

*Indiana Extension Homemakers
100th Year Celebration - - -
Monroe County History*



To



*We believe in...
the greatest institution
in the world :
THE HOME*

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OUR GOALS:

*Education
Community Service
Developing Leadership*

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Our history began when President Lincoln signed the Land-Grant Act in 1862, which allowed funds to be used to start colleges which would include mechanical arts, military tactics, and agriculture. These funds helped establish Purdue University. Within its Agriculture Department, the Farmer's Institute, a national program, was begun. This consisted of county organizations where speakers provided information to rural communities. On January 17, 1913 wives and daughters of this institute met at the Purdue Agricultural Conference to form the Indiana Home Economics Association (IHEA). At this meeting, a resolution was drafted to petition the State Legislature to provide \$100,000 to erect and equip a building at Purdue for a Home Economics Department.

In 1914 the National Smith-Lever Act established the Extension Service to "take the college out to the folks". Q. A. Rainbolt became the first Agricultural Agent in Monroe County in 1916. He was followed by Walter Rogers in 1918, who served until 1947.

Enter a whirlwind in the form of Elma Stevenson (wife of Dr. Harry Stevenson, a local optometrist). She was a transplant from Owen County, where she had started a Home Economics Club. She aided Walter Rogers in starting 4-H and Home Economics Clubs here in Monroe County by attending other organized groups within the county and promoting Extension's involvement in providing programs. In March of 1928 she organized the first Monroe County Home Economics Club, The Homemakers. Also that year, Pleasant Hour, which was a former sewing club, and Energetic became clubs. The Energetic Club is currently the oldest active club in Monroe County. Lessons that year were on sewing. At the end of the year they met for the first Achievement Day, exhibiting samples of their finished sewing projects. Four more clubs organized in 1929: Vernal, ODO, 3H, and Dixie Clubs. At the annual Achievement Day, some of the completed sewing projects were given to needy families...beginning service to the community.

In April 1930, Elma Stevenson gave a talk to a Parent-Teachers meeting. This prompted twelve ladies to meet and the Walk-A-Lot Club was formed. At its first meeting, which included a pitch-in lunch, seven varieties of potato salad arrived. This is currently the second oldest active club in Monroe County, which still meets for the day, sharing lunch.

In the 1930s: Elements of club and county organization were established. Each club has continued to follow a basic meeting plan, but added their own flavor and traditions over the years. In 1930 there were enough Monroe County clubs to form the County Council, with Elma serving as President for the first eight years. That year there was a state contest to write up a creed for IHEA, with Mrs. Horne from Hendricks County as the winner. In 1931 roll call was added to club meetings, allowing us to share personal thoughts and memories. 1935 saw the start of home and business tours. In 1936 the first county wide Program Book was printed and the Home Economics Chorus started.

During these early years, lessons were given on sewing, food/nutrition, gardening, and health. These became the basics for lessons included in the years to come. As each decade rolled around, additional appropriate lessons and community services changed to meet the needs of the time.

During the depression of the 1930s, members were encouraged toward family self-sufficiency. Lessons covered Soap Making, Canning, Home Health Remedies, Slip Covers, Rug Making, Refashioning Garments, and Child Care. Flood relief comforters were made.

In the **1940s**: WWII influenced the direction of our 26 clubs as we learned about: Gardens for Defense, Substitutes for War Shortage Foods, Conserving Food and Clothes for War Needs, and Adjustments When Servicemen Return. County activities were curtailed due to gas rationing. After the war, lessons presented included: Good Grooming, Pressure Cooking, Freezing Foods, and Care of New Nylon and Rayon Fabrics. We helped with: Red Cross, USO and a County Road Name Signs Project.

There was a noticeable increase in women working outside the home and in 1948 the first Monroe County evening club, Helpful Hannahs, came into being.

As the 1950s arrived the county organization was in full swing to celebrate National Home Demonstration Week. Week long activities included radio and TV programs; local business, home and IU tours; business window displays; style shows; entertainments; and out-of county field trips.

Lessons included: Making Hats, How Government Works, Quick Meals, Furniture Arrangement, Repair of Electrical Equipment, Make Me a Better Driver, Teaching Children Values, Use and Care of Automatic Washers and Dryers, and Plastics in the Home. We attacked unsightly county dumps, provided personnel for blood drives, and encouraged polio shots.

