

## Cooperative Extension Centennial Celebration

Your Trusted Partner...Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

As Cooperative Extension marks 100 years of working for Wisconsin, the following is an excerpt from Cooperative Extension in Grant County – The First Forty Years by Wilfred Pierick, written in 1963.

Early Women's Groups – Up to the time that a home agent was hired in Grant County, Grant was one of the few remaining counties in the state without a county home agent. Help had been secured with a few occasional visits to the county from University of Wisconsin women specialists. Forty-five Home Demonstrations groups were already in existence in the county when Helen Davis began work in the county the first of 1944. Four leader training centers had been set up at Bloomington, Fennimore, Lancaster, and Platteville.

During the nearly four years that home agent Davis worked in Grant county, it was her feeling that a more effective job could be done by working with these home demonstration groups as such and not organize them into a County Homemaker's Organization. There was a marked increase in the number of these women's groups in the county during these four years. In 1947, the final year of Helen Davis' service in Grant county, there was a total of seventy-three women's groups having a total county membership of close to 1400 members. Four additional training centers had also been added, making a total of eight.

Women's Rally Day—The "Rally Day" was the annual meeting of the county Home Demonstration groups. The principle purpose of the meeting was to discuss and plan the homemaking projects to be stressed the following year. Rally Day included an educational type of program as part of the day's activities with talks on pertinent homemaking topics by College specialists, movies, demonstrations, and the like.

County Homemakers Organize—When Jean Kinzler began work as county home agent, a full year had lapsed since the resignation of Helen Davis. One of the first things which received attention was the organization of the women's groups into a formal County Homemaker's Organization. Thirty-five clubs representing 560 members joined the County Homemakers. Officers elected for this first year were Mrs. Charles Wieland, Lancaster, president; Mrs. Marian Knapp, Bloomington, vice-president; and Mrs. Wilbur Stanton, Platteville, secretary-treasurer.

There were forty-three Homemaker clubs in the county by 1950, eight more than the first year, with a total of 733 members. Four main training centers were at Fennimore, Mt. Hope, Platteville, and Lancaster, and "interest" centers had been set up at Bagley, Patch Grove, Georgetown, Livingston, and Muscoda.

Home Management—Among the various areas of subject matter in which help was given county homemakers through project emphasis or by way of individual help, were kitchen arrangement and storage space, furniture care and cleaning, use of electricity, selection of electrical equipment, family financial planning, home water and sewage systems, home remodeling, simplifying housework, and planning and redecorating rooms.

A series of eight meetings held throughout the county in 1947 featured the topic of "Farm Water and Sewage Systems". The home agent enlisted the help of the county agricultural agent.

A good deal of individual assistance was given to families of Grant county in the area of kitchen arrangement and remodeling, and home remodeling by the home agent. Occasionally, University of Wisconsin Engineering specialists assisted with these.

Clothing—Work in the area of clothing occupied a major portion of the homemaking program. Emphasis in the war year of 1944 was on care and repair, making over used clothing, construction of home pressing equipment and of dress forms.

Clothing construction, with emphasis on proper fitting, was the major clothing project in 1945, while dress accessories occupied the spotlight in the following year.

Twenty-nine sewing machines were brought to training centers in 1949, when care and cleaning of sewing machines was stressed. Jean Kinzler reported a total 110 sewing machines cleaned in the county as a result of these meetings.

Foods—With the emphasis on food brought about by World War II, there was much concern with the canning and freezing of vegetables, meats, and fruits. Meetings and demonstrations were concerned with the use, care, and proper operation of pressure cookers. In 1945, twelve pressure cooker clinics were held by the home agent. Homemakers brought in a total of 140 pressure cookers to these meetings to have them checked over for proper operation.

A "canning center" was established at Platteville College in 1945 with the help of federal funds. This was an outgrowth of the war food emphasis program. This center was used extensively in both 1945 and 1946. Figures on the amount of food canned at this canning center in 1946 show that 289 families canned 3,800 quarts of fruit, 7,800 quarts of vegetables, 6,752 quarts of meat, and 1,480 quarts of "other" foods. Despite a great deal of pressure from farm groups for the continuance of the canning center, it was disbanded in 1947.