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SAKatchewan women's institutes

The rural women's university

1911-1986

A thesis
Submitted to the college of graduate studies and research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

master of continuing education

in the
Department of communications, continuing and vocational education
University of saskatchewan

by

kerrie a. strathy

regina, saskatchewan

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is the first major attempt to document the accomplishments of Saskatchewan Women's Institutes - Saskatchewan's largest and longest surviving adult education movement for rural women which was known as the Association of Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan prior to 1971. The purpose of the study is threefold. The primary purpose is to make up for the lack of scholarly work on Saskatchewan Women's Institutes by documenting the organization's history as an adult education movement. A secondary purpose is to critically examine the relationship between SWI and the University which organized Homemakers' Clubs as a vehicle to provide extension services for rural women. The third purpose is to provide insight into the role rural women played in Saskatchewan's development. The study increases understanding about this important movement by documenting its growth and decline and its educational and other accomplishments from its establishment in 1911 to its 75th Anniversary in 1986.

The University connection was crucial to the rise and transformation of the Rural Women's University, as the Association of Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan was known, because of its close relationship to the University. Four distinct phases were identified. During the first two phases the number of clubs grew rapidly because the University employed staff to organize clubs and provide direction. Rural women were anxious to join these clubs because they provided much needed social contact and educational opportunities. Membership peaked during the third phase, but began to decline after 1941 because the University cutback the delivery of educational programs through the Clubs, and because it no longer employed staff to mobilize clubs. The fourth phase was charac-
terized by continued cutbacks in University support and funding. This, combined with rural depopulation, improved transportation and communications networks, and other educational opportunities for rural women contributed to the gradual, but steady decline of members and clubs.

An examination of club activities dispels the myth that SWI was merely a social club. Through Homemakers' Clubs rural women learned how to cope with their harsh environment and broadened their interests beyond the home. Homemakers' established libraries, community centres and health clinics which provided a foundation for governments to build on in later years. The University had a significant impact on the organization's activities, particularly its focus on education and the avoidance of political and controversial issues.

It appears that the era of the "Rural Women's University" has come to an end in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan Women's Institutes 75th Anniversary was celebrated in a serious state of deterioration. The majority of members were over 60 years of age, and prospects for attracting new members were not good. University support and direction in the early years encouraged SWI to become dependent and discouraged the development of strong leadership amongst members. The withdrawal of University support prevented SWI from developing and delivering quality educational programs that could have attracted young rural women. With a declining membership base, withdrawal of University support and uncertain core funding from the provincial Department of Agriculture it is unlikely that SWI will continue for much longer. Although there is still a need for a rural women's organization it appears that Saskatchewan Women's Institutes does not have the financial or human resources necessary to revitalize itself to meet the need.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The subject of this study is Saskatchewan Women's Institutes (SWI), a women's organization which has contributed to the social and educational development of rural women in Saskatchewan for over 75 years. Saskatchewan Women's Institutes was formed in 1911 as the Association of Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan, largely through the efforts of the University of Saskatchewan. For most of its history, the University has used the Women's Institutes as the primary vehicle for the delivery of its extension services to women. The Saskatchewan Women's Institutes has roots in the original Women's Institutes started in Ontario in 1897, and is part of a national and international movement - the only Canadian adult education initiative that has been taken up in other countries. The association with the University is unique to Saskatchewan's Institutes and has led many members to call the Institutes the Rural Women's University.

It is evident by simply looking at the number of women who have been club members, at the many educational programs that have been developed and presented to women through SWI, and at the concrete contributions clubs have made to rural community life that SWI is one of the most significant women's organizations in Saskatchewan's history. The provincial government formally recognized their achievements in 1976 on a cairn which reads as follows:

... The Homemakers' Clubs have worked to increase communications among farm women, and to improve the rural community since their formation in 1911 by the Univer-
sity of Saskatchewan’s Extension Services. Local meet­
ings provided a place for all women to meet and learn
new homemaking skills. Rural communities benefited from
local clubs sponsorship of music and drama festivals,
libraries and community halls. These clubs helped to
create an awareness of the need for social reform.
While avoiding politics, they pressured governments to
improve grid roads, rural health and educational ser­
vices, and to change laws which adversely affected
women. After 1972 the clubs continued to work for a
better rural life under the name of Women’s Institutes.¹

Despite the formal recognition by the province, however, little has been
written either by historians or adult educators about the role of SWI or
its contribution to women’s education or the development of the prov­
ince.

This introductory chapter outlines the roots of SWI in the Women’s
Institute movement and the University. It identifies the limited liter­
ature related to the provincial organization and explains the purpose
and approach of the study. The final section of this chapter outlines
the basic organization of the remainder of the study.

ROOTS OF SASKATCHEWAN WOMEN’S INSTITUTES

The model for SWI was Ontario’s Women’s Institutes which were
started at Stoney Creek in 1897 by Adelaide Hoodless, who lost her 18
month old son because she did not know about the need to pasteurize milk.
She became determined to prevent other such tragedies and devoted the
rest of her life to promoting educational opportunities to prepare women
to care for their families. She set up Women’s Institutes to redress the
wrongs done to women by the formal school system in which the same
things were taught to boys and girls despite the fact that their normal
work lives were so vastly different.

In establishing Women’s Institutes, Hoodless followed principles
that are endorsed by current adult educators. For example, her subject, the home and family, was of vital concern to women. As far as possible members were involved in the program and, because they prepared their own papers and presented their own demonstrations, they learned by doing. Members were organized to act upon their new learning and study was combined with sociability. Women's Institutes were an adult education movement for women which "...gave Canada a blueprint for Extension Education."¹

Homemakers' Clubs were organized in Saskatchewan in 1910-11 largely to deliver much needed extension services for rural women through the efforts of Hedley Auld, Director of Extension for the newly established University of Saskatchewan. Extension work was a University priority and it invested a considerable amount of time and money organizing and supporting the Association of Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan (AHCS). This connection with the University had a significant impact on the number and the nature of educational opportunities provided for rural women and on the organization's growth. In an early 1930's study of adult education in Canada, Homemakers' Clubs were described as agents for the University in the communities they serve. They were ranked high "as agencies for the wise and constructive development of rural community life", and their future was considered to be secure because of the financial backing and guidance of the University.² In later years, however, the University allocated more resources to on-campus activities which contributed to the decline of Homemakers' Clubs. Cutbacks in University support had an impact on SWI's ability to remain strong and lead one to conclude that clubs were dependent upon the University for their strength and success.
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

An extensive search of the literature about Saskatchewan adult education and women's history was conducted in an attempt to find out more about SWI. It is clear from the literature that the Saskatchewan Women's Institutes have not been fully investigated.

Literature about adult education in Saskatchewan is sparse. The literature that does exist is focused on cooperative, vocational and agrarian education programs which were largely directed at men. Even Michael Hayden, Carlyle King and Walter Thompson who wrote histories of the University of Saskatchewan barely mentioned Homemakers' Clubs as part of the Extension Division.

A few studies of adult education contain information about AHCS and SWI as part of larger works. The first is the study of adult education in Canada which Peter Sandiford, a British sociologist, coordinated in the early 1930's. This study looked upon AHCS as an effective means of delivering extension programs to rural women up to the early 1930's, but mentioned that the University was unable to expand or even maintain previous levels of support to AHCS because of the severe drought. A thesis entitled "A History of Adult Education on the Prairies: Learning to Cope in Agrarian Saskatchewan" has a chapter on the organization and education of women. In it, Padraig Blenkinsop examined activities of Homemakers' Clubs up to 1944 and concluded that they were well received because they met the needs of rural women. Its focus was on social reform, however, so the study also examined the more progressive Women's Grain Grower's Association. An unpublished history of Extension at the University of Saskatchewan by Lorne Paul, former Extension staff member, includes a chapter on Women's Work. This history provides some informa-
tion on AHCS, but only covers the period up to 1970. None of these studies were intended to provide a comprehensive overview of SWI's achievements, nor do they critically examine the University relationship.

The absence of research on SWI is related to the lack of writing on women's history in general. In the past, women were rarely thought to be involved in activities that historians considered to be significant. Consequently, Saskatchewan historians neglected to record the achievements of women. The few historical accounts written about Saskatchewan women's organizations concentrate on the more progressive, but short-lived Women's Grain Growers' Association, despite the fact that Saskatchewan Women's Institutes existed much longer, and had a much larger membership. This has led to much misunderstanding and a lack of appreciation about SWI's significant contribution to the education of rural women and to the expansion of services throughout rural Saskatchewan.

Histories have been compiled about Women's Institutes in other provinces and other countries. Histories of British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island Women's Institutes were published as anniversary projects. The British Women's Institutes, which were started by a Canadian woman, had their accomplishments, including the founding of the permanent Denman College, recorded. Neeve Scarborough also compiled information about Women's Institutes around the world. The Association of Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan published booklets to celebrate its 25th and 50th Anniversaries. However, these booklets are largely filled with congratulatory messages from past presidents and Extension Department staff and were not widely distributed.
Recently historians have come to recognize that "...the historical experience of women in Canada is a legitimate area of scholarly concern." The lack of study about SWI is a serious oversight of Saskatchewan's historians. This thesis is the first major attempt to document the accomplishments of Saskatchewan's largest and longest surviving adult education movement for rural women, and the first to critically examine the relationship between SWI and the University.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is threefold. The primary purpose is to make up for the lack scholarly work on Saskatchewan Women's Institutes by documenting the organization's 75 year history as an adult education movement. The study will increase understanding about this important movement by documenting its growth and decline, its educational and other activities and accomplishments, and by examining them in relation to the social conditions of the time.

A secondary purpose is to examine critically the relationship between SWI and the University which organized it as a vehicle to provide extension services for rural women. The study will show that the University connection was crucial to the rise and transformation of SWI. The University had a significant impact on the organization's activities, particularly its focus on education and avoidance of political and controversial issues. University support was responsible for the rapid growth of Homemakers' Clubs prior to 1941, and the gradual withdrawal of support contributed to their subsequent decline.

Documenting the history of SWI will also provide insight into the role that rural women played in Saskatchewan's development. The examina-
tion of SWI's activities over the first 75 years will show how its members contributed to the development of rural areas and will dispel the myth that SWI was merely a social club.

