

VIRGINIA

GRAYSON HOME DEMONSTRATION AGENT Annual report 1943

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ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT

HOME DEMONSTRATION WORK

Grayson County

1943

Josephine Fultz

Home Demonstration Agent

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### III. Scope of Work

#### A. Home demonstration clubs

Number 18

Membership 366

#### Other groups worked with by agent

Number 1 (negro)

Membership 6

#### B. 4-H Clubs

Number 2

Membership 16

#### C. Number families reached through neighborhood and community leaders 400

D. Total number families reached 500

Number farms in Grayson County 3145

### IV. Organization

#### A. County Home Demonstration Committee.

In June the county home demonstration committee was organized, with six home demonstration women and three others present. Due to the gas shortage and the very busy season the attendance was small, but officers were elected, and a delegate elected to represent the group at the state federation meeting. Since this is the first year that there has been home demonstration work in Grayson County, it was necessary to explain the state and county organizations very thoroughly. The county committee is composed of the presidents of the fifteen home demonstration clubs plus a few members at large - a few women who helped get the work started in the county.

A second meeting was held in September to plan the work for 1944. Nine members were present, representing six clubs. Even though

the attendance was small there was no lack of interest on the part of the women. They came to the meeting prepared to discuss the needs of the women in the county and to plan for them a program which would be of greatest benefit to them in war time. Every woman entered into the discussion of possible topics as suggested by the clubs, and the most beneficial ones were selected. The county goal is to be "Conservation", and the topics selected for the monthly meetings deal with conservation of food, household equipment and clothing.

#### V. Leadership

##### A. Adult Work

Since the work is so new in the county and is more or less just being organized, the leaders have not been called upon to do as much as in an older county. One project leader training meeting was held, and due to gas shortage and to the fact that very few of the leaders drive cars, only three leaders out of twenty-eight were present. These three represented two clubs and they gave the demonstrations to their clubs at the meeting which followed. This has been a bad year to get people together in groups where they had to travel long distances, and we found that the attendance was small at most of the meetings that were planned.

In the clubs the project leaders were always ready to assist me in giving a demonstration when I needed help.

Some of the club officers conducted their meetings nicely while others never would. To some it was the first time they had held an office in any kind of an organization, and they need to have more training and more practice.

## B. 4-H Club Work

More time has been given to the development of the Home Demonstration Clubs this year and trying to get them organized on a permanent basis, and little time given to 4-H clubs. It was late in the year when they were organized, and it was difficult for them to carry out their projects. Some of the officers and one leader did a very good job of keeping the club together.

## VI. Results

### A. Home Demonstration Clubs

#### 1. Project work:

##### a. Food

##### (1) Production

The greater part of our time this year has been spent on foods as we felt that in war time no other topic was quite so important.

In the winter we began thinking and talking and planning gardens. Each club had a meeting devoted to this, and the women entered into interesting discussions of planning, planting and growing food for their families. They were much interested in new vegetables which they had not been accustomed to planting, and many of them planted some of these for the first time. Some of the new ones which were planted were salsify, okra, carrots, kale, broccoli, celery and spinach. In Grayson County nearly everyone plants a garden but several of the women said this was the most helpful topic we had this year. They were especially interested in the control of insects and diseases.

Poultry production came in for its share in the food production program. Due to the shortage and the very high cost of feed

we felt that culling out the non-layers in the farm flocks was more important than ever. The poultry specialist came to the county for several meetings with home demonstration clubs, and the women were taught how to cull their own flocks. This was taught to all the clubs in the county. Several men attended these meetings and were much interested in the feed situation, housing, culling, etc. Later I had reports of a number of flocks having been culled with good results.

Another result of these meetings is that three families are now keeping the yearly calendar flock record and are finding it most helpful and interesting. In each instance the men are as interested in keeping the record as the women are.

## (2) Conservation

Following the production program, the next topic was conservation. This was felt to be such an important topic that two months were given over entirely to it instead of one as was originally planned. Each group had two demonstrations, one on early vegetable canning and one on later ones. There was good attendance at these meetings, and the women were interested in canning by the method that would preserve the most food value and flavor of vegetables, not merely to just have them "keep". Canning acid is still being used in this county by a number of women and I tried to show them that it was not necessary and that better products were obtained from newer methods of canning. There are a few pressure cookers in the county and these were used and loaned to neighbors who did not have any. More drying was done this year than usual, especially corn.

