
The Quiet Revolution

**A Seventy-Five Year History
of Women's Extension Clubs
in South Carolina**

by
Clyde T. Mounter, Ed.D., C.H.E.

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(Tom)

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Table of Contents

Chapter	Page
	Introduction7
I.	The Foundation9
II.	The Beginnings17
III.	The Early Years21
IV.	Depression Era35
V.	War Years45
VI.	Post War Era49
VII.	Information for All64
VIII.	The Urban Shift72
IX.	Looking Ahead90
	Bibliography102
	Appendices104
	Index123

purpose of providing treatment for a disease so infrequently encountered.

- The vitamin enrichment of all corn and rice products sold in the state. This effort was followed by an aggressive educational program teaching housewives not to wash rice or grits before cooking as this would remove the vitamin supplements.
- Enactment of a compulsory education law and helping to develop a means of enforcing the law.
- The council worked closely with Dr. Wil Lou Gray to establish the state system of Opportunity Schools to help reduce illiteracy.
- The council supported the movement that resulted in libraries and book mobiles that put reading materials within reach of all South Carolinians.
- The council supported the State School Lunch Program and worked to improve the nutritional content of the menus used. This has resulted in standards requiring prescribed amounts of vitamin rich foods—protein and milk.
- Not just once, but on several occasions through the years, when appropriations for Extension work were scheduled to be cut, the council has used the concerted efforts of its membership to contact legislators expressing their concerns and explaining the need for expansion rather than cutting funds for the program. This has resulted in helping to maintain the high quality and expand the scope of Extension training.
- To maintain contact with legislators and reinforce the council's position as supporters of the Extension program, tours of the State Capitol have been conducted with visits to and conferences with legislators.

The organization started out in 1921 with the name South Carolina Council of Farm Women, in 1957 the name became South Carolina Home Demonstration Council, in 1966 the name became South Carolina Extension Homemakers Council, and in 1992 the name was changed to the South Carolina Association for Family and Community Education. Although the name has changed through the years, the organization is still very much alive and functioning to help improve families and communities in South Carolina.

Much of this introduction was taken from materials written by Mrs. Bee Cochran, SCAFCE Historian, in "A Brief History, South Carolina Extension Homemakers Council". The succeeding chapters give a more detailed look at how the organization began, how it has functioned, and what it has accomplished during its 75 year history.

Introduction

Membership in the South Carolina Association for Family and Community Education is now open to both men and women, but throughout its history it has been an organization of women. The accomplishments of the "fairer sex" through this organization over the years has been remarkable. "Never underestimate the power of women" — particularly when their interests and concerns center around the home and community in which they live.

The Council was organized in 1921, a period in history when women, due to the necessity of using their energies and developing latent talents during World War I, were just emerging from the comparative seclusion of home life. They were emerging to a realization that they had a contribution to make to their immediate community, county, state, and nation by taking an active and sometimes winning aggressive role within their sphere of influence. This "Quiet Revolution", as I call it, has been responsible for many beneficial and progressive changes for the benefit of individuals and families in South Carolina and, for that matter, the nation.

When one considers that 80 to 90 percent of the members lived on operating farms in rural communities, one realizes that close cooperation at all levels was necessary if the council was to have any impact on improving living conditions in South Carolina. The council worked with county delegations to gain their support for needed appropriations and also worked closely with the Extension administration staff to convince them that appropriated funds needed to be re-appropriated to cover home demonstration work as well as agriculture.

Accomplishments have been spread over so many years, it is easy to forget the progressive legislation that was passed either as a direct result of the council's efforts or through cooperation with other organizations in the state. The council worked closely with and served in official capacities in the South Carolina Council for the Common Good during the years it was functioning.