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE APPROACH

Many historians have identified the common men and women as the key to an understanding of history. Norman Black, Saskatchewan's first historian, described the historian's duty as:

... to tell the people's own story, to show whence they come and how and why, to trace the rise and transformation of their local institutions and the relations existing between these and the social conditions of the hour. 1

In support of this duty Black expressed his concern that "...the humble work of countless nameless men should be remembered ... preserved from oblivion." 15 and argued that history be written while 'oldtimers' are around to make their contribution. In a similar vein, the Corrective Collective, an organization devoted to the documentation of women's history, believes that the history of Canadian women rests in the millions of women who never become famous 19, like the members of SWI. Veronica Strong-Boag stressed the urgent need for further work in Canadian women's history - especially the Women's Club Movement. 27 She argued that after World War I the time had gone when one could consider women's clubs a fad. They proved that women were capable of working cooperatively to remedy private and public difficulties. As Saskatchewan's longest surviving women's organization it is imperative that SWI's history be recorded.

This thesis pursues Black's 'historian's duty' in documenting and analyzing the Saskatchewan Women's Institutes. Because there is little
literature on SWI, the research included extensive investigation of primary sources, including interviews with charter and long term club leaders and members. It documents a part of the history of adult education and women in Saskatchewan that has never been comprehensively investigated. The study describes the rise and transformation of SWI's relationship with the University, and analyzes it in relation to the social conditions of the times. As a first step in the documentation of SWI's history, this study uses a descriptive chronological approach.

SOURCES

Since this study is the first on this topic, most information had to be secured from primary sources. The Saskatchewan Archives Board has Agricultural Societies' files which contain original correspondence regarding the early organizational work carried out through the University. The Archives Board also has original minute books and other records from disbanded clubs as well as some microfilmed records of on-going clubs. These records provided details about how and why the early clubs were organized and information about their early activities.

The most useful documents were the Records of the Homemakers' Clubs/Saskatchewan Women's Institutes which are contained in the University of Saskatchewan Archives. These materials include an almost complete series of Director's Reports, Convention Minutes, Advisory Council Minutes, financial records and correspondence. Useful information regarding the clubs was also found in the Extension Department files and the early Presidential Papers. More recent reports were obtained from the SWI and Extension Division Offices. These documents were examined in detail to reveal the activities in which the clubs were involved over
the 75 year period and to see how the relationship with the University changed over time.

In addition to a thorough review of the literature and primary sources, personal interviews were conducted with five past AHCS Presidents, women who were members of clubs throughout the province, the last five SWI Executive Secretaries, three former Homemakers' Club lecturers and former Extension staff members. These interviews helped clarify and expand upon written documentation. Interviews also provided information about reactions to the various changes that occurred in the relationship between the clubs and the University. Since many SWI members and former Extension Department staff are well on in years, it is imperative that their stories be recorded now.

A number of secondary sources were consulted to provide data for this thesis. First, materials related to the history of Saskatchewan were used to provide details about the social conditions which encouraged the establishment and transformation of SWI. Secondary sources related to the history of prairie women including those by Kohl (1976), MacEwan (1975), Rasmussen (1976), Smith and Pasternak (1978) and Willick (1985) were also examined. These sources, like the provincial histories, barely mentioned SWI. The few histories of adult education in Canada, and particularly in Saskatchewan, provided some information about the extent of adult education, but most provided little detail about SWI's role in educating rural women or its relationship to the University of Saskatchewan.

Specific information about individual clubs was obtained by examining the accounts of Homemakers' Clubs in many of the local history publications and the club histories submitted to the SWI Office as a 75th
Anniversary project. The history of the provincial body, however, is not simply a compilation of local histories. Club histories varied greatly in detail and quality, but many provided important information regarding club activities and provided insight into the University connection or control that some clubs felt.

CHAPTER OUTLINES

The period covered in this study extends from 1910, when the University undertook to establish an organization for women, until SWI celebrated its 75th Anniversary in 1986. The study uses a chronological approach to trace the rise and transformation of SWI's relationship to the University and is divided into four phases. The first phase covers the early organizational work from 1910-13 when the University hired a woman to oversee the clubs. The second phase is from 1913-30 during which time the clubs were administered by the first Director of Women's Work. The third phase covers the years from 1930 until the second Director retired in 1949. The fourth phase spans the years from 1949-86 during which time a number of women administered the declining membership. Throughout each period descriptions of club activities are included in order to analyze changes in relation to the existing social and economic conditions and in the relationship with the University.

Chapter Two describes the conditions which led to the formation of AHCS in 1911 and the University's central role in establishing clubs. During this period, life was especially hard on rural women, many of whom had migrated from Europe, the United States or Eastern Canada. They were isolated from their neighbours and were required to perform all kinds of unfamiliar tasks in order to survive in their harsh envi-
ronment. The University started Homemakers' Clubs in 1910-11 to extend University services to rural women and to enable them to meet their neighbours and to learn from each other. Clubs grew so rapidly that the University hired Abigail DeLury to oversee club work in 1913.

Chapter Three deals with the period of DeLury's tenure as the first Director of Women's Work at the University of Saskatchewan. She travelled extensively throughout the province encouraging Homemakers' Clubs and was intimately involved in their affairs. She prepared written materials for the clubs and organized their conventions. The number and size of clubs grew rapidly because of her encouragement and the University's support. The third chapter ends when DeLury retired in 1930.

The fourth chapter describes the activities of AHCS under the direction of Bertha Oxner who was the Director of Women's Work from 1930-49. Although an Advisory Council was set up to assist her in 1930, limited time and finances meant that she remained personally responsible for much of the administration. In 1940 membership peaked, but the trend towards urbanization, technological advances and greater recreational opportunities combined with a shift in University priorities to campus activities resulted in a gradual decline during the later part of Oxner's term. Because the University continued to insist that AHCS refrain from politics or controversy, many talented members who believed that more rapid social and economic change was both desirable and possible were attracted by the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation.

The fifth chapter which covers the years from 1949 to the 75th Anniversary of SWI in 1986 deals with a period characterized by a steady decline in membership. Rural depopulation, combined with the availability of other social, educational and recreation opportunities for rural
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The fifth chapter which covers the years from 1949 to the 75th Anniversary of SWI in 1986 deals with a period characterized by a steady decline in membership. Rural depopulation, combined with the availability of other social, educational and recreation opportunities for rural
women had a significant impact on SWI's decline. Another critical factor in its decline was the cutback in University support. From the outset the University took on the responsibility for administering the clubs and providing direction such that SWI was not prepared for the withdrawal of University Extension personnel to oversee the clubs in 1982. This chapter shows that SWI is struggling to survive without University support.

The last chapter summarizes the study and highlights the contribution that SWI made to adult education in Saskatchewan. Further, it analyzes the growth and decline of the movement in relation to the nature and level of University support which was so crucial to the well-being of the organization and its ability to respond to changing social conditions. By documenting original sources which trace the rise, transformation and decline of the Rural Women's University this final chapter, then, sets the stage for future studies, and implications for other adult education and women's movements.

NOTES

1. Inscription on cairn beside Qu'Appelle Hall, University of Saskatchewan.


15. Ibid, p.2.

CHAPTER 2

THE FORMATIVE YEARS: 1910-1913

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the origins of the Association of Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan (AHCS), which later became known as Saskatchewan Women's Institutes. It outlines the situation of rural women about 1910 and describes the major factors that contributed to the formation of this important adult education movement for Saskatchewan women. The chapter describes early club activities to give the reader a sense of what it was like to be a Homemakers' Club member and to document the contribution women made to the province's development. Since a primary purpose of the thesis is to highlight Homemakers' connection with the University of Saskatchewan emphasis is placed on the role of the University in the establishment of the Association of Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan. The period covered by this chapter ends with the University's appointment of a full time Director of Women's Work to oversee the clubs in 1913.

Saskatchewan experienced a period of rapid settlement in the years prior to the establishment of the Association of Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan. From 1906 to 1911, migrants from Europe, the United States and Eastern Canada almost doubled the population of Saskatchewan from 257,763 to 492,432 inhabitants. Most of these new settlers came to open up farms on the vast prairies. The settlement of Saskatchewan was a struggle to adapt and survive the harsh environment. This struggle was epitomized by a Saskatchewan homesteader who said, "If there had been a bridge across the ocean we would have walked home! But there was
no bridge and no money so we stuck it out. What else could we do?" The pressures of an alien environment which had to be mastered to permit survival, not just to provide wealth and comfort dominated the lives and consequently the learning experiences of the settlers. 3

Early settlers braved long cold winters in sod shacks, and later in one and two room wooden homes. In the summer they grew wheat. Dependence on a single cash crop was risky in a province that was plagued by drought, floods, hail, frost, rust and grasshoppers. What wheat farmers were able to grow brought little return as they were exploited by the grain companies. 4

The economic situation of rural Saskatchewan, along with the physical isolation, compelled women to be largely self-sufficient. The typical pioneer woman spent most of her life within a tiny shack engaged in ceaseless heavy toil:

When not sweeping prairie dust, fighting prairie fires, making soap, baking bread, preserving fruit, churning butter, drawing water from the well in the back yard, doing laundry and ironing or cooking for her family, a housewife would turn her leisure time to industry by making towels and bed linens (it took five salt or feed bags to make a sheet), braiding rugs, knitting and crocheting, and/or, of course, having babies. 5

Shopping expeditions were infrequent, and when women did go to town, the shortage of cash meant that their purchases were limited to essential items such as flour, sugar, salt and oil.

Physical isolation was a major problem for the early settlers since farms were generally many miles apart and were often several miles from the nearest town. This situation was made worse by the fact that travel was by horse or oxen drawn wagons and sleighs over rough trails. Physical isolation, therefore, meant that basic medical and social services were inaccessible. Women frequently died in childbirth for lack of medi-
Cal aid and infant mortality was high in rural Saskatchewan during the early 1900's. If one could get to the nearest town, it would likely be at an early stage of development and would consequently lack doctors, libraries and other services.

Social isolation was a severe hardship on the prairies where the absence of neighbours could be verified at a glance. Nellie McClung, an outspoken advocate of women's rights and other social reforms, described prairie loneliness as being next to prairie madness. It was hardest on women since men were able to meet their neighbours when they left the farmstead on business, or took seasonal jobs away from home. Women were isolated physically and cut off from relationships with other women who understood and shared their problems.

