cream. She would sell 20 dozen eggs a week. She had three girls and she made all of their clothes and one boy and she made his shirts. She made my father's shirts and she cooked for 5 day hands 2 meals a day, 5 days a week. I reckon you'd call that work.

I guess that was busy, wasn't it?

Maybe we were so busy we didn't have time.

Maybe you weren't so involved in outside activities other than your church.

We had a little church with a preacher coming from the college one day a month. When the preacher came it was wonderful because he would come on the train. My father would meet him and bring him to our house to spend the night. It was really wonderful to sit and listen to him. And he could preach, I'll tell you. And people listened.

Did you have church every Sunday?

One Sunday a month.

And he was more or less a circuit rider, I suppose.

He didn't ride because he was going to Mississippi College and he would come on the train and somebody had to give him a way to go to the church.

But he served other churches on the other Sundays, didn't he?

I guess he did because he was a boy that was working his way through school.

You've seen a lot of changes through the years, I know. You've lived on the farm all these years. There have been changes in the farming.

We don't have little farmers any more. That is, you've got to have commercial farming now because no more in Warren County can people farm unless they do it commercially. You can't sell your sausage if you make it at home. You can't sell your hogs except through cooperation with others. You can't sell a beef. Everything's different; the program is different and you've got to have cooperative inspection for everything you do and that has done away with the little farmer.

That's true not just here but every place I'm sure.

My father had a rule that when he went in town he carried enough produce to pay for what he was going to buy and bring some money home. I was talking to a young woman who is a big farmer's wife just last week, and she said, "We don't have money through the year because we get our money in one lump when we sell our crop in the fall." I don't know how people live that way, just getting money once a year.

It's different that's for sure.

But you know living on a farm is a glorious thing. Since my husband died three years ago, we don't even have a garden. Having been used to a garden all my life, that grows hard.

When you've spent all these years canning and gardening and everything and then all of a sudden to quit. There have been a lot of changes outside the home too. Social changes among the children, all the rock and roll music and just all sorts of things that young people are involved with now that you didn't see years ago. They weren't as affected by outside things, maybe.

There's one thing that has been a worthwhile improvement and that is no matter in what position you are born, in this day and time you have a chance to be somebody if you want to.

If you've got it in you, you can do it if you want to.

In olden times when a family was poor it seemed that they stayed poor. If they were middle class they stayed middle class. There were some that thought they were so much better than others. And they kept that prestige among themselves. It's real amusing to me to see that some of the people that some of those prestige people that are still living are married into the family of the what they call the poor white trash and they're so proud of them that they found out there's no such thing. Our black mammy used to tell us, "Now you can't go with them. They're poor white trash." But there's no such thing in this day and time. If you want to be somebody you can.

It's all within you then. If you want to do something you can. How many years were you married, how many years ago did you tell us?

I was married in 1922. When my husband died we had been married 36 years, 10 months and 12 days.

What was a typical day of keeping house when you first got married? Did you wash on the scrub board?

Oh yes. I drew water up out of a cistern with a pulley up over the cistern with a wheel with a rope over it. When we could we always had what we call a washer woman. She came on Monday generally and washed our clothes, came back Tuesday and ironed the clothes with an iron heated on a coal furnace. They would be starched just a stiff.

No wash and wear and no perma press. Times have changed in that respect haven't they? We put our clothes in the washer and dryer and shake them out and wear them.

In another way, people talk about not having enough money. If a day hand got a dollar a day and two meals he thought he was rich. I tell people the same percentage goes now. Everybody that works gets a big salary but it doesn't go any further than that dollar did because everything costs a lot of money. When everybody worked for a dollar a day that worked for other people, they could get cloth to make them a dress for 30¢ a yard. The first time I ever had a dress made out of cloth that cost 25¢ a yard, I thought it was something. That was a fine dress. That same material now is about \$3.50 a yard, maybe more. I don't buy it because sewing never was my thing. I thought I would love to sew, my mother could sew beautifully, so when I was in high school one year I took sewing. It did not make me sew.

I thought everybody had to sew when they got in high school and took home economics. I thought sewing was a part of the course.

I found out it wasn't mine though. We didn't have high schools when I got ready for high school in the country. So nobody had an automobile. I can remember the first automobile that came to Warren County and so living 10 miles from town I couldn't get into town every day to go to school so I stayed with a friend of ours, boarded with them, going into town on Monday morning and coming back on Friday evening. Now the bus picks you up at your house, takes you to school and brings you home.