Some of the projects claiming the attention and concerted efforts of the council through the years were as follows:

- Passage of a law requiring a 24-hour waiting period between application and issuance of a marriage license. The council actually requested a 5-day waiting period before issuance and also a blood test. They didn't always get everything they asked for, but even the 24-hour waiting period was a major victory.
- Testing of cattle for tuberculosis in an effort to wipe out the dread disease. This was most effective and today most T.B. hospitals no longer operate for the

Chapter 1

The Foundation

The history of the South Carolina Cooperative Extension Service is largely an untold chapter in the state's history. Yet the work done by the many agents who worked for the Extension Service laid the foundation for much of the social and economic progress in South Carolina's rural and mill village communities in the 20th century. Working as a partner with Extension in these efforts since 1921 was the Association for Family and Community Education. In fact, the histories of the two entities are so closely entwined that it is not always possible to separate them.

Cooperative Extension work in agriculture and home economics did not originate as the product of any one person's thinking or in a sudden flash of inspiration. The concept of Cooperative Extension gradually developed to meet the felt and expressed needs of farm people throughout the United States and was the product of many experiments and efforts by colleges and universities, foundations, state boards of agriculture, and the United States Department of Agriculture (Morgan, 1970).

Agricultural societies were active in most of the eastern and central states dating back to the colonial period. The first such society in South Carolina was organized in Georgetown in 1740. Other early societies included Charleston, 1785; Pendleton, 1815; and Beech Island and Darlington, 1846 (Morgan, 1970).

Lyceums and chautauquas were another method of getting people together and sharing information. Organized groups of speakers and entertainers went from town to town to share information and entertain. Chautauquas generally lasted for several days, and were continued until after the turn of the century.

Lyceums and chautauquas gave rise to the idea of farmer institutes which were started in the eastern states around 1850. The first of these were held at colleges and consisted of agricultural educational programs of several days duration. Later, these programs were held in counties, generally at county courthouses.

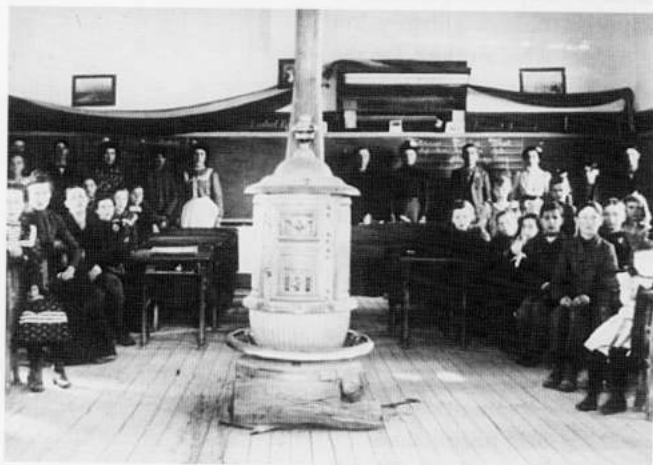
When internal national strife erupted into Civil War, the first shots were fired at Fort Sumter. Even while our nation was at war, broad-minded Americans, aware of the potentials of Agriculture, founded the Department of Agriculture.

Early Influences

The Morrill Act was passed into law on July 2, 1862. This was an "act donating public lands to the several states and territories which may provide colleges for the benefit of agriculture and the mechanicarts." This set in motion a movement that through the years has gained momentum. Subsequent acts and amendments made national leaders

aware that the endowment of colleges within itself was not enough, but that some means of disseminating the results of research to the farm and home must be devised.

Farmer institutes were developed in South Carolina in the late 1800's under the auspices of the State Board of Agriculture and the University of South Carolina. These institutes were taken over by the Clemson Agricultural College when it opened in 1893, and were



Early Extension meetings were often held at schools or churches

continued until the Extension Service was organized. In this program, college professors of agriculture and other departments went out to counties and conducted educational programs for farmers. It was, however, not until about 1908 to 1910 that institutes of this type were held for women. (Morgan,1970)

Federal-State Extension Work

Dr. Seaman A. Knapp is known as the father of demonstration work for and in cooperation with clientele. Demonstration work spread from this beginning and led to the passage of the Smith-Lever Act creating the Cooperative Extension Service in 1914.