The physical isolation of a sparsely populated countryside meant that women had to plan their social contacts. The earliest recorded women's organizations are the Prosperity Homekeepers' Society, organized in 1907 by Rocanville District women to draw them together socially and to provide an opportunity to discuss questions of mutual concern, and the Mair Open Door Society, which was established in 1909. Organizations such as these, however, were not common so women had few opportunities for social contact before the University began organizing Homemakers' Clubs in 1910-11.

ORIGINS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF HOMEMAKERS' CLUBS OF SASKATCHEWAN

The Association of Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan came into being largely because of the efforts of Hedley Auld, Superintendent of Fairs and Institutes with the provincial Department of Agriculture, and later the University's first Director of Extension. Auld traced his interest
in women's programs to the 1910 Agricultural Societies Convention where one member suggested that discussion topics of interest to farm women be included in future Society meetings. After the 1910 meeting Auld began to investigate possible programs for women and met with Lillian Beynon, Women's Editor of the *Manitoba Free Press*, who was well known by her pen name, Lillian Laurie. Auld modelled AHCS after the Ontario Women's Institutes that Beynon, who was originally from Ontario, told him about.

A few weeks after meeting Beynon, Auld wrote to ask her to address women at the July 26-28, 1910 farmers' excursion to the Indian Head Experimental Farm. From the outset Auld was determined "to provide encouragement and cheer" to rural women. He therefore asked Beynon to limit her remarks to women's opportunities in rural homes and to avoid politics or other subjects which might divide women. Beynon, who was known for her outspoken views on women's rights, replied that:

I was rather amused by the limits you set, which so absolutely shut out suffrage and homesteads; however I understand your position, and much as I might be tempted to touch these topics I will refrain, and deal with something quite harmless and non-political.10

Beynon's afternoon addresses to these women were the first attempt to provide extension services for women in rural Saskatchewan.

By September 1910 responsibility for agricultural extension work was transferred from the Department of Agriculture to the newly established University of Saskatchewan. Auld became the first Director of Agricultural Extension and support for extension work was strengthened under the University. From the outset the University adopted the principle of community service which President Walter Murray outlined to the first University Senate:
It was an obligation of academic experts to use their specialized knowledge and training to help with concrete practical problems, great and small, individual and communal, on and off campus. That should be their business and not a sideline.11

The University encouraged the farming population to participate in the institution that was financed by and for them by providing extension services throughout rural Saskatchewan.12

The first education work undertaken by the University of Saskatchewan Extension Department, however, was directed at men so the change had no immediate impact on the provision of extension services for rural women. According to Auld, men produced the crops and livestock and needed to learn the best farming methods quickly so that their efforts would meet with a fair measure of success. Consequently women's education was neglected, and the needs of the home were not given the attention they demanded or deserved.

Within the first year of the University's existence Auld came to recognize the important role women played in shaping the future. He realized that more attention would have to be paid to homemaker training if women were to learn skills that would help them enrich the lives of their families. He proposed that the Extension Department could be of great assistance to Saskatchewan women and stated that, "...as we worked hard to make farming profitable, we propose to make farm life comfortable, pleasant and enjoyable."13

The University support for extension work was crucial to the initial development and rapid spread of Homemakers' Clubs throughout rural Saskatchewan. While Homemakers' credit President Murray with establishing AHCS, it was Auld who proposed to make women's work a more prominent feature of University extension activities. Auld became intimately
involved in planning programs for women, and promoting women's clubs.

"The Association of Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan was organized virtually as a part of the University, with the Director of Agricultural Extension acting as the ex-officio secretary and managing director."\(^2\)

To encourage women's work Auld decided to plan a program for women as part of the 1911 Agricultural Societies Convention. In preparing for the meeting, he corresponded with Beynon and secured copies of articles she had published on Ontario's Women's Institutes. Auld wondered if it might be profitable to organize women's clubs prior to the 1911 meeting and asked Beynon if she would attend the Agricultural Society Seed Fairs on the CPR mainline east of Regina to organize clubs. Beynon agreed to speak to women at these fairs and was hired at $6 per day - the going rate for University extension personnel - to generate interest in the January meeting.\(^3\)

During the winter of 1910-1911 Beynon delivered addresses to women at twelve seed fairs, but her efforts to organize separate women's clubs met with some resistance from men. Although the Agricultural Societies were primarily concerned with improved production for greater income, many of the most active members were women. The home and family, however, had second priority due to the dominant male influence and the intense need to concentrate on survival. In spite of men's objections to separating the work of men and women in Saskatchewan, Beynon proceeded to organize women's clubs modelled after Ontario's Women's Institutes.

Beynon supported her argument for separate women's clubs with her belief that one must specialize in order to succeed in life:
The farmer will not have time to learn all the secrets of housekeeping, nor will his wife have time to learn about farming, if she is to master her own profession of homemaker. So that the idea in separating the men from the women is merely to save time, a commodity rather scarce in this western land.\(^2\)

While women were involved in many phases of Agricultural Society work, they did not operate any of the programs entirely.\(^2\) On November 23, 1910 the Broadview Club became the first of eight clubs organized by Beynon specifically for women prior to the 1911 Convention.\(^5\)

Auld invited forty-two women from eighteen isolated communities to attend the Agricultural Societies Convention in Regina in 1911. These women arrived January 31st as representatives of isolated women's groups. Auld arranged talks on such topics as "Women's Clubs: Their Nature and Purpose"; "Experiences with Women's Clubs in Ontario"; and "Plans of the College of Agriculture for Assisting Women's Clubs". Practical lectures on poultry, strawberry growing, domestic bookkeeping, home nursing and model kitchens were also given. Speakers included Nellie McClung, Cora Hind (agricultural reporter for the Winnipeg Free Press), the Honourable W. R. Motherwell (Minister of Agriculture), and his wife Catherine.\(^6\)

The women at the 1911 Convention founded the first provincial rural women's organization and, after much debate, named it the Association of Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan. The clubs were modeled after Women's Institutes in Ontario, but there was resistance to adopting the same name, possibly because of Saskatchewan's anti-central Canada sentiment and independent spirit. Before the women returned home on February second, they decided on the name Homemakers', which was favoured by Auld because it was much more descriptive than Women's Institutes. Although Homemakers' became part of a national federation in 1919, the name cho-
sen at the first convention was clung to "affectionately and stub-
bornly" 20 until 1971 when the name was finally changed to Women's
Institutes.

Implicit in the promotion of Homemakers' Clubs was the belief that
women's primary role was that of homemaker. The motto adopted by the
first convention 'to promote the interests of the home and community'
was therefore not contentious. It signified the desire to work towards
improving conditions for families as outlined by the objects Beynon
presented:

> For the study of scientific homemaking, of sanitation,
> ventilation, the composition of foods, hygiene, the care
> of children, the improvement of the environment, etc.,
> and to improve social intercourse. 22

The aim of Homemakers' was to educate women as homemakers and to inspire
them with the significance of their profession. 22

Homemakers' Clubs were needed because many women were not natural
born homemakers, and because housekeeping was the most backward of all
sciences. Beynon believed that just as men need to study how to feed
their livestock, women must study how to feed their families; just as
men need to study the preparation of soil for seed, so too women must
know how to prepare their children's minds for learning the everyday
lessons of life. No woman could know by instinct everything connected
with her work simply because she was female. 22

Through Homemakers' women would realize that housekeeping and home-
making were a science and not mere drudgery. By studying how to orga-
nize their work rural women could avoid becoming slaves to housekeeping
since:
Women are much too scarce in this western country for us to be able to wear them out over the washtub and churn when an engine can be purchased at a very reasonable price to do the work quite as well.24

A more efficient use of time could also enable women to get out and realize that they are part of society, something Beynon had been told they did not know.25

**INITIAL CLUB ACTIVITIES**

Beynon stressed the need to organize a yearly program for clubs in her address on the nature and purpose of women’s clubs at the first convention:

*This program should be thorough ... the clubs, too, should have their topics timely - that is I would not study housecleaning in December, or gardening in September. Study housecleaning about the month people usually start to houseclean.*

The *First Annual Convention Report* contained a list of thirty-six program suggestions to assist in this task. These suggestions were based largely on the work already undertaken by the Ontario Women’s Institutes along with a few topics of special interest to western women. While the University provided program suggestions, it instructed clubs that they were free to study anything of interest to members.26

From the outset, however, Auld instructed clubs to be non-partisan and non-political. They were designed to provide an opportunity for social intercourse for women “...where Grit and Tory, Protestant and Catholic, ... as well as those without political, religious or other affiliations could meet and enjoy each other's society and benefit thereby.”27 Because of differences in nationality or creed women who lived in the same neighbourhood for years often did not know each other.
Votes for women was a passionate political issue at the time Homemakers' Clubs were being organized, but early Homemakers' Club programs focused on such things as homemaking skills and childcare. The fact that AHCS was not in the forefront of suffrage or other overtly political activities was a consequence of its position within the University. President Murray acknowledged that Beynon was, "...intensely interested more in advancing women's rights than in establishing a mere University organization....", but he went on to explain the University position:

Well do I remember the Dean's anxiety lest the University become involved in party politics. There was no question that party politics had been the greatest curse of the State Universities on this continent. Both political parties in Saskatchewan had publicly declared that there should be no political partisanship in the University, and the University authorities were equally anxious to avoid every appearance of the evil. This decision was responsible for the name, the motto, as well as the objectives of the Homemakers' Clubs.²²

Even Beynon herself recognized the potential danger of discussing such controversial issues as the dower law and women's suffrage. In her speech to the Wellesley Convention she cautioned clubs about studying these subjects while admitting her pro-suffrage stand:

I believe there is too much diversity of opinion on these matters for it to be wise for the clubs to take them up at the present time. I have advised leaving them alone, because I know, through a wide correspondence with women, that many are not in sympathy with this work and would not join Homemakers' if these subjects were the chief ones discussed.... It is a desperately inflammable topic and I think it best to avoid such subjects until the clubs are firmly established. But this is merely a suggestion. The Homemakers' Clubs are free to take up any work that the majority of the members believe to be in the best interest of the home and community.²²

The clubs embarked on a moral and cultural reform program with visiting speakers and members presenting the latest information on homemaking, gardening and poultry raising. There was also discussion of
such topics as temperance and health and some clubs did discuss votes for women. Members instigated the travelling library concept, set up numerous health and dental clinics and established many rest rooms and community centres. Women in rural districts were anxious to improve local services and were staunch allies of those who would extend information on national and local topics.30

Through Homemakers' Clubs women were able to meet and become friends, having a common interest in such things as the care of children, or securing nurses for rural districts. A strong feature of this work was that it did not exclude any women although clubs were uncommon in non-English speaking Districts and it was not until the 1930's that attempts were made to organize Homemakers' Clubs on Indian Reservations. All could come to learn and to help. Women did not care how old they were, if there was some work for them to do they would learn how. Older women could help younger ones in such areas as the care and feeding of children - the original reason for the Women's Institute movement. Women of different ethnic backgrounds could teach others to make foods and handicrafts from their homelands. Barriers between town and country women were also broken down. The study of homemaking put women on common footing, and they were able to socialize during the customary lunch at the end of each meeting.33

From the beginning, clubs were advised to subscribe to some good household magazines to assist them with their work. Beynon suggested that the University prepare a list of helpful books and magazines (with prices and where they could be obtained) to send to the clubs. Beynon also suggested in her 1911 "Report of Work in the University Tent" that the University should publish 'live' bulletins to help the clubs because
there was no great supply of household magazines. She also expressed hope that the University would soon take up the matter of travelling libraries "...for the lack of reading matter is a very serious one in this west of ours." Papers from household magazines often served as the basis for club programs as did Extension Department bulletins when they became available.