There was just the one high school in the county then at that time.

There weren't any high schools in the county.

I mean the one in town was the only one in the county.

Oh yes.

Do you feel like your children and grandchildren are better off living today than if they had lived in your time?

In some ways they are and in some ways they are not.

How do you think they are poorer?

I don't think that people really appreciate, in this day and time, the good things they have. They are so common that they just take them for granted.

They just don't realize how much they do have.

Our whole nation is that way.

They've grown up having all these things. Are you speaking of material things or just things in general?

It covers all phases of it--everything. They have every opportunity. Everybody has money that wants to work. Of course this relief program, there are people who need to be on relief but we have some that expect everything for nothing that don't really need to be on relief that are physically able to work. And we accept that, too.

Of course they say jobs are harder to find so maybe that's part of the answer too that we've got to have the relieve because there are no jobs. You said you had a telephone when you were growing up. That was sort of a rarity wasn't it?

My father did the work. There were five men in the community that put the money together and built the telephone line and my father kept it up. I don't know what they paid to have what they called exchange when they connected with uptown. Otherwise you rang yourself. Exchange didn't have a thing to do with it. But they paid so much a month to the central office in Vicksburg to be connected to them. Everybody had a ring. One thing that shouldn't have happened was that everybody listened in when everybody else rang because everybody's phone rang. If one rang everybody else's did.

And you could hear receivers go up and everybody was listening to what you had to say.

You had to be careful what you said.

If you weren't they'd call you down. I know I was called down one day. We were talking about a ballgame and they had gone off and the ones that were playing against said, "That wasn't the way it was."

They gave themselves away, didn't they. But at least you knew somebody was listening so you were careful what you said.

What were some of your biggest pleasures as a homemaker? What do you enjoy most about homemaking?

Maybe I wasn't such a good housekeeper but I always liked my house. I didn't have fine things but I liked for them to look attractive. I like blooming flowers in my house. I liked an attractive dinner table and I reckon I did all right there because my husband never failed to say I enjoyed my dinner or supper. And a thing I think is most important in a home is love. I think that people ought to tell each other in the family, "I love you."

But we think we don't have time.

It saves a lot of time and anxiety if you'll just do that. I used to have a little saying for my husband. I said to him, "You belong to me." And he would say, "Yes, and you belong to me." We did not want to do things that were not approved by the other because we belonged to each other and sometimes I think that's the reason we have so much divorce. People have forgotten that they belong to each other and they've forgotten to say I love you. When things go wrong they've forgotten to say I'm sorry and they've forgotten to say thank you. Those are the things that count in my home.

And your marriage lasted 56 years so it did work. That was a good recipe apparently. You're still active in your homemaker club.

Yes I am. I taught Sunday School for 45 years and I started off with 11 year old boys. I kept them for 15 years and when we got a church in our community then I had a mixed group of children. That's hard work to have young boys and girls together. After a while though I just got boys again. Then when I got too old for young people I took the young married couple and that was just wonderful happiness for me. And they said to me, "You know the reason we like to come to Sunday School is because we hear about love in Sunday School. Loving each other." It was so wonderful trying to love people. And I think that's the reason people don't forget me now. Those Sunday School girls through the years would give me a book and they would always say in the back of the book "From your girls." I never had girls of my own.

How many children do you have?

Just one son and he lives right by me and looks after me every day.

You're real fortunate.

He never goes to work that he doesn't come by to see me first.

It's obvious that love is one of the most important things in your family.

The last words my husband said to me when he died in the Veterans Hospital was "Love you." Then he just closed his own eyes. I think that love is everlasting. I've heard people say that you could kill love. I doubt that.

It could solve a lot of the world's problems though.

If you couldn't kill it. I have had people to do things to me that I didn't love, but it didn't keep me from loving the person.

I don't think you always love everything even your own children do, but you continue to love the child. You have enjoyed your homemaker's work through

the years and I'm sure you feel like you want the program to continue, don't you?

I sure do. This year there are so many young people coming into the work and that's an important, the reason it needs to go on. Of course it's gotten to me now where the social part of it is the highlight for me because I've seen all these things and have enjoyed and now when you get as old as I am you want some social life still.

You're not as busy doing now and now as anxious with homemaking skills as you were as a young homemaker.

No, I live by myself and you don't have as much interest in doing things when you're by yourself. Of course you still need to have things to work but your strength gives out.