In 1907 Dr. Knapp, then in charge of USDA Extension, came to South Carolina to organize extension work. He appointed Mr. J. Phil Campbell of Georgia as Director of demonstration work in our state plus district and county agents. These agents were the nucleus around which the present Clemson Extension Service was built. (Morgan, 1970)

Boys and Girls Club Work

A movement began between 1901 and 1910 in the United States of America through the Department of Agriculture to use the Land Grant College System to teach young people current knowledge and the best techniques available for

success in agriculture. Initial efforts for farm demonstration work had been with farmers. The leadership in USDA reasoned that change in agricultural production in America would occur more rapidly if youth were taught. (Richardson, 1993)

Boys corn clubs had been organized as early as 1848, and scattered reports show that boys corn clubs were organized and contests and shows held during the late 1800's. Early boys clubs were mostly organized and led by school superintendents in rural areas who realized that farm boys needed training in improved methods of farming. (Morgan, 1970)

A.L. Easterling, County Superintendent of Education in Marlboro County, organized the first boys corn club in South Carolina in 1908 which was the forerunner of the present day 4-H clubs. The basic purpose of the boys corn clubs was to convey to young people the new methods that had been developed on Experiment Stations at Land-Grant Colleges to increase agricultural production. In 1909 clubs were organized in six other counties, and the total membership was 327 boys in the seven counties. (Morgan, 1970)

In 1909 Jerry Moore, a member of a boys corn club in Florence County, produced a world's record yield of 228 3/4 bushels of corn on one acre. Jerry received national publicity and a scholarship to Clemson Agricultural College. He entered Clemson on scholarship and graduated in 1917, with a degree in agronomy. He was a cotton technologist with the North Carolina State University Agricultural Experiment Station. (Richardson, 1993)

J.B. Miles was a member of the boys corn club in Barnwell County. On November 26, 1910, he received a certificate of merit for having produced 137 bushels of corn on one acre of land. (Richardson, 1993)

Dr. O.B. Martin, former State Superintendent of Schools in South Carolina, was appointed USDA Field Agent for demonstration work among youth in the Southern states. The success of boys club work soon raised de-



Boys and girls club work in the early years established the foundation for Extension

mands from throughout the South for a similar program for rural girls. Dr. Knapp was opposed to the idea. He was afraid that to add girls club work to the program would dilute the effectiveness of the program. However, J. Phil

Campbell, who had served as Director of Extension in South Carolina, Miss Wil Lou Gray, then a school teacher in Laurens County, and O.B. Martin favored the idea and succeeded in winning Dr. Knapp's approval to draw up a plan for girls club work. Dr. Knapp limited participation for girls to one commodity and approved tomato canning clubs for girls.

Mr. O.B. Martin came to South Carolina in 1910 to address the school teachers of the state and outlined the proposed program for girls tomato club work. Miss Marie Cromer, a teacher in Aiken County, was one of the few teachers to catch the vision of the address. Miss Cromer returned to Aiken County and organized a girls tomato club in Talathia School, a two teacher school in Aiken County. She is generally recognized as organizing the first girls club of this kind in the United States. (Morgan, 1970)



Girls tomato clubs were the real forerunners of organized Extension work with women

Miss Cromer's work attracted attention across the country. She was rewarded with a trip to New York and New England, where she enrolled for a course in Home Economics at a college in Maine to better prepare her for the work.

The difficulties encountered were many that first summer. It wasn't all easy going. Miss Cromer was away, so Washington sent a canning outfit to be used by

the girls, who learned by doing the job themselves. It was the first time that farm girls worked together to try to produce a marketable product. It was a demonstration which proved that good results could come from united action. This adventure of Miss Cromer's became an inspiration to the whole South to create similar opportunities for farm girls within its borders. From this humble beginning in Aiken, the work spread to thousands of communities in the United States.