While the women of Saskatchewan did a great deal to expand the Homemakers' movement it was not accomplished through their efforts alone. Support for Homemakers' activity came from a variety of sources including husbands, teachers, professionals, the media and the Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture. Last, and most crucial, was the support and direction Homemakers' received from the newly founded University of Saskatchewan which was trying to make its presence felt in rural areas.

THE ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY IN STARTING CLUBS

After the 1911 Convention Auld took on the responsibility for supporting and encouraging Homemakers' Clubs. He had ten thousand copies of the 1911 Convention Report printed and arranged for their distribution. Auld placed advertisements in such papers as the Herbert Herald, Watson Witness and Regina Leader advising women about the University's desire to encourage Homemakers' Clubs.

Women came forward from all parts of the province requesting literature on AHCS and often expressed a desire to organize clubs immediately - without waiting for the University to send out a regular organizer. Auld answered correspondence regarding the formation and operation of AHCS directly. He replied to women who wrote about affiliating existing clubs, such as the Rose Plain Social Circle and the Fairlight Prairie
Circle, with Homemakers'. Auld responded to requests from established Homemakers' Clubs seeking suggestions on work they should be doing.

Auld hoped to keep in contact with Homemakers' by receiving copies of minutes from local meetings. He provided club secretaries with minute books designed especially for this purpose which came complete with carbon paper and alternate pages perforated for easy removal. More could be obtained by requesting them from the Extension Department. The College of Agriculture also aimed to keep in touch with clubs by providing a series of popular bulletins free of charge to all Homemakers' Club members.

Another way that Auld proposed to maintain contact with clubs was by providing speakers for provincial and county conventions, and as far as possible, to meet women in central localities. Auld recognized that the large size of the province and the expense of visiting the two thousand or more branches expected to exist in the near future would make local visits a nearly impossible task. He did, however, expect that, in time, county officers and officers of local clubs would render assistance in organizing and sustaining neighbouring clubs.

While there was some consideration given to getting local clubs to do extension work in 1911, Beynon believed that they were too busy solving their own problems to do much work beyond their own territory. She also cautioned that women would "...never do aggressive work of this kind because of the jealousy it is almost sure to cause." Auld's determination to provide extension services through Homemakers' Clubs led him to hire Beynon, Mary Mantle and Abigail DeLury to organize clubs in the summer of 1911. Beynon was hired to tour summer fairs in an
effort to organize new clubs as was Mantle, sister of the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Women's Editor of the *Nor'West Farmer*, and speaker at the 1911 Convention.

Mantle was concerned that existing clubs not be neglected at the expense of trying to expand the number of clubs:

> The idea is so new that the clubs just formed will meet difficulties and problems as they get to work, and I believe that a strong start in a few clubs will in the end forward the clubs better. 43

Beynon also recognized the importance of ensuring that early clubs were strong:

> The work of the clubs already organized is the foundation on which we are building, and the whole structure will be influenced by the kind of masonry we are putting up. 44

It was with this in mind that DeLury, a Moose Jaw domestic science teacher, was hired to deliver a series of domestic science addresses and cookery demonstrations to clubs organized before the summer of 1911.

Auld personally organized the summer tour to increase and strengthen Homemakers' Clubs. On April 5, 1911 he sent letters to prominent men in major centres announcing the tour of summer fairs. He requested that these men assist him by providing names of farm women from their districts who are real leaders, public spirited and likely to be interested in this matter. Auld arranged to have tents erected at fairs in Battleford, Saskatoon, Prince Albert and Moose Jaw. These tents served as restrooms and headquarters for AHCS where afternoon addresses were given and literature distributed. 45

After the summer tour Beynon reported to Auld that many women hoped a club would develop in their district, "but the majority expressed faith in it for someone else". They were afraid it would not work in
their part "...where the women were a little queer"." Beynon, however, collected names of interested persons and influential women in each district she visited and passed this information on to Auld.

Beynon started the 1911 summer tour doubting the success of clubs organized on her 1910-11 tour. Her doubts were based on the fact that none of the women were familiar with the work they were attempting and that the only literature she was able to leave with them was one or two copies of the provisional constitution. Beynon had directed the women to write to the University for any information they wished although she felt that most would not avail themselves of that help because they knew no one there who would be familiar with their needs. While a few clubs kept in touch with Beynon directly she heard nothing from the others. Her only hope was that the influence of the Regina Convention was strong enough to keep up the interest until literature and speakers could be sent out by the University."

In her "Report of Summer Work Among the Homemakers", however, Beynon proclaimed that clubs were in fact flourishing. Her first visit was to the town of Pense where:

The membership had almost doubled since the organizing meeting, and the work of the women had so interested the women in adjoining towns, that they were anxious to organize as soon as an organizer could be sent."

With the exception of Sintaluta and Whitewood the experience was similar to that at Pense - "...membership had greatly increased, some progressive work had been accomplished or started, and the women were more deeply interested than I expected.""

Beynon felt that the greatest gain in some places was that women who had not spoken together for years were working together for 'home and community'. "Women who had been kept apart by the barrier of creed,
were for the first time, meeting as sisters, and rejoicing in the oppor-
tunity to do so. There were some discouragements too:

Many of the clubs are facing problems that come when people are enthusiastic and not accustomed to the give and take of club life, but I feel that in the solving of these problems a great and valuable training is being gained. Many hard places have been faced and left behind without any scars and I am most hopeful for the future.

Conventions played an important role in strengthening Homemakers' clubs. The first district convention held July 20 and 21 in Wolseley gave existing club members a chance to come together to share their experiences, listen to addresses and to observe cooking and sewing demonstrations. Almost every woman who was a delegate to the Convention in Regina attended the Wolseley meeting. Many who hesitated to participate at the first meeting forgot all nervousness and took an active part at Wolseley.

Many new faces were also present at Wolseley, and all declared themselves delighted with the meeting. Beynon attributed much of the meeting's success to "...the work of the Wolseley ladies who were untiring in their efforts ... and who all opened their homes most hospitably." One must not, however, underestimate the contribution Auld made to the Convention's success by arranging the program, transportation and publicity.

In February 1912 the University hosted the joint AHCS and Agricultural Societies Convention in Saskatoon. At that gathering, President Murray invited the Homemakers' to continue holding their conventions at the University where a visit to the home of Dr. and Mrs. Murray became an annual event. Because the weather had been so unpleasant it was decided to hold future meetings in May or June - a time when members
could also be more easily spared from their homes.

University support was crucial to the success of AHCS conventions along with its other activities. In addition to hosting the conventions, the University organized the program and paid transportation expenses for delegates and speakers. This support enabled many women to attend informative and well run conventions where they got practical help regarding club organization.

The University became a retreat where Homemakers' could discuss questions of importance and get inspiration for their many duties pertaining to homemaking. President Murray recognized that one of the happiest of the many good features of the movement was the convention each year where social activity could be enjoyed for a few days and household cares forgotten:

Living in the handsome residence hall of the University where physical comfort was combined with companionship and intellectual stimulation, made the Convention a never-to-be forgotten experience in the lives of pioneer women. Better still, it gave the women practice in organizing for specific aims, got them thinking about problems which closely affected their interests, and gave them confidence in their own abilities.

One woman, for example, described herself as being in a rut prior to attending the Convention. With the world constantly changing she felt the need to gain knowledge and engage in friendly intercourse. She got out of the rut by being refreshed from contact with new people, new surroundings and new ideas. She went home inspired and eager to get back to work which seemed too wearisome a week before.

The Extension Department of the University provided most of the funds required to carry out the early organizational work of the Association. Auld did, however, seek grants from the Department of Agriculture. Frank Mantle, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, believed it was
wise for some connection to exist, as in the case of Agricultural Societies, and suggested that club charters and grants could be issued to the clubs by the Department in an effort to stay in touch with developments. The Department of Agriculture covered the cost of train fares for the women who attended the Regina and Wolseley conventions. Motherwell also indicated that in light of the lack of funds that were directed at the 'gentler sex' it should be possible to provide funds to assist AHCS. The question of direct grants to Homemakers' Clubs, however, was not acted upon until 1982.

The College of Agriculture received funds from the government to carry out its extension work, and some of these funds were used to support Homemakers'. In 1912-1913 the College received an extra $15,000 as part of the Province's share of the Dominion Agricultural Aid Act. These funds enabled the College to expand its extension services although the 1912-13 Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture reported that Homemakers' Clubs were practically neglected in so far as any real assistance from the Extension Department. The Report went on to say that thirteen new clubs organized without an organizer being sent from the University, though it also mentioned that Beynon, DeLury and Joan Hamilton, a Regina home economics teacher, spoke to clubs in the summer of 1912. This apparent lessening of support for AHCS was possibly due to Auld's departure as Director of Extension. Auld had been intimately involved in the day to day operations of the Association, but his successor, S. Greenway, does not appear to have taken the same personal interest in the clubs.