But there's not as much that needs to be done either as there was when you were younger with a family. You mentioned the Tomato Club girls. Was the Tomato Club just in Mississippi?

They were all over the United States but they didn't come together until later years. They would meet at Miss. State just like they do now. My younger sister who is three years younger than I am went to state when she was a Tomato Club girl. It was the highlight of her life. It doesn't seem they had to have a special project. You know the first Miss America that was from Mississippi, Mary Ann Mobley, my son went with her as official escort to Atlantic City, and when my sister went as a Tomato Club girl to State College she roomed with Mary Ann Mobley's aunt who was Mary Mobley. We thought we sort of knew Mary Ann.

Do you have young homemakers in your club?

To me they're young, I'll put it that way.

Do you encourage the young women to join?

We try/

They have many excuses. Really and truly it's lack of understanding what it would mean to them, I think.

They don't realize the benefits that they could receive.

I don't really believe that we have as many women in this county in the work that we used to have.

I don't believe so either.

And I think it's lack of understanding what it would mean to their lives. I don't know how to get that over to them.

If they would ask you you could tell them.

At one time the Cooking Club had 43 members and we knew that was too many for one club so the first time we divided Highway 80 pulled out from our club and took about 20 women. We were so proud of them whenever they would have something extra like a picnic outdoors they would invite us. Whenever we had anything we'd invite them. Then the few that are left from that old club are in Town and Country now.

How many do you have in your club now?

We just have 12. Just think of that. We have visitors every month though. Somebody said to me yesterday, "Why don't those visitors join?" and I said I don't know any other reason but they don't want to put forth the effort to do the things we are doing.

It does require some effort.

It requires a lot of effort and to me that's what it's all about. If you don't put something into something you don't get anything out of it.

I've always heard you got out of something just what you put into it.

People go to church and say "I didn't get a thing out of the sermon."

I say, "Were you listening? Did you give it your undivided attention because

I got a lot out of it."

Why were homemaker clubs organized in this county? You were a part of the first clubs that were organized. Was it the agent that got after you or did the women realize the need?

I think the women realized the need. I think that was really the thing that made the clubs. At one time we had 18 clubs and we were real active. I think we're real active now, maybe because we don't have the public fair that took a lot of the interest away. Right off the membership dwindled.

They enjoyed the competition, in other words.

That's right. And then you see when we had the fair where we put on our exhibits it was such wonderful work and we were so proud to show what we had done. The schools came in and they would have a concession at the fair and the same women that were club members were interest in school. We would make enough money, say for the PTA, to do things the county didn't do for the schools in those days at that one time. It was wonderful.

We like to be recognized for what we have done.

Another thing was that in those days and times when we were so very prominent in Warren County the supervisors allowed so much money for the support of the Extension work in the county. Now they've withdrawn it and that makes a difference too. A lot of people, when you were going to get money for every jar that won first place, they had jars there. Some were doing it more or less for the rewards they were getting, they rewards besides awards. The award of money is what some were working for.

I remember going to one national meeting and one of the women on the bus had paid for her trip with the money she had won in prize money at the fairs. So in that case she was working for the award money.

The award money meant a lot for me too. We never had a lot of money and every little boy in the community had a leather jacket except my little son. I was going with my garden exhibit to the state fair and he said to me, "Mama, if you win some money can I have a leather jacket." And I said, "You sure can." I was chosen as one to put on a canning exhibit at the state fair. I won first in the garden exhibit there and then in individual jars I had \$45 dollars when I came home in prizes. So the first thing he said was, "Am I going to have a leather jacket?" I said, "You sure are."

So there were a lot of benefits from the homemaker organization other than just learning to cook and a better way to can and that sort of thing. A lot of fringe benefits, we'll say. I believe you said you had been an officer several times, too, in both your local club and on the county level.

I was on one state committee. You have to be on a state committee, I think, to get a five ruby pin. I was on the Peace Committee. What the women of the state needed to do to bring about peace during World War II. I was on that committee at State College.

Can you think about anything else about your early meetings that were especially interesting? I think you used to have camps.

We did. My husband drove a school bus for four years and in those days you owned your own truck chassis and the county put a body on it. You could do whatever you wanted to do with it when school wasn't going on, so he would let the women in the county load up in the school bus and we would go to camp on it. Those were highlights. It was for a week. Everybody carried food. I never will forget one time a lady brought a live chicken. She didn't know you were supposed to have it dressed in a box with ice. Mrs. Purvis was the home agent.

