

ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT

CHESTERFIELD COUNTY
VIRGINIA

1946

Eleanor L. Rice Local Home Agent

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Duties as home demonstration agent were assumed in Chesterfield County on September 9, 1946. Since that time the agent has been busy learning the county and its people in order to have a clear understanding of the needs, interests and desires of the people. This was done through the visiting of homes, schools, churches, and various other meetings.

Scope of Work Five home demonstration groups have been organized with a total membership of 56. An additional 123 women have been reached by home demonstration club members.

The agent worked with the thirteen 4-H clubs that were already organized by the Farm Agent; Such clubs have a total membership of 273, of which 135 are boys and 138 are girls.

Organization

The County Home Demonstration Committee held its first meeting at Chesterfield Courthouse on October 10, 1946, with sixteen in attendance. This committee which is composed of two women from each community, has a membership of 22 women, and functioned to aid the agent in becoming better acquainted with the county and the needs, interests and desires of the people. Present at this meeting were Miss Blanche D. Harrison, Mrs. T. T. Hewlett, and Mr. R. F. Jones, County Agent, in addition to the local committeemen. Since this is the first time a home demonstration agent has been assigned to work in Chesterfield County, the agent explained to the group to the best of her knowledge, what home demonstration work really is. The importance of a home demonstration planning committee was also brought out. After a brief oral report from Miss Mozelle Archer, delegate to the State Advisory Board Meeting, Mrs. Hewlett led the group in many interesting discussions. She

stressed the importance of planning the placement of plugs, convenience outlets and other electrical fixtures before installing electricity in the home. Other topics of discussion were the clothing situation, the high cost of cotton materials, children's clothing, and the importance of proper care of all clothing. This discussion held particular interest for all in attendance, for the high cost of clothing had demanded certain changes in the use of certain articles. Discussions continued to include such things as proper working heights, the use of labor saving equipment, refinishing furniture, some things to consider when installing water in the home, and the family food supply. The committee then proceeded with planning the type of project work for home demonstration clubs for 1947. The committee decided that home demonstration clubs will carry two projects during 1947: Clothing, and food and nutrition. 4-H girls project work was discussed, and it was decided that home demonstration project work for 1947 would be somewhat similar to that of 4-H girls.

Leadership, Adult

The five home demonstration clubs in the county are functioning under the leadership of eighteen club officers, 15 project leaders and 10 subject matter leaders. Two training meetings have been held with a total of 15 in attendance. A total of approximately 30 days of service have been given by leaders. The most outstanding accomplishment of these leaders as seen by the agent is the interest and enthusiasm they have taken in acquainting their communities with the extension program. In one community (Port Walthall), Mrs. Elmo Lawing, a club leader, announced the presence of the home demonstration agent in the county, explained the agents' work as it had been explained to her by the agent, and solicited members for the club at her church one Sunday. Notice

was then sent to the agent that the community group was ready to organize whenever the agent set a date. Leaders have been influential in many other communities in stimulating interest in the community people. Thus it can be stated that leaders have done much toward acquainting the people with the work of a home demonstration agent.

4-H Leadership

The thirteen 4-H clubs in the county have a total of 29 adult leaders with 71 club officers, and 13 junior project leaders.

The agent plans to hold training meetings according to districts. Specialist help will be requested for many of the training meetings. Others will be held by the agent only. The agent plans also to hold planning meetings in communities with only community leaders present, whenever necessary.

Results, Adult clubs

Food production

Suggestive garden plans were made in many of the adult club meetings, which proved of value to the members by helping them to definitely plan their own gardens. A definite plan, intelligently thought out, is a long step toward having a successful garden. Other factors brought out in the discussions as being essentials of a successful garden were (1) Plant only good seed. (2) Plow in the fall or as early as possible. (3) Locate the garden convenient to the house, on fertile well drained soil. (4) Apply manure and fertilizer each year. (5) Use a thorough pest control program. (6) Practice frequent shallow cultivations. (7) Plant on proper planting dates.

Food conservation

The agent assisted in conducting two pantry tours. Discussions were held in many of these pantries while it was possible

for the agent to use pantry products of local women to illustrate and differentiate between good and poor canning. The use of half gallon jars was greatly discouraged, and members were urged to purchase pressure cookers for the preservation of their meats and non-acid vegetables, or take them to the community cannery, where they would be canned by the steam pressure method. The freezer locker plant in the county was advocated as an excellent means of preserving meats.

During the month of November the main topics of discussion were (1) storage (2) cutting and curing of meats. Storage was defined to members as a place of safe-keeping for a quantity of goods. Types of storage spaces and the kinds of foods suitable for storage in each were explained to members. pamphlets on cutting and curing the home meat supply were distributed to many club members.

Many of the club members are Mothers who have sons returned from the service. They are faced with the problem of satisfying the nutritional needs and the desires of these sons who have become accustomed to having well balanced diets, as well as variety in the diet. Using the "Basic X" chart, the agent centered many nutrition discussions around the returned veteran.

Clothing construction

The use of feed bags in clothing construction has been greatly emphasized by the agent. Club members have constructed from feed bags ten aprons, four child's dresses, three slips, three pairs of men's shorts, a dozen pairs of pillow cases and sheets, and two ladies dresses.

Home Safety

The importance of a drawer in the kitchen table or cabinet with sections for the various kitchen knives, forks and spoons was

one of the home safety measures taken up by the agent. The agent secured for four housewives, sectioned boxes from the ten cent store which served to prevent dangerous cuts and scratches while raking in a tumbles up drawer.

4-H Clubs

The agent assisted 4-H boys and girls in the keeping of good record books. Club members with projects in poultry had more trouble with their books than any others. Practically all other work pertaining to projects was done before the arrival of the agent.