The expansion of Homemakers' Clubs combined with funds made available through the 1913-14 Agricultural Instruction Act made it possible
for DeLury to be hired in 1913 to supervise women's clubs as full-time Director of Women's Work. As early as the summer of 1911 Beynon suggested that the work had assumed such proportions that it was necessary to have a woman in charge of it. She felt it would be especially important for new clubs, and that the work of established clubs could be enhanced by more attention from one who knows the members, the difficulties, and the objective of the clubs. She felt that the need was so great that unless someone was engaged soon much of the value of the work already accomplished would be lost. The fact that DeLury was appointed to oversee club work in 1913 demonstrated the University's commitment to providing and expanding extension services for women.

SUMMARY

Settlement in Saskatchewan was sparse in 1911, even though the Province's population had grown from 257,763 to 492,432 inhabitants in the previous five years. Many of the new settlers were women; women who were not prepared for the arduous tasks of managing a prairie farm. These women who had come from smaller farms or urban centres were also not accustomed to the isolation that came with prairie living. Through Homemakers' Clubs rural women were able to overcome their isolation and to provide services for the increasing population of rural Saskatchewan.

As first Director of Agricultural Extension at the newly established University of Saskatchewan, Hedley Auld took it upon himself to organize Homemakers' Clubs to provide extension services for rural women. With the support of the University's President, Walter Murray, he hired Lillian Beynon to organize clubs for women and in 1911 he organized a women's program for the Agricultural Societies Convention in Regina. It
was at this meeting that he encouraged forty-two women from eighteen isolated communities to form the Association of Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan. A consequence of Auld's prominent role at this meeting was that AHCS members felt that they were a part of the University, and they expected the University to provide future direction and support for the clubs.

From the outset the University took on responsibility for administering the clubs. Although some clubs started spontaneously, most were organized by Beynon and the other women the University hired for this purpose. Auld kept in direct contact with the clubs by insisting that they send him minutes of their meetings, and by sending leaflets and home economics demonstrators to existing clubs. He also organized annual conventions to bring club women together at the expense of the University which further reinforced AHCS's expectations and the sense that they were part of the University. Although Auld was undoubtedly well-intentioned in his desire to provide opportunities for education and social interaction to women in rural areas, the centralized administrative structures he set up made the clubs overly dependent upon the University and stifled local initiative.

The University connection also limited the future activities of Homemakers' Clubs. The University, under Auld's direction, had organized Homemakers' to assist women in their efforts to improve the lives of their families. Initial education programs were therefore focused on homemaking skills. Political and controversial issues, such as the dower law and votes for women, were to be avoided because the University was set up as a non-political institution and wanted to remain so. By doing this, however, the University limited women to their traditional
roles of wife and mother, and prevented them from becoming involved in the larger issues that affected their place in society. It appears that club members, and even the outspoken Beynon, acquiesced to the University's wishes because they did not want to antagonize the University and jeopardize continued support.

The next chapter examines the rapid growth of Homemakers' Clubs that occurred after the University set up a Department of Women's Work with DeLury as Director to oversee Club work.

NOTES - CHAPTER 2

1. The population of Saskatchewan was 257,763 in 1906; by 1911 it was 492,432. Of the 234,669 people who emigrated to the province 175,384 settled in rural areas. John Archer, Saskatchewan: A History, (Saskatoon, Western Producer Prairie Books, 1980), pp.360-61.


4. Success or riches did not come easily for the individual farmer who had to battle the organized and ever growing pressure of well financed commercial forces that sought a bigger slice of returns from international wheat sales. Archer, pp.148-52.


6. Emma Ducie, a long time Homemakers' Club member and AHCS President, said that women wanted so much to hear the sound of another voice, to drink a social cup of tea, and to feel again the impact of personality upon personality. Lorne Paul, "Extension at the University of Saskatchewan, 1910-1970", (Unpublished Manuscript, University of Saskatchewan Archives, 1979), p.76. According to Mrs. Rogers, a past President of the Alberta Women's Institutes, many women did not see anybody for a week - or longer. Some of them just could not take it and ended up in Ponka (mental hospital). Women's Institutes provided a place to get together and meet people with common interests.

7. The Corrective Collective, p.41.


10. Lillian Beynon to Hedley Auld, July 1, 1910 in response to Auld's letter of June 28, 1910. Agricultural Societies File #120, SAB.


13. *AHCS 1st Annual Convention Report, 1911*, pp.23-24. Mantle in a paper entitled "Saskatchewan Homemakers' Clubs" said, "Farmers meet and discuss the raising and housing of stock; may not mothers meet and discuss the care of their families? Farmers are interested in crop rotation; may not mothers profitably study food variation?", n.d., p.3, Agricultural Societies File #166, SAB.


15. Series of letters between Hedley Auld and Lillian Beynon, Agricultural Societies File #169, SAB.


17. Paul, pp.76-78.

18. Other clubs were organized at Whitewood, Moosimin, Wolseley, Windhorst, Sintaluta, South Qu'Apple and Pense. *Regina Leader*, April 15, 1911.


20. Ibid, pp.33-35. According to a report in Agricultural Societies File #167, SAB, the Pense Club was organized as a Women's Institute on December 10, 1910, but changed its name to Homemakers' after the 1911 Convention.


22. Mary Mantle stated that housekeeping was as much a profession as nursing in "Saskatchewan Homemakers' Clubs". p.1, Agricultural Societies File #166, SAB.


25. Lillian Beynon, "Report of Work in the University Tent", Agricultural Societies File #167, SAS.

26. In a 1912 copy of "News of the Clubs" it was reported that the Windhorst Club had its program for the year printed at a cost of $5 for 100 copies, and the Bladworth Club had planned its programs to June. Records of AHCS/SWI, University of Saskatchewan Archives. See also Beynon, *AHCS 1st Annual Convention Report, 1911*, p.27.


29. (Beynon, Untitled Speech delivered to Wolseley Convention July 1911), Agricultural Societies File #167, SAS.


32. Beynon stated that they would have to be 'live' for the average woman is not a great reader and only live matter will get her into the habit. "Report of Work in the University Tent".

33. Ibid.


35. In the "Report of Summer's Work Among the Homemakers'", p.5, Beynon credits husbands of members as the organization's best supporters. She cited several examples of encounters with men who congratulated her on setting up clubs for their wives. In her address at the Wolseley Convention she stated that she found more men than women interested in the clubs during her winter organizing tour. She also mentioned one woman who told her she would not have attended if her husband had not encouraged her to do so. Husbands at the 1910 Agricultural Societies Convention were the ones who requested that activities for women be undertaken.

Throughout the province the public also took an interest in the Homemakers' movement. Small town businessmen helped out - hotel and shopkeepers allowed women space for rest rooms in their buildings. Clergymen and their wives were amongst the strongest supporters. Doctors and nurses were sympathetic to the clubs and often helped by addressing club meetings.

Several clubs were started with the help of teachers whose mothers belonged to Homemakers', or were familiar with Women's Institutes from their homes in Ontario. Some clubs held meetings on Saturday so that the local teacher could attend and/or the school could be used as a meeting place. The support given by teachers was mutually beneficial as the Homemakers' did much to improve the con-
dition of rural schools by providing books, playground equipment, prizes for competitions and treats for parties.

In a society where bachelor farmers were numerous, female teachers' careers were often terminated early by marriage. Many former teachers saw Homemakers' Clubs as a means of providing the social contact and stimulation they lost when they were forced to retire. Interview with Nancy Adams, former school teacher, AHCS and FWIC President, November 8, 1985. Also see Archer, p.145.

Isobel Armstrong, Women's World Editor of the Regina Leader, was anxious to assist the splendid work of Homemakers'. In an exchange of correspondence with Auld she proposed that the Leader become the official organ of AHCS. The April 15, 1911 edition of the paper carried a report of the first convention, previous club activities and an outline of upcoming events. Armstrong explained that the paper decided to devote a part of each Saturday paper to Homemakers' Clubs. The AHCS corner was to be a mutual benefit association where the clubs could communicate their progress with others. Reports were also published in the weekly Wednesday edition that was widely circulated in rural areas.

Beynon cultivated press support and generally felt that the press was most kind to Homemakers'. Local papers were cooperative in publicizing club work. They advertised meetings and covered club activities thereby contributing to the success of the Homemakers' Club movement. See Beynon, "Report of Summer's Work Among the Homemakers'", p.7.

36. Ibid and Regina Leader, April 15, 1911.
37. [Beynon, Untitled Speech delivered at the Wolseley Convention]. Archer attributed the special impetus behind the formation of Home-makers' Clubs to the presence of many former teachers who had married homesteaders, p.157.
38. Auld's response was to send copies of the Constitution, advise that the name be changed, officers elected and the club governed by the AHCS Constitution. He stated that there was no need to send an organizer now "since you have been working together and appreciate the importance of this kind of work ... at the present time you will be able to get along nicely, and next summer it will afford us great pleasure to send speakers to your district to hold a meeting under the auspices of your club." Letters from Hedley Auld, August 14 and 15, 1911, Agricultural Societies File #167, SAB.
39. In a letter of August 20, 1911 to Mrs. McCready, Hedley Auld affirmed the club's autonomy to decide on programs and did not offer any suggestions. Agricultural Societies File #169, SAB.
40. Hedley Auld to Homemakers' Club Secretaries, August 21, 1911, Agricultural Societies File #166, SAB.
41. Auld, AHCS 1st Annual Convention Report, 1911. Auld mentions the possibility of 'County' executives because there was some discussion to introduce a County system in Saskatchewan similar to that of Ontario, however, it never did get implemented.
42. Beynon, "Report of Work in the University Tent".

43. Mary Mantle to Hedley Auld, July 31, 1911, Agricultural Societies File #167, SAB.

44. Beynon, "Report of Work in the University Tent".

45. Ibid, and various letters from Auld regarding arrangements for the summer fair tour in Agricultural Societies File #166, SAB.

46. Mantle to Auld, July 31, 1911.


49. Ibid.

50. Ibid, pp.2-3.

51. Ibid, p.5.

52. Ibid, p.4.


54. [Cameron] ed., p.11.


56. The Minister of Agriculture issued Club Charters until some time prior to 1921. At that time an exchange of correspondence between DeLury and Auld, who was then Deputy Minister of Agriculture, questioned the usefulness of the large stack of Charters sitting in the Department's vaults. Auld informed Delury on October 27, 1921 that the remainder of the Charters were being destroyed. Agricultural Societies File #168, SAB.

57. On November 28, 1911 and January 17, 1912 Hedley Auld wrote the Minister of Agriculture requesting funds for Homemakers' Clubs similar to the grants given to Agricultural Societies. He recommended that a grant of §10. be given to each Club, but Motherwell replied that the Department was branching off in so many new directions that he could not guarantee funding.

