

United States Department of Agriculture  
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Office of Extension Work

Narrative Report 1921

Boys Club Work & Home Economics  
Among Negroes in the State of  
Virginia

See Report for 7 States  
Filed under Maryland

Lizzie A. Jenkins, District Agent.  
 Negro Work.

*Virginia  
 1914*

Enrollment and Membership

The enrollment given is the total for seven counties: Amherst, Bedford, Halifax, Hanover, Henry, Louisa, and Nelson.

Gardens were planned, planted, and worked, but the drought out them short. Florence Carter, a Hanover County club member had a garden and in addition 3/4 of an acre of corn and millet. She did her breaking and putting in her seed. The dry weather spoiled her crop. Marica Goodloe sold \$3.45 worth of spring kale. With part of the money she bought a hen, set her, and raised seven chickens.

Though the number of quarts of fruits and vegetables canned this year is not as great as in other years, some very good work has been done in Amherst, Bedford, Henry, and Nelson.

The Amherst agent succeeded in teaching one woman who had tried unsuccessfully to can vegetables so many times that she had given up in despair and felt perfectly sure that it could not be done. Now she is loud in her praise of Demonstration Work. Forty three of her club members made exhibits at the County Fair.

The Bedford agent began work July 1st but succeeded in getting up a splendid interest in canning. The canning club at Montvale made a donation of 20 quarts of fruits and vegetables to a home demonstrator who lost her home by fire.

Both the Amherst and Nelson agents were able to teach the people that it was possible to can without the use of acids which the women had formerly used.

A Henry County girl was able to go in to the home of a woman and teach her how to can string beans successfully after the woman had canned a number of quarts in own way and all had spoiled. The club girl's beans kept perfectly and the woman was convinced that club work is worth while.

POULTRY

In former years a good deal has been said about improving the farm poultry.

This year the women have had 14 open front poultry houses constructed and 8 remodeled. People are beginning to realize that it is necessary to give the hens a chance in order to get satisfactory results. More culling has been done than ever before. A great many people had no faith in it. The Hanover agent culled a flock for a woman who was great doubter but consented to try the experiment. When she found out that the hens which the agent marked as poor layers separated from the flock really did not lay she owned up that she was convinced.

The county and district agent visited a farm in Halifax County and pointed out certain hens as good layers in spite of the scuffings of the farmers. An account was kept and he saw that what the agents said was true according to his own confession. Now he is willing for his wife to have a poultry house and has planted green stuff near the house for the fowl.

#### MILK

After a visit of the district and county agents to a league meeting in a certain county, at which time the food value of milk was discussed, it was noted that a number of children brought milk to school as a part of their lunch. Upon a subsequent visit the Local Agent found that some of the older people had grasped the idea that the government was requiring the parents to give their children milk to drink and if they didn't do it officials would be sent to enforce the law. By request of the Local Agent in Hanover County the Superintendent of Schools has allowed the purchase of flat top stoves for heating in two schools in order that school lunches may be prepared upon them. Some of the milk brought is made into cocoa.

#### CEREAL PRODUCTS

The club girls of Amherst, Hanover, and Nelson counties have done very well with their bread. In Amherst Sarah Watson won first prize on a loaf of bread at the fair even though she had to compete with the women.

The Henry County girls had a public bread demonstration in Martinsville which was a great success in more than one way. It brought together people from six

communities; it showed how the girls appreciated the club uniform; it demonstrated to an audience of about 500 people that these girls had learned how to make several kinds of bread; and it showed good team work. Last, but not least, money was raised to buy a camera. 50 girls took part in the program and demonstration. They gave the club yell in a way that showed that they were proud of their club and its work.

In Hanover a woman visitor to a girls' cooking club saw them mixing their bread with spoons. She remarked that it was a lesson to her. During the time just previous to her visit she had suffered from some form of itch on her hand and had had to buy bakers' bread because she did not know that she could have mixed the dough with a spoon. In the same county when the club girls of one community went to their Sunday School picnic they were very proud of the cake they carried because they had learned to make it in their club.

#### TEXTILES

The value of the sewing clubs is certainly making itself felt. It is gratifying to see that year by year as the women and girls come under the influence of demonstration work they learn to buy and make clothing that will be durable and becoming rather than flashy and showy.

The same Hanover girls who were so proud of their cake also decided to go to their picnic in uniform, i. e., middie blouse and blue skirt. It was their own idea.

More curtains have been made than usual because that is one point which the agents have stressed.

#### COUNTY FAIRS AND CONFERENCES

##### AMHERST COUNTY

Approximately 1400 people attended the first fair held by the Maple Grove Fair Association of Amherst, Va., September 20th - 22nd, 1921. The Association

appealed to the Extension Department to assist in planning and carrying out this fair. The Hampton Extension Department very kindly helped by sending one of its workers to render aid in the Farm Crops and Live Stock Departments. The entire Women's Department was placed in charge of the Local H. D. Agents of Amherst and Bedford. In fact, it looked as if the Amherst Local H. D. Agent were general Manager, judging by the number of questions left to her decision by the President of the Association. At the close of the fair the President and Directors were very profuse in their thanks to the Extension Department for so kindly assisting in making their fair a success and pledged their support to Demonstration Work.

The county people certainly enjoyed it, many having come down from the mountains on the first day and camped upon the grounds until everything was over.