Did you take your families?

I just had one little son and she always let him go. I had this friend, Mrs. Hall, who had a son the same age as mine. Mrs. Furvis would say to us, "Well, we're going to have Phillip and Bubba to go. We need them down there." They got to thinking that they needed to go. They were part of the group. It was all right with me because my husband was driving the bus and he had to have a place to stay and our little son wasn't in the way.

The two little boys could play together and entertain each other.

She'd let them take part in the craft. My son, when he was that young, made a stool with the women. I still have it. Everybody their material and then they were taught how to do it. I never did find out if Bubba finished his or not. Friendship start at so young. They are still bosom friends.

It all goes back to homemakers. Do you meet in the homes altogether?

Yes. I had my club meeting the second Thursday of this month in my home. For many years the second Thursday has been our meeting date. Sometimes some woman would join and say, "If you meet another day I could come." So twice we changed it to meet other people's needs and it never did work out. The last time we changed we said it was going to stay second Thursday regardless, because it's been that for over 50 years and why should we change. We find out that it works better because everybody knows that's the day we're having our club meeting.

So when you go to changing things up you run into more problems.

It seems that way with us. Our last project, we have workshops as old as I am. I take part in it sometimes but I can't nail nails. Our last project was bluebird boxes. We made quite a bit of money for our club out of our bluebird boxes. We sell them as fast as we make them. The ones that

work on them get one free. That one I have hear belongs to a lady who wasn't at the club. She hasn't picked it up.

You make the bluebird houses yourselves and then sell them? That's a money making project for your club then.

We've been so lucky to make money in our club, to have money to send our women off to state and national convention and things like that. We've had two to go to the national convention when it was in Biloxi close enough by. Every year we have at least one to go to state.

I believe your group has a potluck dinner after your meeting, don't you?

We do. That's a lot of fun for me. Everybody brings their favorite dish and we all feel uncomfortable and fat. You can tell by looking at me. They have so many lovely new recipes that I haven't learned to make yet so there's lot that I've got to learn yet. These pies that these girls make that are so beautiful and then they just melt in your melt.

The day that there is nothing more to learn is the day we die. I think there's always something to learn.

I should live to be 100 then. I wonder if everybody wants to live to be 100. I'm not particularly fond of living that long. However I am from a long live family. My father had a sister that was 102 and a brother that was 101 when God called them. My doctor said to me, "You're going to live forever." I said, "I know that, but I don't want to spend all that time in this world." He laughed. I think it's nice to live to be old if you can still be active. A sad thing is to have to go off to a rest home to live. One day out of each week I go to the rest home to visit.

Is that a club project or your own project?

My husband started for us and we just kept it going through our church. The majority of the people there are younger than I am. But we try to help them have interests. We have a little girl that comes to play the piano that has two little children under school age and they mean more to those people. She said to me when she said that she could come, "But my children may be a problem, will they?" I said I didn't know but that's the joy of those people. They just love them and want to hold them. It just means so much to them to have somebody to come that they can talk to and that they feel like loves them. We carry them a little refreshment once a month. One poor little Jewish lady will say, "I'm hungry. When are we going to eat."

You've never worked outside the home, have you?

No I haven't. I used to think that it would be wonderful to work out and say, "Well this is my money." But I guess the Lord knew best and I think a lot of times now people say they have to work. They can't make ends meet if they don't. We didn't have a lot of valuable worldly things but we always had enough. And my husband wasn't able to work out too much because he had been wounded in the first World War and his health wouldn't allow him to work out. He tried to raise a garden and he did try to farm a few years, but we always managed. Somebody asked me yesterday that was here interviewing old people to find out that if the general run of people had enough income to live on, and she said to me, "Do you think you have enough income to live on." I said, "I don't have enough income to get everything I want but I have enough to get everything I really need."

A lot people don't know the difference.

That's so true. And they have credit cards and say, "I have a credit card and I can get this." I'm glad I never owned a credit card.

They've gotten a lot of people into trouble.

Yet if you need it it's good to have.

They're nice to have if you don't abuse them.

We don't know the difference though. As a whole, the people don't know the difference in desires and needs. I think if members of home Extension work learn those things, that's the reason we need to influence other women to come in and find out there's a difference in wants and needs.

There is the program now that helps people to manage their money. That's one of the new emphasis.

It sure is. It's a good program.