In 1951 there was a name change to the state organization. Now we were to be known as Home Demonstration Clubs.

Clubs started making their name tags for Achievement Night in 1953. The first pie baking contest at the fair occurred in 1958.

In 1955: The Monroe County Fair bought the current fairgrounds and first built the Community Building. A lasting partnership was started between the Fair Board and our Demonstration Clubs. For thirteen years (1955-1968), clubs ran a food stand from the Community Building's kitchen. Over these years thousands of dollars in profits were funneled back to the Fair for improving the kitchen. This included kitchen equipment and supplies, cement for the floor, screens for the windows, putting the dining area under roof, and table service to feed 200 at a meal. Supporting the Fair has continued 45 more years in help with handling the thousands of yearly Community Building's Open Class and Children's Open Class entries, the Style Show, Bake-it Contest, and Kid's Big Top.

During the 1960s: Time appropriate lessons included: Auto Mechanics, Hair Care, Appreciating Antiques, Insecticides, Hooked Rugs by Elma Stevenson, Family Camping, Troubled Teens, Mental Health, Credit Cards, and Protection Against Nuclear Attack. Substantial funds were donated for building a new hospital, and for supplies for the new 4-H building at the fairgrounds. We supported an Anti-tuberculosis Campaign and the Measles Immunization Program.

By now we belonged to two international organizations, Associated Country Women of the

World (ACWW) and Country Women’s Council (CWC). Support was given through “Coins for Friendship.”

1966 brought another name change to the organization. It was now Indiana Extension Homemakers Association (IEHA).

The first Homemaker of the Year and door prizes were added to the Achievement Night festivities in 1968.

In the 1970s: The number of clubs in Monroe County peaked to about forty. Lessons again addressed the concerns of the times, such as: Microwave Ovens, Domestic Violence, Crockpot Cooking, Artificial Sweeteners, Energy Conservation, Care Givers, and Stress/Depression. We made dresses for Opportunity House, had a bib making project for women at Muscatatuck Mental Hospital, and collected bread wrappers for Stonebelt School.

1980-1990: Added lessons on: Balancing Multiple Roles, Putting a New Glow in an Old Romance, Organ Donations, and Ethnic Cooking. In the community we were busy with: a Seat-Belt Safety Program, gifts for first baby born on Ag Day, mapping county cemeteries, regular cake and cookie donations to Madison State Hospital, Cholesterol Clinic, Pre-School Screening, and the Crisis Pregnancy Center.

Year 2000 and counting: Lessons have included: Getting Rid of Clutter, Going Green, Lunch in a Drawer, Estate Planning, Internet Safety, Identity Theft, Herbal Teas, Keeping Your Mind Frisky, and Healthy Sprouts. We continued to share our hearts through: cookies for Community Kitchen children, a nursing home bird aviary, scrapbooking for children in foster care, cleaning supplies for the Rise apartments, curtains for Middleway House, food and games for Banneker Community Center, and office supplies for Jill’s House. This names only a few ways we have continued to touch peoples’ lives as a county organization. Over the years, each individual club also has had other special projects and community organizations that they support.

You might ask how our lessons are passed on. A representative from each club attends a lesson presented by an extension agent or another knowledgeable person. These representatives then return to their clubs and present the lesson. This sharing activity prepares individuals for leadership roles.

For the past 100 years, Extension Homemakers have had lots of fun and developed strong friendships as they have worked to meet their goals:

* Strengthening the family through EDUCATION

* Giving of themselves to COMMUNITY SERVICE

* Developing skills in LEADERSHIP

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Current clubs and their starting dates:

DOMESTIC ENGINEERS, 1981
ENERGETIC CLUB, 1928
EVENING BELLS, 1956
EVENING GLORIES, 1990
GOOD NEIGHBORS, 1967
HIGH HOPES, 1965
HIGHLANDERS, 1961
LES BONNES AMIES, 1955
MUSIC MAKERS, 1979
NINE PATCHES, 1991
NORTHERN NEIGHBORS, 1969
THREE T'S, 1968
TOWN & COUNTRY, 1960
TWIN LAKE CO-WORKERS, 1988
WALK-A-LOT, 1930

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OR

check our website

<http://www3.ag.purdue.edu/counties/monroe/Pages/ExtensionHomemakers.aspx>



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