County Fair

The annual county fair was held this year for the first time since 1940, due to war conditions. It was looked forward to with great enthusiasm by all county people. Some of the highly worthwhile contributions made by the county fair toward better citizenship may be thought of in terms of its social value, its moral, spiritual, educational, and economic values. Socially, it afforded a meeting place for old and new friends, amusements and recreation for both old and young. The county fair made it possible for people from one section of the county to see what people in other sections of the county had done during the year. Thus, through competition between communities, clubs and individuals through the exchange of ideas, interest in increased production of better products was aroused. The people of Chesterfield county were able to learn more about some of the wild life in Virginia from the exhibit displayed by the department of forestry.

The county fair is sponsored by the fair association. Its members, local people, farm-and home agents, school supervisor, and others, pay a membership fee of fifty cents, and make the plans

for the annual occasion.

On display at the county fair were six community club booth exhibits, five garden exhibits, three hundred exhibits of canned fruits, vegetables, meats, pickles, preserves, jams and jellies. One hundred displays of green peppers, onions, white and sweet potatoes, turnips, peanuts and egg plants. Sixty articles of clothing such as children's dresses, ladies dresses, slips, pajamas, nightgowns, and aprons. A large number of household articles such as sheets and pillow cases made from feed bags, table scarfs, luncheon and buffet sets, table cloths and chair sets. A lovely home-made quilt was also displayed. Baked goods exhibited were loaves of bread, pan rolls, pies, cakes and plate candy. Twelve displays of pot and cut flowers were exhibited also. Exhibited by 4-H members were the following: project record books, scrap books, fifteen displays of three jars of canned goods (One tomato, one other vegetable and one fruit), four garden displays, five coops of poultry, hybrid corn, spanish peanuts, and many other individual exhibits.

4-H Achievement Day

Seven out of thirteen 4-H clubs were represented at the achievement day program at Hickory Hill High School on November 29th, to summarize their activities and achievements for the year. In attendance were 125 club members leaders and parents. The meeting was opened with the home agent leading the group in singing The More We Get Together, The 4-H Trail, and I'm on The Upward Trail. After the statement of the purpose of the meeting by the presiding officer, each club made its achievement report and/or a yell, stunt or song. Most outstanding accomplishments were reported by the Port Walthall, Courthouse and Midlothian 4-H clubs. The Midlothian report follows.

"The Midlothian 4-H club with a membership of 12 boys and 9 girls held 9 meetings during the year with an average attendance of 12

members. 20 projects were grown, 18 were completed, and 10 members completed their project record books. 2 members sent exhibits to the county fair and won prizes.

5 members carried poultry projects, 8 grew gardens that furnished vegetables to the home, 2 grew fat pigs, and 3 carried hybrid corn projects. Total value of projects grown was \$840.

4 members attended the County Junior council. 25 attended and took part in the county club rally. Clinton Lee attended the wild life conference at Virginia State College, and made a very interesting report to the club. All of our members went on the sight-seeing trip to historical Williamsburg and Hampton Institute.

Clinton Lee and Earl Draper gave a very interesting demonstration to the club on planning the family garden. Other demonstrations in the care of baby chicks, and table etiquette were given by club members.

6 of our members entered high school in September, and are paying a part of their expenses from project returns. We are proud of the 9 who have started bank accounts.

Clinton Lee, President
Dorothy Brown, Secretary
Mrs. Gladys Bently and
Mrs. Bernise Branch, Leaders

Awards for outstanding work done during the year were made by Mr. Levi Johnson, a local leader in the County. 8 club and 32 individual awards were made. The remarks of the achievement day speaker, Mrs. T. T. Hewlett were encouraging. She enumerated some of the ways in which members can live up to their club motto, and pointed out the importance of using wisely the money received from projects. Self improvement was also emphasized. Mrs. Hewlett brought

out in her remarks that it is the amount of improvement made as a result of the project selected rather than the amount of money alone. Mrs. Hewlett's remarks were enjoyed by all, for they were in such language as could be easily interpreted by all 4-H boys and girls.

Total profits reported for the year were, gardens \$496, poultry \$490, pigs \$467, potatoes \$22, corn \$100, making a grand total of \$1899. Clubs were encouraged by both agents to challenge one another in a race toward greater achievements. Club leaders, ex-club members and other parents were given opportunity to express themselves. Many interesting remarks were made as to how each planned to give greater support to 4-H work in the coming year.

Appraisal

This being the first year that Chesterfield County has had a home demonstration agent, the most significant contribution the home demonstration program has made to the county was that of acquainting the county with this particular phase of extension work. The home demonstration committee has been instrumental in further acquainting the county people with home demonstration work. The home demonstration agent has made a great contribution toward better methods of food preservation, particularly in canning and storage. She has helped greatly with the clothing situation of many county people. A noteworthy contribution has been made in regards to better nutrition and health. The home demonstration program proved of great help in making many preparations for the county fair. Through the acknowledgement of the presence of the home demonstration agent, many housewives have given more thought and consideration to the home, making it a more comfortable place to live. The home demonstration program, though relatively new, has made some definite contributions to Chesterfield county.

4-H club work, among girls in particular, has taken on new interest with the coming of a home agent. The home demonstration program has brought to them a program filled with projects that have a definite bearing upon each individual child. Club girls are more eager to attend their meetings, for through the home demonstration program they will be able to learn to improve their personal appearance, by improving upon the care they give to their clothing, hair, skin, and their home, particularly their own room. The home demonstration program has made a great contribution toward 4-H work through offering a wider varieties of projects.