Perhaps it's like a lot of other things. The people that need it the worst are not the ones that are being reached.

That's the same way it is with church. The ones that need to be listening to the preaching are at home. When I go to church I pass houses where they're cutting grass. They're riding Hondas around. It's grievous to see that they don't understand.

They don't realize their need, but that's like the young women you were speaking of that didn't realize their need for homemakers. Didn't realize what it could mean for them.

You said you had been to state council a number of times.

The best I can figure it's been 10 times or more. We used to go every year and I lost count. I have a scrapbook with everything in it. It's good reading, if I do say it.

We used to call it Farmer and Home Week. Did you go and model in any of the fashion shows?

I went to food preservation and had to can my can of tomatoes at home and then take it to State College and in the class up there have it opened and graded.

I didn't know they every opened the jars when they were doing the judging.

We had to have this in a tin can years ago and Miss Dony was the one who did it. She opened it and showed how a can should look inside. It was real interesting.

When you canned the chicken and beef, you canned them in tin cans?

Yes.

Why did you use the tin cans instead of the jars?

They had jars but it seemed that it was just better to use the cans because they kept better some way or the other. Now and then if you canned meat in a jar there would be spoilage and you hardly ever had a tin can to spoil.

You're more sure of a seal with a tin can, I guess.

The county owned the cookers. The county agent would go with the canner. They used to have canners in the school and you would go every so often and can food for the school cafeteria. That was an interesting program that came through the Extension work. You would carry your produce to the school. The county would furnish the cans and they would allow the canner at the school at a certain and you would can soup for the cafeteria. You would give one out of every four to the school and you'd have the others. The pressure cooker was what we canned in then and that has been a great improvement when you could have your own pressure cooker.

It was a lot more fun for everybody to get together and can than to just stay at home as an individual and can. I'm sure it was a lot more fun with everybody getting together and can than just to stay at home as an individual.

I liked those get togethers.

We have other all day workshops now.

The birdhouses was our last one.

The basic principles have remained the same. We still do the same things but yet they're different.

The first one I ever went to before they had clubs I was a teenager and they made a tossed salad. It was the first time I ever saw a salad and it was called that. Miss Estelle Beard demonstrated making a tossed salad. I thought it was just wonderful. I still like tossed salad.

It's an everyday thing now. You said the first meeting you went to as a club. What did you have at first, countywide meetings?

It was a community meeting. This first meeting was in the lawn with trees. Mrs. Beard is one of the people at the Sidney Building where I visit the convalescent home. We have about 25 to come out into the assembly room for devotion. She could come if she wanted to but she says to me, "I don't hear good and I don't come because I want you to come to my room."

Sometimes I get out my scrapbooks. I have a hobby of scrapbooks and every thing I'm in I make a scrapbook and I'll get out my 4-H scrapbook and my home Extension scrapbook and I forget to go to bed that night.

I remember when we've had countywide programs you were always the one who would give such beautiful devotions. I'm sure the people at the nursing home appreciate your coming and get a lot of inspiration.

One of them says to me every week, I go around and speak to them individually they sit in a circle and she'll say, "My inspiration, I'm looking forward to next Wednesday." But you know we let them say a memory verse from the Bible,

and about 90 percent have their favorite verse and they love to have something to say. We had a little Jewish lady whose mind wasn't too good but she has learned to sing our songs and that means a lot to us. We had all denominations and I found out in the years I've been going about 17 years and I have found out that you don't have to belong to a certain church to be in close touch with the Saviour. The Lord didn't say that you had to have a certain denomination but He is the head of the church. One baptism means you are baptised to the Holy Spirit, it doesn't have a thing to do with water. It's meant a lot to me to get their viewpoint and to find out how close they are to the Saviour.

In some of the counties they have organized a Homemaker club in the nursing home. Maybe that would be a project for you to do. We have now in all the nursing homes they have recreational directors and she's in charge of their programs. If you want to have a program there you set it up through her and they have all kinds of things like they're going to work to get money for handicapped children and they had the rocking chairs and they called it the jazz dance from the chair and they'd see who could rock the longest. One of our ladies rocked for three hours. She got the prize for the one who rocked the longest. On another day they'll have hat day and they'll bring material there for them to cut out and decorate a hat and they'll give a prize for the one who decorates the best hat. The girl that's in our rest home is so wonderful and she had such good ideas and every month she has all kinds of beautiful displays for that month, like Valentine, Easter and every month she has a different thing.