After the canning season was over we discussed how much had been canned as compared with last year. Some of the women said they

had canned more, but most of them said they had canned fewer jars because there was no fruit in the county except berries. Nearly all of them reported that while they did not have as many jars as usual, they felt that they had a better variety because they had more vegetables and less fruit.

One interesting canning demonstration was given to a small group of Negro women near Independence. Six women and girls were present, and some of them had been having vegetables to spoil and they were very anxious to find out what they had done wrong that had made theirs spoil. They were most appreciative of the help given them, they asked good questions, and said the help given them would not only help them in their own canning but also help them as they go out into the white homes to work. This group wants to be taught how to put seats in chairs this winter.

### (3) Nutrition

While no special meetings have been devoted to nutrition, this topic has been discussed at all the food meetings, whether they were devoted to production, conservation or preparation. The women are very conscious of nutrition as related to the health of their families, and we feel that we have done a great deal in the county toward bringing to the people the importance of good nutrition in every days diet.

### (4) Preparation

Three meetings in each group were devoted to the preparation of foods. In December the topic was Christmas Sweets, and the sweets that were made required little sugar, syrup or honey being used instead. The meat substitutes were of interest to the women, especially

those who were making cheese at home. The nutritional value of the cheese, eggs and other meat substitutes was emphasized. In the fall a demonstration was given on vegetable cookery, using the more common vegetables, as potatoes, cabbage, onions, carrots and sweet potatoes. The food value of these vegetables was stressed, and the principles of vegetable cookery discussed and demonstrated. Several of the women said they had never seen cabbage cooked without meat before, and many of them said they did not know it could be cooked in such a short time. <sup>the agent</sup> I felt that food preparation was one of our most helpful topics.

Cheese making has been very popular this year, due to the shortage and high price of cheese in the stores. Demonstrations have been given in several clubs, and some of the women have made it a number of times. One woman in one of the clubs up on the mountain reported sometime ago that she had made 60 pounds. In another club eight women have made 200 pounds. Women in all parts of the county have made it, and all report that it has been a great help to them, especially those who have to pack lunches for school children or for working people. Much milk is produced and sold in Grayson County and most of the families have sufficient milk to make cheese for their own use.

#### b. Clothing

##### (1) Conservation

###### (a) Woolen garments

Since wool garments and woolen materials are hard to get, and the quality not always so good, we made a special effort last spring to store all woolen garments and blankets so that they would

not be eaten by moths. This topic was discussed and demonstrated at each group. Sweaters were properly washed with warm water and soap and blocked on towels, each person being taught how to block them to keep their original shape. Many of the women said they wished they had known sooner how to wash sweaters, before they ruined some that they had done.

At the same meetings, wool and rayon dresses were dry cleaned with cleaning solvent. After this demonstration, dozens of dresses were cleaned. This was especially helpful to the women in the west end of the county who are a long way from a dry cleaner, but the others cleaned theirs also. All the dresses in the family could be cleaned for the price of having one or two done at the cleaner's.

#### c. House Furnishings

##### (1) Conservation

###### (a) Furniture clinics

Each club had a demonstration on reseating chairs with fiber splints, the women bringing their own chairs to the meetings and putting the seats in. In this way each one learned how to do the job. About sixty chairs were reseated at the meetings, and since then many others have been done, some of the women having done as many as six chairs. Some lovely old chairs were brought, some of them a hundred years old or more. The women said they were glad to learn how to do this because there was no one they could get to do it for them.

#### d. Home Management

##### (1) Kitchen Arrangement

Making the kitchen more convenient with little or no money spent was one topic discussed. Time and labor savers that could be made at home, rearranging furnishings and equipment for convenience

and to save steps, proper height for work surfaces, coverings for work surfaces and floors, all these and others were subjects discussed and practical suggestions made. Reports have come in telling of many small improvements made by rearranging furniture or keeping certain equipment where it is most used, work surfaces re-covered, walls painted, new floor coverings, etc., all of which makes work easier and more pleasant for the homemaker.

### (2) Storage

Possibly the greatest improvement made by any one family was the one in which storage cabinets and work surfaces were built all across one side of the kitchen. It is a large kitchen and had windows on two sides. One of these was moved over beside the other, making a double window, and above the sink and work surface small windows were put in. The cabinets take care of everything, from the tiny narrow shelf for spices to the larger space at one end for cleaning equipment. The work surfaces were covered with nice inlaid linoleum and will be easy to keep clean. The floor was also covered with linoleum. This improvement was done at no cost except for materials because the family did the work themselves.