Miss Wil Lou Gray was employed by USDA in 1910 during the three summer months to work with Mr. Martin to initiate the tomato canning demonstration work with girls in South Carolina. The goal of the girls tomato canning clubs was to teach safe and efficient methods of preserving food. The girls were expected to demonstrate to others procedures for canning tomatoes. (Richardson, 1993)

Miss Wil Lou Gray assisted Miss Cromer with the canning and demonstrations given by members of the first girls tomato club. Miss Wil Lou Gray had also organized a club at the Cross Hill School in Laurens County, where she taught. Ozelia Harmon was a member of the that club. Mrs. E. Joyce Richardson interviewed Mrs. Oselia Harmon Derrick in 1984. She said, "Miss Wil Lou gave me the incentive to plant 1/10 acre of tomatoes. With advice from Miss Wil Lou and my mother, I became a farmette. I won second prize and a gold brooch donated by a jeweler in Laurens. I also exhibited my products at the State Fair in Columbia and won \$9.00 for the quality and variety of canned goods." (Richardson, 1993)

As was typical of the thinking and attitudes of the times, early emphasis on Extension programs for farm people was directed toward farming and the men and boys. Iowa State College records the first course in "Home Economy" in 1869. Yet, there were few programs for farm women and girls until after 1910. (Morgan, 1970)

As early as the 1890's, Winthrop's President D.B. Johnson began advocating home demonstrations and home economics. Under his leadership, Winthrop began offering the first of a continuing series of summer short courses for women.

In 1909, Winthrop established a practice house, which was one of the first of its kind in the United States. Groups of students lived in the house for two weeks and gained experience in preparing meals and taking care of the home. After spending time in the practice house, Winthrop students went out with missionary zeal to help improve the quality of life in the rural areas. They showed South Carolinians how to use labor saving devices to relieve the drudgery of work, how to improve health conditions through better sanitation and a wholesome, varied diet, and how to beautify the home and its furnishings.

On January 1, 1911, Mr. Christopher Bradshaw Haddon, who had served as assistant in Rural School Agriculture, was appointed by Clemson Agricultural College as Acting Superintendent, Special Agent in charge of Boys and Girls Demonstration Work in cooperation with U. S. Farm Demonstration Work. In addition, through a cooperative agreement, Dr. Booker T. Washington, President of Tuskegee Institute, appointed S.T. Powell as the first Negro Agricultural Agent in South Carolina.

By the summer of 1911 Winthrop and Clemson had begun cooperating in extension work. The colleges sent a train for a 10-week tour, traveling through practically every

Home Demonstration Work



Mrs. Dora Dee Walker was affectionately known to council members as "Mother Walker". She was appointed "Tomato Club Agent" in Barnwell County on March 10, 1911

county in South Carolina. Morning demonstrations showed the use of the fireless and steam cookers. Afternoon talks were usually devoted to sanitation and health, preventable diseases and related subjects. Free bulletins and other publications were distributed.

Soon after her pioneer work in organizing the first girls tomato club in Aiken, Miss Marie Cromer (Mrs. C.H. Seigler) was placed in charge of this work in the state with headquarters at Winthrop College. She, in effect, became the first State Home Demonstration Agent in the state but did not have that title. Letters found in Winthrop College files from Dr. Johnson to Miss Cromer state, "I have provided an office with a typewriter and I would like for it to used."

Miss Cromer appointed Mrs. Dora Dee Walker (Mother Walker) of Appleton, SC (which was then in Barnwell County and now a part of Allendale County) as County Tomato Club Agent to work one month in 1910 and as county collaborator for Barnwell County in 1911 to work with both youth and adults through a USDA appointment. Thus, after passage of the Smith-Lever Act in 1914, with a prior USDA appointment, Mrs. Walker became what is thought to be the first county home demonstration agent by that title. In any case, if she was not the first, she was one of the first.

The impact of the work of Dora Dee Walker (Mother Walker) is probably best summed up by the following article from the housekeeping edition of *The Modern Priscilla* (Tribute, 1934).

"The home demonstration agent working with boys' and girls' clubs is, to my earnest belief, doing more today to hold the American home on an even keel, and to lift it, inch by inch, to a higher standard, than any other one or dozen organizations or institutions in the world. So greatly appreciated, furthermore, is the work by on-looking countries that England, France, Luxembourg, Holland, Denmark, Egypt, and the Phillippine Islands have sent girls to Washington to be trained in this work and bring it home to their own countries. And Washington sent these girls to Winthrop College to 'Mother Walker'. And now the work is spreading over there."

