

# A Brief History of Co-Operative Extension Homemakers Association in Indiana

Written July, 1989

It was 1913 -

The editor of the "Ladies Home Journal" criticized "heads loaded down with puffs and 'rats', hobble skirts so tight that they reveal the figure at every step. Sleeves too short, necks too low, and stockings of the thinnest, transparent 'silk'.

Woodrow Wilson was the President of the United States.

The Federal Income Tax Law went into effect.

There was considerable activity in the Woman Suffrage Movement.

Wool Blankets were on sale at \$1.48.

Very few women were employed outside the home. Of those, 40 out of 100 were domestics.

The Indiana Home Economics Association became a reality.

On January 17, 1913, a small group of women got together at Purdue University and drew up a constitution for an Indiana Home Economics Association. During this first year, 58 members signed up and 10 clubs throughout the state joined the Association.

In her President's message at the Association's second meeting, Mrs. Virginia C. Meredith said, "Every community needs organized groups of women to guide, in a common sense way, spirited discussions about whatever will make Indiana homes better homes."

The Smith-Levar Act of 1914 provided for the funding, field demonstrations, publications and other means to carry on Extension work throughout the United States. In Indiana, this work is administered through Purdue University and carried out by County Extension Agents.

Miss Rose Marie Kronemiller became LaPorte County's first "Home Demonstration Agent" in 1936.

Today, LaPorte County's Extension Home Economist, Kathy Butwin, serves as advisor to Extension Homemaker Clubs. From her office in the County Complex, up-to-date information on a great variety of topics related to the home (everything from nutrition to energy conservation) is available to the public. "Home Demonstration Clubs" (as they were called at that time) started in LaPorte County in 1925. There were six clubs in that year. Today there are 45 clubs with a total of 670 members, who get together monthly to learn, exchange ideas and, of course, have spirited discussions.

Glove Making - 1936

Mending, Darning & Patching - 1944

County Road Situations - 1954

Taking Advantage of Peak Food Supplies - 1962

Grapevine Wreaths - 1980

Health Walking - 1988



As lesson content has changed over the years, so has membership in LaPorte County Extension Homemakers Clubs changed as a reflection of woman's role in the 1989 economy. This is no longer an organization exclusively for women with farm-related interest. A typical member today might work at a bank or be a teacher. She might have her home in town or country.

1913 to 1989; more than 75 years. Indiana Extension Homemakers Association continues to grow.