Twelve club girls put their finished uniforms and underwear and canned goods on exhibition. Ten received prizes, including one girl who won second prize in the ladies' driving class. One club girl won the prize given for loaf of bread in competition with women. The canned goods was limited as to variety, but the quality was good.

Mr. G. J. Davis of Hampton handled the farm crops and live stock in a way that gave great satisfaction and splendid instruction as to the kind of things to put on a fair, and how to arrange them as well. At the platform meeting Mr. Davis spoke on Soil Improvement while the District Home Demonstration Agent discussed the leading articles shown in the women's department, especially sewing, canning, and butter. There were 176 entries in all.

Among the white friends present were Attorney Thomas Whitehead of Amherst, the Messers Beard, one of whom is manager of the white fair at Amherst, Mrs. Harrison and several others.

BEDFORD FARMERS' CONFERENCE

About 100 adults and 75 children made up the audience of the Farmers' Conference

at Bedford on September 24th. It was held in the dining room of the Bedford Hotel. Three ministers, the Rev. Mr. Whitlock, the Rev. Mr. W. E. Gray, and the Rev. Mr. Smith, one physician, Dr. G. L. A. Jones, were present and took active parts in the meeting.

District Agent prepared and placed a Creole Stew in the home-made fireless cooker which Mrs. Flagg, H. D. Agent, had built and which she explained to the audience. Mrs. Holly Jones, Pres. of the Montvale Women's Club, told how she built her cooker and served the stew to the Conference. It was heartily enjoyed and created interest in H. D. work.

The H. D. Agent had constructed a miniature poultry house which was used in teaching the conference about better housing of the farmers' hens.

Reports were given from three women's clubs of that community. Mary Hart of Goode made the report for the girls' club of that community. Six teachers who were present showed a very lively interest in the fireless cooker and asked to be taught to make them. Two women of the town of Bedford stated that they had been asked to manage a club but did not know that Home Demonstration Work meant anything like that and that they would go to work at once.

Mr. Geo. J. Davis of the Hampton Extension Department gave an instructive talk on soil improvement and consequently better living for the farmer's wife and family. After his speech there was a round table discussion in which a number of farmers and two of the ministers joined. One man who stated that he was an old man and an old farmer, said that he had never heard any such teaching given to farmers before and that he hoped that the Extension Department would continue its good work.

#### HENRY COUNTY FARMERS' CONFERENCE

Mrs. Eva S. Sanders, Local Home Demonstration Agent, succeeded in calling together an audience of about 60 people who were interested in Home Demonstration work and improvement of their farms. The meeting was held in the Renner Warehouse, Oct. 18th, 1921. A small exhibit of canned goods done by the members of the girls' club was made.

Three club girls gave reports of their work. One of them had taught a woman the club method of canning string beans successfully after the woman's method had failed. Representatives of four community clubs told of what they had done in club work and of the help which they had already received.

District Agent, E. L. Charity talked on Soil, Improvement and "What Community Clubs Can Do". A number of questions were asked during the meeting and several people stopped after the meeting to ask more information. They seemed hungry for just what the Extension Department brought.

District Agent L. A. Jenkins talked on the "Benefits to Be Derived from Club Work".

Professor Masley of the Graded School, white, was present and urged all present to make the most of their educational advantages. Professors Petty and Hairston two of our own teachers spoke in commendation of the work and pledged their continued support. One minister, the Rev. Mr. Jeter, was present and spoke encouragingly.

One woman, a Mrs. Smith, told me that she lived about 25 miles away and drove that distance in a farm wagon rather than miss the meeting. Many of the people of Henry County seem thoroughly interested.

WILSON COUNTY FARMERS' CONFERENCE

About 35 people responded to the call of Mrs. Wallie V. Thompson, Local Home Demonstration Agent, and attended the conference held in the Baptist Church at Shipman, Sept. 24th. District Agents G. E. Oliver and L. A. Jenkins were present. Thirteen communities were represented. Some of the people had driven more than 30 miles to attend this conference.

Mrs. Thompson, Local Home Demonstration Agent, brought a miniature model poultry house and coop which she had constructed and used it to illustrate the proper the proper care and housing of poultry. An inexpensive homemade drier was also explained to the audience.

What aroused a very lively interest, probably the most lively interest during the whole meeting was the demonstration of a homemade fireless cooker. The Local Agent put string beans in a cooker before leaving home and served them all done to the audience. The men were especially pleased. One man said that he saw how it would save a great deal of wood chopping. He asked the agent to come at once and teach his wife how to construct one.

District Agent Oliver talked to the men about Soil Improvement. Later in the day after county agent Russel Ghist and the Secretary of the Tobacco Growers' Association came in the Association was taken up and explained thoroughly by these three gentlemen. Some signers were secured.

Representatives of the different communities spoke in approval of the work and pledged their support.

Hampton Institute has been most generous in rendering assistance to our Extension Work whenever any demand has been made.

The Negro Organization Society is also most anxious to cooperate in every way possible.

Thanks also due the Superintendents of Public Instruction in counties where the Local Home Demonstration Agents are working for the very warm welcome to cooperate with the schools. The Supervising Industrial Teachers also have been most kind in helping to make it possible to secure local aid.

We are also grateful to all county officials who have given local aid from public funds.

It is very encouraging to know that more counties are asking for work than there is money for agents' salaries.

Respectfully submitted,

(Signed) Lizzie A. Jenkins.

District Agent.