

Chapter 2

The Beginnings

Following the pioneer tomato club work done by Miss Marie Cromer in 1910, and prior to the passage of the Smith-Lever Act in 1914, the tomato club work and the beginnings of home demonstration work in South Carolina grew up under the auspices and supervision of Winthrop College. The work was headquartered there and had the active interest and support of Dr. D.B. Johnson, president and founder of Winthrop College and a man of great influence in South Carolina. (Morgan, 1970)

The passage of the Smith-Lever Act in 1914 definitely assigned the responsibility for all Extension work in agriculture and home economics to the United States Department of Agriculture and the Land Grant College in each state. However, in view of Dr. D.B. Johnson's great influence in the state, and to avoid a conflict which might jeopardize the acceptance of the act by the state legislature, Clemson College, the Land Grant College for South Carolina entered into an agreement with Winthrop College in 1914 stipulating that the headquarters for home economics would remain at Winthrop College. As a fitting celebration to this achievement, in the summer of 1914, Dr. Johnson invited women and girls to Winthrop for the first short course, where they received instruction in the homemaking arts. This arrangement was continued until July 1, 1957, when the headquarters for home demonstration Extension work was moved to Clemson. (Morgan, 1970)

Dr. W.W. Long, a native of North Carolina, came to Clemson from USDA in 1913 at the request of Clemson's President, Dr. W.M. Riggs, to head up Extension work. In this position, Dr. Long became the first Director of Cooperative Extension work and State Agent under Smith-Lever Extension in South Carolina. Dr. W.W. Long, Director and Miss Edith Parrott, State Home Demonstration Agent, built Cooperative Extension work in South Carolina around the nucleus of workers appointed by J. Phil Campbell and succeeding directors during the previous seven years. (Morgan, 1970)

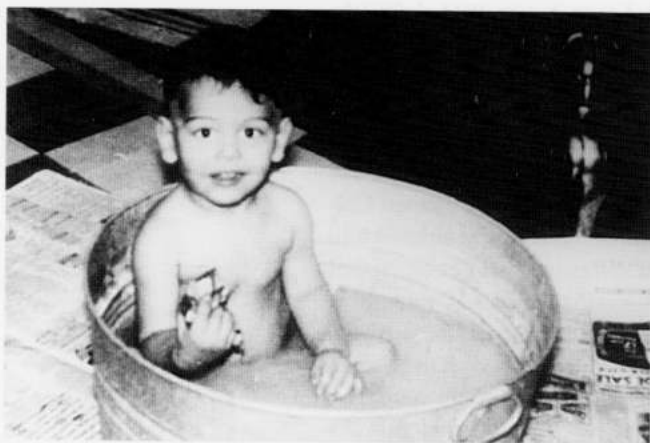
Extension work was relatively new, and early Extension workers were, in effect, true missionaries. They had no curriculum or lesson plan. However, they had a vision that farming could be made more efficient and profitable and that

South Carolina Extension Service

Early Extension Work



Wash day during these early years



Another kind of wash day during these early years

farm life could be enriched for that large segment of the people who grew up, lived, and worked on the farms of the nation.

During these early years, county agricultural and home demonstration extension work dealt, of necessity, with simple, fundamental things within the comprehension and financial reach of the farmer and his wife. In order to assure that the recommended practices would be carried out, agents resorted to much personal service. County agents frequently pruned all the trees in an orchard or culled all the hens in a flock, in many cases, doing more work than teaching.

During the period of 1910-20, as subject matter areas expanded, there was need for additional state staff members to be in contact with USDA research findings and provide guidance in subject matter to be

taught by county home demonstration agents and to train these agents (Woodall, 1992).

Early Home Demonstration Work

The county home demonstration agent frequently canned a family supply of peaches, tomatoes, or actually planted the shrubbery to landscape a farm home. They mainly taught home production and conservation of the family food supply, food preparation, the making of clothing for the farm family, and home furnishings, including ideas for home-made furniture. The fireless cooker was a new development that attracted great attention.