From 1910 to 1913, through the use of federal funds, 29 people were appointed to work in 16 counties for either summer months or for 12 months. Most of the people were teachers who, as volunteers, had organized tomato clubs. These teachers were not always home economics graduates, however, some of them received permanent appointments during 1914.

In 1912, Miss Edith W. Parrot (Mrs. H.E. Saveley) was appointed as the first State Home Demonstration Agent with that title and was headquartered at Winthrop College.

Mrs. Dora Dee Walker was later transferred to Winthrop and appointed State Club Agent to work with both youth and adults. She organized what has been verified as the first home demonstration club in the United States under the Smith-Lever Extension program early in 1915. The club was in the Bethel Community of Sumter County (Morgan, 1970).

Mrs. Walker became a specialist in production conservation and home beautification. One Extension agent is quoted as saying,

"She instilled inspiration for better living in every girl and woman with whom she came in contact. Their efforts show the results; a humble home brightened with paint, fabric, and good food; a home used as a social center; the yard improved with native shrubs and flowers. This brought relief from existing conditions and brought contentment and joy in living."

The following poem written by Harriet Johnson at Winthrop College probably best illustrates the high esteem held for 'Mother Walker' in South Carolina.

"I think that we shall never see A Mother wonderful as Thee; One who never stops for rest But gives her state her noblest, best. A Mother with a faith so strong. Working, praying, her whole life long. A woman counting, as no other, Thousands of children who call her Mother. With love for all from a heart of gold She blesses each from her great soul. Her life a demonstration true Has set a goal achieved by few."



Miss Edith Parrott Savely State Home Demonstration Agent 1912 - 1919



Dora Dee Walker (Mother Walker) conducting a meats demonstration

Legislation

Gradually, all of these influences and movements during the late 1800's and early 1900's nourished and stimulated the growing demand on the part of the farm people of the nation for a unified extension service to bring and interpret to farm families the result of research, experience and information in agriculture and home economics.

The Smith-Lever Act creating the Cooperative Extension Service was introduced in the House of Representatives by Congressman A. Frank Lever from Lexington County in South Carolina and in the Senate by Senator Hoke Smith of Georgia. The bill passed both houses and was signed by President Woodrow Wilson on May 8, 1914. The Smith-Lever Act provided "that in order to aid in diffusing among the people of the United States useful and practical information on subjects relating to agriculture and home economics and to encourage the application of the same" there may be inaugurated in cooperation with the Land Grant Colleges an Extension Service. (Morgan, 1970)

Congressman A. Frank Lever was reared on a farm in Lexington County and was a graduate of Newberry College. In developing the Smith-Lever Act, he was assisted greatly by B.H. Rawl, a native of Lexington County, and J.H. McClain, a native of Spartanburg County. Both were Clemson graduates and employed by USDA in Washington at the time.

Mr. Lever, speaking on the 25th anniversary of the passage of the act, stated, "The Smith-Lever Act is almost entirely the product of South Carolina thinking. The first man I conferred with was B.H. Rawl of Lexington County. He started the framework of the bill." He further stated, "The word 'education' does not appear in the bill. And yet, after it has been in effect 25 years, I believe I am right in saying that extension work is the greatest education movement along these particular lines in this or any other generation——." "This Smith-Lever Act is the first federal recognition of the existence in this country of the American country woman." (Morgan, 1970)

The General Assembly of South Carolina passed a joint resolution which was approved by the Governor on February 12, 1915, accepting the Smith-Lever Act, and designated "that the trustees of the Clemson Agricultural and Mechanical College be and they are hereby authorized and empowered to receive the grants of money appropriated under said act and to organize and conduct agricultural extension work which shall be carried on in connection with the Clemson Agricultural and Mechanical College in accordance with the conditions expressed in the Act of Congress aforesaid. (Morgan, 1970)