Auld indicated the amount for 1912 would only be $450. With the plan to establish one Homemakers' Club in each of approximately 2,000 school districts the amount required could increase to $3,000 in two years and $15,000 in ten years. Considering the fact that Agricultural Societies were already receiving $45,000 Auld considered the request modest.

The request was considered to be so modest by the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Frank Mantle, that it was not introduced to the
legislature. Mantle indicated that $500 - $1,000 could be made available to Homemakers' Clubs by Order-in-Council. Orders-in-Council and other records, however, indicate that the $450 requested for 1912 was never granted. The first record of direct grants to the organization from the Department of Agriculture was 1983, and even then the grant was just $10,000. Agricultural Societies File #168, SAB and Government Grants File, SWI Office.

58. The total Saskatchewan grant was $34,269.29, Department of Agriculture File #261, SAB.

59. The Homemakers' Club files held by SAB are filled with correspondence to and from Hedley Auld regarding club work, but there is little addressed to Greenway. While it is possible this may be because he did not keep good records like Auld, it is appears more likely that he was not as directly involved in Homemakers' Club affairs as his predecessor had been.

60. See Chapter 2 for a detailed account of the Agricultural Instruction Act.

61. Beynon thought that the work could not be done by a man, nor by someone from outside Saskatchewan. She had heard the criticism that, "Surely Saskatchewan was big enough to have an organizer of their own without calling on other provinces." - an obvious reference to her Manitoba residence. "Report of Summer's Work Among the Homemakers", pp.4-5.
CHAPTER 3

GROWTH OF HOMEMAKERS' CLUBS: 1913-30

This chapter covers a period of rapid growth in the Association of Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan from 1913-1930. During these years the number of clubs grew from 40 to 240 and their scope of work broadened. As we shall see, this phenomenal growth was made possible because the University devoted substantial resources to the establishment of a Department of Women's Work, under the direction of Abigail DeLury, to promote and administer the Association of Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan affairs. This chapter examines the expansion of the Association's educational activities and documents the extensive contribution Homemakers' Clubs made to the establishment of services throughout rural Saskatchewan.

The ten year Dominion-Provincial Agricultural Instruction Aid Act Agreement of 1913-14 to 1922-23 was a major factor that led the University of Saskatchewan to establish a Department of Women's Work. Under this legislation, the Dominion government provided the provinces with funds to carry on agricultural work which they could not otherwise afford. In Saskatchewan these grants amounted to approximately $80,000 per year from 1913-14 to 1923-24 and the monies were divided equally between the Department of Education, the Department of Agriculture and the Extension Department of the University.²

The University used most of its allocation to carry out agricultural research, teaching and extension services. The remainder was spent on Women's Work. These funds enabled the University to create the Depart-
ment and to hire DeLury as the Director to provide support to Homemakers' Clubs. From 1914 on, the University also hired lecturers to deliver short courses and demonstrations to the clubs.

DELURY IS HIRED TO OVERSEE CLUBS

The expansion of Homemakers' Clubs was influenced by the appointment of DeLury as the first Director of Women's Work in April 1913. DeLury had taught school in Ontario for several years before taking the home economics teacher training program that Adelaide Hoodless established at Macdonald Institute in Guelph. DeLury took further home economics training at Columbia University and taught at Macdonald College in Quebec before she came to Moose Jaw in 1911 to teach home economics in the public schools. In the summers of 1911 and 1912 DeLury had been employed by the University to do extension work with Homemakers' Clubs. As the Director of Women's Work DeLury was responsible for extending University services to rural women which she did through Homemakers' Clubs until her retirement in 1930.

DeLury was an energetic and determined worker who immediately set about attending Homemakers' meetings, writing bulletins and organizing conventions. She was author of such well thumbed bulletins as the 'Handbook for Homemakers' and 'Food for the Family'. When DeLury travelled throughout Saskatchewan, she often stayed overnight in the home of a club member where she learned first hand about Saskatchewan home and family life. With this knowledge as her guide she planned the University services for Homemakers'. DeLury was widely read and did a great deal to encourage the establishment of libraries by Homemakers' Clubs. Her cosmopolitan interests also helped to broaden programs undertaken by
H homemakers' Clubs flourished under DeLury's direction. University funding enabled her to travel widely to encourage the formation of new clubs. It also enabled lecturers to be hired to deliver short courses and demonstrations to established clubs. Clubs became known for promoting good homemaking, neighbourly living, good citizenship and interest in all phases of adult education. According to Dean Rutherford, Homemakers' Clubs "...linked up in a very effective way nearly 200 communities with the College of Agriculture and the University."

THE RAPID EXPANSION OF CLUBS

DeLury was a very able woman of strong character and attractive personality who rapidly built AHCS into a large, active and influential organization. Convention reports indicate that she provided a great deal of assistance to the clubs by travelling extensively throughout the province encouraging existing clubs and organizing new ones. In 1917-18, for example,

DeLury and her assistant visited fifty clubs, presented short courses, assisted in getting speakers, prepared and distributed bulletins, answered innumerable inquiries, provided a short course for girls at the University, were hosts to the provincial Homemakers' Convention, and supervised the operation of the provincial organization.

Both the number of clubs and the size of membership in existing clubs increased dramatically as a result of DeLury's efforts. The Hanley Club, for example, which started with 20 members in 1913 had 65 by the end of the year. And the Mantario Club which began with 13 members soon had 80 who felt "...united we stand, divided we fall." When DeLury was hired in 1913 there were between 40 and 75 Homemakers' Clubs, a year later she
was administering at least 121 clubs with an estimated 6,000 members.\(^7\) When DeLury retired in 1930, there were approximately 5,800 members in 240 active clubs.

In several communities women considered information about a number of organizations including the Red Cross, Women's Grain Growers' Association and Homemakers' before deciding to form a Homemakers' Club. The original motion to form a club in Floral, for example, was that it be a Red Cross Society. Mrs. Rutherford, wife of the Dean of Agriculture, addressed the meeting and provoked such a discussion that the women eventually found themselves voting to become a Homemakers' Club.\(^8\)

The University connection was definitely a factor in expanding the number of clubs, "Their close connection with the University and the assistance it was able to give to them added greatly to the esteem in which it was held throughout the province."\(^9\) Many of the Homemakers' Clubs that were formed during DeLury's term as Director of Women's Work, for example, were former community clubs or Ladies Aids to churches that wanted to take advantage of the services the University provided to Homemakers'. After the war several Red Cross clubs switched to Homemakers'.\(^{10}\) Another major transfer came in 1926 when the Women's Grain Growers' Association ceased to exist.\(^{11}\) Women throughout Saskatchewan who realized the benefit of cooperation felt that the University's assistance to Homemakers' would enable them to continue working and learning together.

**THE GROWTH OF CLUB ACTIVITIES**

During the period from 1913-1930 the number and nature of activities in which Homemakers' were engaged in grew. DeLury's annual report of
1924 "...revealed something of the enormous influence of this organization both as an educational power and in the great amount of service work carried on by the clubs". Clubs continued to provide rural women with opportunities for social contact and education that were still desperately needed, but they were also alert to new work they might undertake. In the course of socializing members were instrumental in identifying community needs and planning community services which they often sustained with club funds and volunteer time. Educational activities were a central feature of regular club meetings during these early years, and many clubs sponsored short courses and demonstrations offered by the University. Another important aspect of club work during this time was war work.

The Director's reports from the war years stated that of necessity Homemakers' Clubs directed their main efforts towards war work. During the First World War, clubs sewed, knitted and collected relief funds for the Red Cross. The Wolseley Club, for example, raised $14,631.71 for war work and the Red Cross between 1914 and 1918. Members also knit 1,732 pairs of socks, made 446 shirts, and numerous caps, mufflers, etc. The 1918 Director's Report revealed that Saskatchewan Homemakers' raised $36,955.20 for the war effort and made 18,400 quilts, socks, mitts and bandages in 1918. In 1919 DeLury reported that $32,969.73 was raised and 9,880 articles were made.

Over and above these impressive figures, Homemakers' throughout the province packed boxes - of food, cigarettes, socks, mitts, cash, etc. - for local servicemen on duty overseas. A couple of examples illustrate just how extensive the local activity was. In 1917 the Grenfell Club reported packing 140 boxes which the club paid $80 to post. Minutes
of the Floral Homemakers' Club provide detailed lists of members who prepared boxes each month. Some months members donated items for the parcels, other months the contents were purchased with club funds. Postage costs also alternated between individual and club responsibility. Floral minutes show that between ten and twenty boxes were prepared monthly so the Director's figures may have only been a fraction of what was actually contributed by Homemakers' to the war effort.

As for community services, even during the war years there were other challenges to be met. Many Homemakers' communities were in need of services, and throughout the war years clubs developed permanent libraries and rest rooms. When the war was over, clubs devoted more attention to the provision of community services.

Health services were of vital concern to Saskatchewan women since mothers often died for lack of medical aid in childbirth and the infant mortality rate in 1916 was 74.81/1,000 live births. One of the earliest actions in the realm of health care undertaken by Homemakers' Clubs was the presentation of a petition regarding mother's allowances to the government in 1913. This petition requested that all mothers be given $25 to provide for medical expenses and a layette for newborns. By 1916 it was possible for 'needy' mothers to apply to the Registrar of Births and Deaths for $25, $15 of which was to go to the doctor present during delivery. As mothers Homemakers' were therefore determined to bring health services to all parts of the province.

During their early years Homemakers' Clubs became involved in a variety of health activities, especially those related to children. Pre-school clinics became a regular activity for many clubs, such as the one at Garnoch. The first baby clinic held at the Punnichy Club at
the 1924 summer fair was so popular that it eventually became a monthly event with members taking appointments for the visiting doctor and/or nurse. Specialized clinics to have children's teeth examined, or tonsils removed were sponsored and subsidized by some clubs. The Briar Mound Club, for example, reported that 20 children had tonsils removed at their clinic in 1927. Other health related activities included sponsoring home nursing courses and purchasing home nursing equipment that could be borrowed by anyone in the community who required it.