### (3) Home and Farm Unit Demonstrations.

Two home and farm unit demonstrations have recently been started, both of them being T.V.A. farm families. One family is building a new home, the man doing the work himself as he has time to work on it. He has been building it for some time and now has enough finished for them to live in. He has recently built in some very nice cabinets and work surfaces in the kitchen, and put a floor in the front porch.

The other family is planning some improvements in the home but have not gotten any done as yet.

## 2. Home demonstration club activities:

### a. Other special activities

In March an all-day program was planned and held in Independence with about 150 men and women attending. This Farm and Home Day was put on by all the agricultural agencies cooperating. Representatives from the Extension Service and from Farm Security Administration were present to speak to the group. At the end of the meeting the men organized a labor committee, and the women discussed and planned the victory food campaign.

### B. Agricultural Boards

The agricultural board assisted with the victory food campaign, visiting homes and getting the families to pledge to grow and raise all possible food this year. Cards were given out to community and neighborhood leaders, and less than half of them were returned to the agent.

### C. 4-H Clubs

#### 1. Project Work

##### a. Poultry

The 4-H clubs were organized rather late in the year, too late for the girls to have charge of the baby chicks, as they were already started. Eight girls took the egg laying unit for their project and cared for the family flocks. Seven of them completed their work, keeping records of what they had done.

##### b. Gardening

Twelve girls took gardening as their project and ten completed their work. Their records showed that they had assisted in keeping the family garden clean, helped to plant seeds, gathered

vegetables and helped with the family canning. Some of them canned a few jars alone but mostly they helped their mothers. One mother said that her little thirteen year old girl was such a help to her in canning while another one of the children was sick.

#### **D. Other Work Done by Home Demonstration Agent**

##### **1. Office of civilian defense**

Plans are being made to launch the Food Fights for Freedom program the last week in November. Some time has already been spent on this program, and more will be given to it.

##### **2. Salvage committee**

In the home demonstration clubs salvage was discussed frequently and the women salvaged old silk hose and fats. Early in the year they said they did not have any fats, but this fall as time drew near for butchering some of them have had some to give.

##### **3. Rationing board**

Assistance has been given the rationing board by my carrying information to the womens' groups concerning rationed goods. Canning sugar was one that could be assisted with, also kerosene and shoes. Often the women needed to have information about these things and I kept informed on them so I could pass it on to them.

##### **4. Red Cross**

During the summer and early fall the women in the home demonstration clubs made over a hundred wool skirts and sixty gowns for refugees. They have a few scarfs now knitting them, and have promised to make two hundred kit bags as soon as they come to the county. The women enjoyed doing this Red Cross sewing and made some sacrifices to do it, because it came to us right in their busiest season, when they

had chickens and turkeys to raise, gardens to work and canning to do. However, there is hardly a woman in the clubs who does not have someone in service and they are all glad to do all they can to help.

5. Others

a. Farm Bureau

I assisted the Farm Bureau district supervisor in putting on a county-wide meeting which he was promoting, to help boost the organization in the county. A lamb barbecue was served, and a nice program put on. About a hundred men and women attended.

b. War Board

I also assisted the War Board with the rationing of pressure canners, giving out information on the subject, sending or giving out application forms and acting on the committee to decide who was eligible for canners.

VII. The most significant contribution in meeting war needs which was made by the home demonstration program this year:

I think our food program has been the most significant contribution in meeting war needs. In it we have stressed all phases of the subject. "Production", which was done by growing more and better gardens with a greater variety of vegetables, improving the poultry flock by better feeding, housing and care; preservation of all that was produced, vegetables canned, dried or stored, poultry canned to save feed and for convenience to the homemaker, and a few fruits canned; preparation of the foods more commonly used, foods that can be used as substitutes for meats, and foods that make for better health and happiness. And through all this food work the importance of good nutrition and its relation to the health of the family was stressed.

This year has been a year of organization for the home demonstration program in Grayson. The work was begun the latter part of last year, just three months before the end of the year, therefore much time has been spent in organization and getting the work established. I feel that the women are growing stronger for home demonstration work and that they are anxious to have it permanently in Grayson County.