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*Extension Work in Home
Economics for Rural
Women*

CLARENCE OUSLEY

Director of Extension Service, College
Station, Texas

EXTENSION WORK IN HOME ECONOMICS FOR RURAL WOMEN.

By Mrs. Nat P. Jackson, Organizer Rural Women, Extension Service, Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas.

One of the phases of the Extension work of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas that is steadily growing in popularity and usefulness is that of which rural women are receiving the direct benefit.

The plan of this work is very simple and is outlined below for the information of those

who wish to aid in the movement or to receive the benefit of it for their own communities or counties.

Rural women are asked to organize themselves into Bands of Good Neighbors, Circles, or Societies, give such groups a definite name, elect such officers or leaders as they may deem necessary and apply to the Extension Service for literature. The club is then regularly enrolled and the names of the officers placed on the Extension Service mailing list. Each club is furnished with a copy of a simple constitution and by-laws, which may be adapted to local needs before being adopted, if desired. The Farm Women's Reading Course, planned for group study to be conducted in fortnightly meetings, is sent free of charge to every club, and valuable publication bearing on the betterment of Texas farm conditions are mailed from time to time.

As often as practicable, trained lecturers who give instruction and demonstrations in the fundamentals of Texas Rural Home Economics, are sent to each club. The expression, "Texas Rural Home Economics," is used advisedly, because it embraces subjects peculiar to our Texas country homes, and includes instruction in the making of butter, the production and marketing of eggs and the preservation of our native products. This department is trying to suit its instruction to the common every-day needs of Texas rural women, both through reading courses sent out to clubs and through demonstrators especially trained to teach the subjects in which our Texas farm women need training. It is hardly necessary to say that child welfare is counted one of the most important phases of home economics and that it is stressed in our teaching.

It will be evident that it is convenient to have our rural clubs as closely grouped as possible, since this will make it easier to reach a large number of women with instruction at one time, thus lessening the expense of our Extension field workers. Where there are a number of clubs in one county, it is advisable for them to form a county union

or federation of women's clubs, such as are already in good working order in Bee, De Witt, Collin, Gregg, Armstrong and Lubbock Counties. The advantages of such an organization are evident to those who have given Texas rural conditions much thought. The various rural community groups are linked with the Agricultural and Mechanical College and may feel at liberty to ask for such help as they may need from time to time. Already some definite and helpful follow-up work has been done in the practical teaching of cooperation in the marketing of eggs by the organization of egg circles.

It has been found that the rural club movement is enriching community life by getting women together, not only for the much needed social features of the meetings, but for cooperative work for their schools, their churches and their young people. The county organization, composed of the smaller community units, brings rural and urban women together, gives them a common purpose for the advancement and development of the material interests of the county and breaks down the barriers between town and country.

The success with which this work is meeting has surprised even those who planned it and have been its warmest advocates. It is but just to say that much credit is due to the active support and aid given this project by the Texas Federation of Women's Clubs. As soon as a definite plan had been formed by the Extension Service of the Agricultural and Mechanical College, they were submitted to that big-hearted woman, Mrs. Henry B. Fall, who was at that time president of the State Federation. After a careful examination of the plan outlined and of the first published courses of study, she gave them her hearty approval as suited to the needs of Texas rural women. She also, in a cordial letter of endorsement, urged the club women of the State to aid in reaching rural communities with this work for the improvement of living conditions in our State; and, they, already keenly alive to the needs of the hour,

have eagerly rendered most loving and efficient service. Without the sympathetic and intelligent assistance thus given, it would have been hard to reach the hundreds of rural communities that are now receiving direct aid from this department. Whenever an offer has been made to send a field worker to assist in organizing a county, the federated club women of the towns, often aided by the superintendent of public instruction, the board of trade and the county demonstration agent, made dates and announcements, arranged an itinerary for the representative of the Extension Service, provided rapid local transportation and stood sponsor for the success of the movement. In several instances, as in Collin and DeWitt Counties, local club women have asked very little help in the matter of forming rural clubs, but have undertaken the work themselves and have met with wonderful success. Fortunate indeed are the communities that are guided by good women imbued with the true club spirit of usefulness and helpfulness.

It is sincerely hoped that the interest of the club women in this work will be as unflagging in the future as it has been in the past, for nothing can be more vital to the material and intellectual uplift of our State than is this work for the brave and patient women of our farm homes, the homes that are the foundation stones of our prosperity. It is gratifying to know that the present president of the Texas Federation of Women's Clubs, Mrs. Fred Fleming, and her co-workers are in warm sympathy with the work, as is shown by the outlines submitted by the Rural Life Committee.

While it is desirable that counties and communities act together as far as possible and that a number of clubs be formed in one vicinity, individuals and single groups should not hesitate to effect organizations and write to the Extension Service for suggestions and assistance. It is our desire to help the people to help themselves.

Application should be made to Mrs. Nat. P. Jackson, Organizer Rural Women, Extension Department, College Station, Texas.