HOMEMAKERS' worked hard to secure permanent medical care throughout Saskatchewan. Beynon suggested at the 1911 Convention that Homemakers' could sponsor a district nurse and guarantee her a living wage. This was done by a number of clubs, including Forgan, as early as 1916. Many clubs also raised money to establish and equip local hospitals. In Lowell, a Ladies Aid was formed to establish a hospital in 1928. In 1930 the group became a Homemakers' Club, but continued to support the hospital by donating money, linens and layettes they made. The Association of Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan raised money for the Everywoman Fund and, by 1924, two beds had been permanently endowed at Fort San for mothers in the crusade against tuberculosis and a third was hoped for.

Another major activity undertaken by many clubs was the development of rest rooms and community halls. Clubs held fowl suppers, dances and raffles to raise money to build a facility, or to purchase and renovate an abandoned school, church or other suitable structure. In the few communities where halls were already established, Homemakers' provided funds for maintenance or added kitchens, toilets, curtains and other furnishings. At the 1926 Convention DeLury reported that the number of
rest rooms and community halls was increasing rapidly, and by 1928 she reported that 52% of Homemakers' Clubs had helped establish or maintain community halls.24

Community halls became the site for many community activities organized by Homemakers' Clubs. These buildings were sometimes used for Homemakers' Club meetings although most members preferred to meet in each others' homes. Since there was virtually no organized entertainment in rural areas, the dances, dinners, card parties and other events organized by Homemakers' provided much needed social contact.

Most clubs established permanent or travelling libraries which were often started with books from the University. The University sent out 60 permanent libraries containing 11 technical and reference books regarding women's work in the home, and 60 travelling libraries of fiction and bibliographies in 1914. The Department of Women's Work also reported that 33 more permanent libraries were being put together that year.25 The University encouraged other clubs to establish libraries by providing them with a matching grant of up to $10 to be expended on books.26

Clubs secured books from a number of other sources including the Lady Aberdeen Association which was established to distribute books that Lady Aberdeen, wife of the former Governor-General of Canada, arranged to have sent from England. By 1930 Lady Tweedsmuir, wife of the new Governor-General, was also providing books to the clubs.27 The Hantario Club decided during the first year of its existence that club members would donate one book per year to establish their library. Other clubs took responsibility for the travelling libraries which were provided by the provincial government from 1915.28
Clubs established permanent libraries in different ways. Members with large homes would occasionally volunteer their homes as a location for a library. They would turn one room into a library and have an open house one or more days a week. In other communities public places, such as Council Chambers, were used to retain books and members took turns being librarian. The 1927 Convention resolved that Homemakers' Clubs make a greater endeavour to establish permanent libraries in every community. By 1928, 59% of the 228 Homemakers' Clubs had libraries.

While Homemakers' contributed much to the well-being of the communities in which they lived, their influence also extended further afield. Clubs sent well packed boxes of books and clothing, as well as money, to other Saskatchewan communities that were not materially as well off. After Homemakers' became part of the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada (FWIC) in 1919, their outlook broadened to assist those in need throughout Canada.

Educational programs were a central feature of Homemakers' Clubs during DeLury's term as Director of Women's Work since other educational opportunities for women were still non-existent in rural areas. Regular club meetings included an educational program and clubs often sponsored demonstrations and short courses delivered by extension personnel from the University. These programs continued to be based on the assumption that:

A woman may study for years, but unless she learns to prepare food and clothing, care for the young and sick, and properly keep a house, she stands a small chance of being a successful woman for sooner or later a woman must do some of these things, regardless of what trade she has. Some do these things more easily than others, but to be trained for it makes it easier for all.

While educational work took second place during the war, it was not
allowed to die. Some clubs did drop their monthly educational programs to devote more time to knitting, quilting and packing boxes for the troops overseas, but the University continued to provide short courses and demonstrations to Homemaker's Clubs throughout the war years.

Short courses and demonstrations provided Homemakers' with skills that were essential for reducing their workloads and improving the quality of life in rural Saskatchewan. DeLury organized these short courses and demonstrations and sent clubs a list of topics that were being demonstrated each year. She asked clubs to let her know if they wished to sponsor a course or have a speaker visit their district. Many clubs sponsored courses which were well attended by members who regarded them as a holiday and by school girls who were frequently given time off from their regular schoolwork to take advantage of scarce home economics training.

In 1917-18 clubs sponsored 27 short courses of one to four days duration on food conservation, sewing and hygiene which were attended by 2,950 women and distributed 5,500 bulletins. Food conservation was the main feature of the 15 short courses held in 1918, and was also the topic of presentations made to 24 regular club meetings. In 1919 the University provided personnel for 27 short courses and 79 lectures and demonstrations.  

More time was available to devote to learning after the war and there was a substantial increase in the educational activities of Homemakers'. DeLury emphasized the educational nature of Homemakers' Clubs in her 1920 report:
The ideals of the organization are educational, and educational in the widest sense of the term... Homemakers' have the satisfaction of seeing some of the fruits of their labours in bettered conditions and a larger outlook on the things that make for progress. 7

Educational programs delivered by the University, however, concentrated on helping rural women meet the basic needs of their families. The 61 short courses and 36 single lectures provided by University staff in 1920 were mostly on sewing and millinery, household science and home nursing. In 1922-23 there was a dramatic increase in the delivery of dressmaking and millinery courses. That year there were 68 single lectures and 121 short courses (2-5 days duration) attended by an average of 55 women each.

DeLury reported at the 1925 Convention that the Dominion grant which had provided funds to conduct lectures and demonstrations had been terminated. Women's Work was forced to cut staff with the result being that only 88 short courses and 20 single lectures were delivered by extension personnel to Homemakers' in 1925-26. The following year the number of short courses declined to 74, but there was a slight increase in the number of lectures held to 25. In 1928 Women's Work delivered 90 short courses in dressmaking, millinery and housewifery because the University was determined to provide extension services for women in spite of the cut in federal funding. 2

DeLury endeavoured to make women aware of modern labour saving devices to reduce their workloads since only 1,334 farm homes had running water, and only 2,331 had electricity as late as 1926. 3 She cooperated with the Extension Department to include displays for women on the Better Farming Trains that travelled throughout rural Saskatchewan each summer. 4 In 1917, for example, the train included an
exhibit featuring the latest canning equipment. Many of the items featured were expensive, but the introduction of installment buying meant women could purchase more 'luxuries' now and worry over bills later.

The educational component of monthly Homemakers' Club meetings was designed by club members themselves. Some clubs had program committees or the executive plan their programs six months or even a year in advance and often printed programs listing the speaker, topic, location of meeting and person(s) responsible for lunch. The University assisted clubs by preparing lists of suggested topics for study, but these were only to provide ideas. The University also provided written bulletins and an occasional speaker. For the most part, however, club members took turns presenting papers or introducing guest speakers so that all members were able to gain confidence in public speaking.

In response to DeLury's request for suggestions to improve club work, a number of clubs suggested 'a uniform program'. DeLury had something to say for and against this suggestion at the 1923 Convention:

There must always be a certain sameness in the activities carried on because real human needs will always remain the same. There are many things of common interest to communities such as health, but about which there are so many aspects! Some of these aspects appeal in places where in others they would be of no interest.... It seems more reasonable therefore, for people to choose what most fits their immediate needs and tastes.

DeLury did suggest that clubs could promote the study of health by using the outline prepared by her Department. She also informed the Convention that articles regarding health being prepared for Western Woman and Rural Home could serve as the basis for club discussions. Her other suggestion was that clubs study peace and the League of Nations.

From the outset in 1919 the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada set up five Standing Committees to provide some direction for club acti-
vity. Standing Committees were to become part of the provincial structure, but AHCS did not establish any until 1923. That year Homemakers' organized a League of Nations Committee. The following year Homemakers' resolved that Standing Committees on Arts and Crafts, and Public Health and Child Welfare be established. Homemakers' set up Agriculture, Legislation and Immigration Committees in 1925. Public Health and Child Welfare became separate committees that year, and Arts and Crafts became known as Home Industries. 41

Bessie Near, AHCS President from 1937 to 1940, credits the establishment of Standing Committees with simplifying the preparation of papers. Clubs obtained lists of suggestions from the Department of Women's Work and they could get papers to present at their monthly meetings by requesting them. "This greatly assisted us to develop a higher standard of living in the home and a more efficient organization." 42

About the same time AHCS became part of the nation wide organization, DeLury was concerned about the lack of visiting and communication between clubs within the province. Consideration was given to ways of increasing contact. There was the annual Convention each June, but many women had neither the time nor the means to attend since it would mean leaving their families for several days. 43 Realizing the need to change this situation, women at the 1922 provincial Convention decided to divide the province into districts. The aim was to bring members into closer touch with each other by enabling them to attend at least one large assembly. Another aim was to enable Homemakers' to discover ability among its members. 44

District conventions, which were originally experimental, were so successful that they became a permanent part of Homemakers' Clubs pro-
grams in 1924. Members had the pleasure of meeting with women from other clubs in a holiday like atmosphere at District Conventions. For a day or two they could sit back and relax; be stimulated by exciting speakers and demonstrations; eat without cooking; and generally enjoy themselves. Although Districts were required to assume full responsibility - both financial and administrative - for their Conventions and other activities from the beginning women worked hard to plan these events because they appreciated the opportunity to get out of the home environment. By the time DeLury retired in 1930 District Conventions were being held in 17 districts.

The Association of Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan helped meet the needs of its members through two types of publications during the 1913-30 period. The first involved issuing leaflets and bulletins to provide members with information on subjects concerning their multiple roles and responsibilities. A 1922 Report of Activities listed Home Nursing, Preservation of Food, Essentials of an Adequate Diet and Egg Production as regular bulletins printed that year. Typed leaflets included such topics as community sanitation, textiles, tree planting, preservation of bird life, sausagemaking and other methods of meat preservation and health reports. These bulletins and leaflets, which were issued mostly in accordance with requests from the clubs, often provided material that was not otherwise available.

The second type of publication was to share news about club activities. A number of publications served this purpose during DeLury's term as Director of Women's Work. The Regina Leader continued to publish reports from clubs in its Women's World column, as did the Western Producer after it was established in 1922. Minutes of the 1922 Conven-
tion state that a motion was adopted making a national women's magazine, Canadian Home Journal, the official organ of AHCS. These reports served to inspire clubs and to give them ideas for new work they could undertake.