Travel in those days was unlike that of today. Automobiles were still not too numerous, and many of the agents plied their trade with a horse and buggy. It was no unusual sight to see a horse-drawn buggy driven by a lady swathed in a linen duster, with a canner on the back of the buggy,

headed toward some farm home where the agent would train the women of the community in the art of food preservation and production.

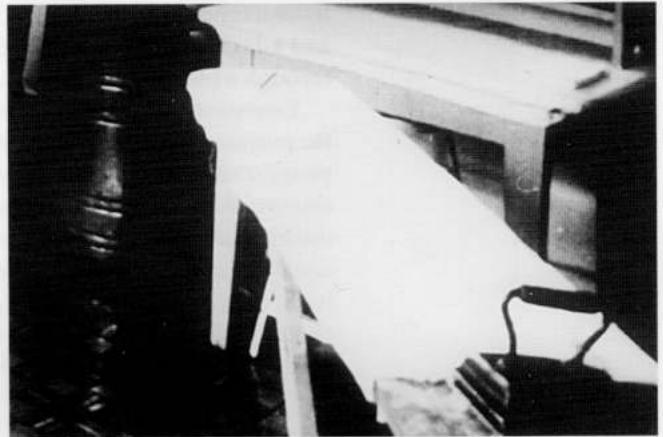
The value of 4-H club work in changing the attitudes of farmers and farm women cannot be overestimated. In many cases, the parents were reached with new ideas through their children in 4-H club work.

Home demonstration clubs and 4-H clubs grew in number and were the main vehicle through which programs were carried out.

Much of the work was centered around foods and nutrition, safety, health, and beautification of the home and community. Although no specialist in clothing was on the staff, outside home economists conducted training for the county staff until later when this additional responsibility was assumed by Mrs. Harriet Johnson, along with her role as state 4-H Club Agent. (Woodall, 1992)



Modern appliances of the day



Modern appliances of the day

Extension was hardly organized under the Smith-Lever Act when war clouds began to threaten from Europe. The trans-Atlantic cable and improved ships had brought Europe much closer to America. By 1916, it was evident that the United States would be involved, and in 1917, they entered into World War I.

The need for farm products immediately became a major problem, and the noble experiment of the Extension service became a number one asset. Emergency federal funds were appropriated and agents were located in all counties. The slogan, "Food Will Win The War" along with technical help and encouragement were carried to farmers in every corner of the state. Farm families responded to the need, and food

First World War

and fiber production and food conservation were stepped up to fully meet the needs of the United States and our allies. (Morgan, 1970)

The war years of 1917-1918 were demanding years, and the work of the home agent and farm agent was intensified. The production of food, careful use of resources, adjustment to shortages, and the "flu" epidemic of 1918 all added up to an expanded program that gave variety and opportunity that had hitherto not been in the regular routine job. Food rationing was not the order of the day, but families were urged to have "meatless" and "wheatless" days each week. Sugar was not rationed, it just was not available.

From 1917 to 1920, all 46 counties had at least one agent to help organize clubs and conduct wartime programs on food supply and more efficient operation. Some of these agents had the title of "emergency agents" because the special federal funds were temporary. Home demonstration clubs and 4-H clubs grew in number and were the main vehicle through which programs were carried out. (Woodall, 1992)

Extension work during World War I firmly established the purpose and usefulness of the service in the minds of the people throughout the country, and many South Carolina counties that had had emergency agents during the war years made the necessary county appropriations to continue these agents in the post-war years. The war brought great prosperity to South Carolina farmers and their families. Uncontrolled prices for farm products soared to levels never imagined. Cotton prices, which in the memory of most farmers

had ranged from 5 to 10 cents per pound, rose to 30, 40, and even to 45 cents per pound. Labor and fertilizer were reasonably plentiful, but land was scarce, and land prices skyrocketed to phenomenal heights. (Morgan, 1970)

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education was carried on through two-week, annual short courses for women and girls at Winthrop College. In addition, short courses were conducted at the county level.



Extension Agent Foods Training Winthrop, 1920s