A resolution at the 1924 AHCS Convention changed the official organ to the Western Woman and Rural Home which began publishing out of Govan in November 1923. This monthly news magazine which was devoted to the development of better homes and home life in western Canada fit well with the aims of Homemakers' Clubs. When it was sold to the Regina Leader Publishing Company in 1926 it was incorporated into the Saskatchewan Farmer which then became the official organ. After much discussion of the liquor advertisements found in the Saskatchewan Farmer, delegates to the 1927 Homemakers' Convention decided, "...for the present we do not use any organ officially, but send our news to any organ willing to accept it". After 1922, however, it was no longer crucial to have an official organ since members were able to share ideas personally at District Conventions.

Homemakers' Clubs were very active during the years that they were administered by DeLury. She encouraged the clubs to sponsor lectures and demonstrations and to provide community services. Educational programs provided by the University, and those designed by the clubs, tended to focus on women's domestic responsibilities. Community services that Homemakers' developed were also in the realm of women's traditional roles, such as the provision of health care. In spite of the fact that there was a significant increase in Homemakers' Club activity, the scope of their work was limited.
THE GROWING ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY

University support was crucial to the rapid growth of AHCS during DeLury's term as Director of Women's Work. The University devoted much of the Agricultural Instruction Grant to the creation and expansion of a Department of Women's Work to administer the growing number of Homemakers' Clubs. In recognition of the increasing support that the University was providing to Women's Work, the Memorandums of Agreement signed by the Dominion and Provincial Ministers of Agriculture began listing Women's Work as a separate budget item in 1915-16.

Although the funds allocated to Women's Work remained part of the University's one-third share, they increased significantly over the years of the Agreement. In 1915-16 Women's Work received $4,500, or 16.3% of the University's share. This covered the salary and travelling expenses of DeLury and one lecturer, Daisy Harrison, as well as administrative and convention expenses. In 1917-18 the allocation to Women's Work increased to $5,500 (20.4%), and in 1919-20 it was increased to $7,500 (27.8%). These increases allowed the Department of Women's Work to hire three lecturers to provide talks and demonstrations to Homemakers' Clubs.

The Agricultural Instruction Aid Act was extended to include 1923-24, but was not renewed after 1924. Although the amount Saskatchewan received was slightly lower than in previous years, Women's Work was allocated $15,180, or 57.3% of the University's share. This source of funding was crucial to the four lecturers Women's Work hired to assist Homemakers' Clubs. When the grant was terminated, the University laid off staff and, consequently, there was a reduction in the number of short courses and demonstrations provided to Homemakers'. In 1925 the
number of Convention officials was reduced to three - a president and only two vice-presidents - in an effort to further reduce AHCS expenses.\textsuperscript{51}

President Murray felt that there could be no question of the value of Homemakers' Clubs after ten years of experiment. He believed that their growth in numbers and usefulness during the trying times of war was evidence of their stability and of the great service they rendered in their communities:

They represent the growing sentiment that women have a place and a duty to perform for the good of the community as well as the home. These clubs have never sought political objects, but have directed their efforts to forming public opinion and to directing and stimulating that opinion to support movements or proposals that look towards the betterment of social conditions.\textsuperscript{52}

Even after the Agricultural Instruction Grant was terminated, Murray was determined that "...this work must not be allowed to stop"\textsuperscript{53}, and, as long as he was President the University continued to support AHCS.

University support for AHCS placed some limitations on its activities. Despite the University's desire to maintain political neutrality, local Homemakers' Clubs began to show a more active interest in women's suffrage about 1914. At the December 6, 1916 meeting of the Lunenburg Club, for example, Catherine Motherwell spoke in favour of suffrage.\textsuperscript{54}

The provincial Association, however, was not represented on the Equal Franchise Board of Saskatchewan which was set up February 13, 1915 by seven other societies. Nor was it ever to openly endorse, or even discuss franchises for women because DeLury was sensitive to the University's concern that controversial issues be avoided.\textsuperscript{55}

In the early years, the University's Department of Women's Work carried on most of its work through AHCS because:
The work with Homemakers' Clubs was one of tradition and convenience - of convenience to the clubs as a clearing house and to extension as an excellent means to work with women. Clubs and the Department of Women's Work complimented each other such that it was often impossible to distinguish between programs generated by the clubs and by the University. Homemakers' looked upon the University as an active partner in their community development efforts. Most clubs were aware of what needed to be done; the problem of Women's Work was to meet the rapidly increasing demands of an expanding membership.

During DeLury's tenure, the Women's Grain Growers' Association also demanded equal treatment because their taxes supported the University. Somewhat reluctantly President Murray allowed the WSGA to obtain the facilities and resources of the University for their benefit. Although DeLury acknowledged that the Department was designated 'Women's Work', and should therefore provide help to any women's organization, she did not offer her services to WSGA as she did to Homemakers'. DeLury had a vested interest in the success of the clubs which the University had organized and endeavoured to keep Homemakers' an integral part of the University. Limited time and financial resources prevented an expansion of Women's Work activities so DeLury continued to concentrate her efforts on the non-partisan and non-denominational Homemakers' Clubs.

DeLury's relationship with the clubs was a close one. According to the 1917 AHCS Handbook, she was to be directly involved in the formation of clubs by either calling or authorizing a meeting for the purpose of organizing a Homemakers' Club in any public school district. Within a month of such meeting she was to be provided with a report of the organizing meeting complete with names and addresses of elected officers and
members. Club secretaries were directed to furnish the Director with reports of meetings within ten days, to notify her of changes in members, and to send copies of papers or addresses of exceptional interest. Secretary-treasurers were expected to keep exact records of all receipts and expenditures so that they could provide a yearly financial statement to DeLury.

The University continued to direct club work and administer AHCS through the Department of Women's Work during DeLury's term as Director. As previously noted, DeLury provided support to clubs by coordinating short courses and demonstrations and by preparing bulletins and suggestions which she distributed to the clubs. She was also involved in special projects, such as the promotion of egg circles. Although District organizations were to be self-sufficient, the University continued to direct AHCS and to host the Annual Convention which DeLury planned.

Prior to 1918 DeLury planned and facilitated the Conventions with no formal help from the members. In 1918 this situation changed when DeLury appointed a Convention Committee to assist her at the Convention. The Committee included a President, Elizabeth Gow Cameron, and five Vice-Presidents who helped draft resolutions and generally ensured that the Convention ran smoothly. Members gradually assumed some responsibility for running their own affairs, but the recording secretary remained a Women's Work staff member until 1925 when a resolution passed the responsibility to a Homemakers' Club member who was paid a $15 honourarium because of the arduous nature of the task.

In 1920 DeLury suggested to the Convention that she not appoint committees, but the meeting voted that she should continue to do so. In 1921 DeLury again asked for a new way to appoint committees and once
again the meeting moved that she continue to do it as in the past. In 1930 when DeLury attended her last Homemakers' Club Convention, she was still appointing Audit, Resolutions, Nominating and Finding Committees herself. The following year, however, a permanent Advisory Committee was established to assist Bertha Oxner, the new Director of Women's Work, with this task and to advise her between Conventions.

SUMMARY

The years from 1913 to 1930 were years of rapid growth for the Association of Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan largely due to the support of the University of Saskatchewan. From the outset, clubs looked to the University for direction and support, and it was given. Funds from the Dominion-Provincial Agricultural Instruction Grant enabled the University to provide lecturers and demonstrators to the 40 clubs which existed in 1913 and to create the Department of Women's Work to administer AHCS affairs. Abigail DeLury, the first Director of Women's Work, worked hard to extend University services to women throughout rural Saskatchewan such that the Association grew to 240 clubs by the time she retired in 1930.

Under the direction of the University, Homemakers' expanded their work while still providing much needed social and educational opportunities for rural women. While men continued to learn practical farming techniques, women learned practical homemaking skills and also added to the cultural capital and infrastructure of the province. They contributed to the growth of rural areas by establishing libraries, community centres, health clinics and other community services. The Association of Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan was a founding member of the Federated...
Women's Institutes of Canada in 1919 and in 1922 AHCS began to organize District Conventions to involve more women in inter-club meetings. When the Agricultural Instruction Aid Grant was terminated in 1924 the University continued to support AHCS activities because President Murray believed that the clubs provided a valuable service for the betterment of rural communities.

The University, through DeLury, was intimately involved in the direction and control of club affairs from 1913 - 1930. She organized the provincial Convention at the University each year, prepared leaflets and bulletins for club members and arranged to have lecturers and demonstrators visit the clubs. University support, however, placed some restrictions and requirements on the clubs. They were instructed to avoid politics and controversial issues so programs tended to focus almost exclusively on women's domestic roles. Clubs were expected to provide DeLury with minutes of meetings and annual financial statements. Most clubs abided by the University's instructions because they wanted to continue receiving University support. Members respected DeLury's experience and judgement so they were reluctant to take on responsibility for directing their affairs.

NOTES - CHAPTER 3

1. The original Act ended in 1922-23, but was extended for another year. For details about the Agricultural Aid Act and the Agricultural Instruction Act see Department of Agriculture File #261, SAB.


7. Department of Agriculture Annual Reports list 40 Clubs for 1912-13 and 75 clubs for 1913-14. Carlyle King, The First Fifty Years, (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1959), Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan 1911-1961, and others give the number of clubs as 140 or 150 in 1914. An official looking typed list of clubs dated 1914, however, lists 121 clubs with notations that five of these were defunct. This list gives no indication of the number of members which I think others may have estimated too high. Records for the 1920's give memberships in the range of 4,500-5,000 but by then there were over 200 clubs. It was not until there were almost 300 clubs that membership reached 6,050. Agricultural Societies File #168, SAB and AHCS Club Lists, AHCS/SWI Records, U of S Archives.


9. Thompson, p.91.

10. DeLury reported that Red Cross Clubs penetrated the remotest districts during the war years such that almost all new clubs were Red Cross ones in 1918 and even four or five Homemakers' Clubs became Red Cross Clubs that year. "The Homemakers' Clubs", Saturday Press and Prairie Farm, June 29, 1918.

11. Although WGGA locals were encouraged to become affiliated with the Women's Section of the United Farmers of Canada Padraig Blenkinsop, "A History of Adult Education in the Prairies: Learning to Live in Agrarian Saskatchewan, 1870-1944", (Phd. Thesis, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1979), p.372 and pp.343-44 noted that, "women were more closely integrated into the main organization" and "the UFC did not actively encourage women's sections". Consequently many former WGGA's opted to become Homemakers' Clubs. Some club histories submitted to the SWI Office give transfer dates prior to 1926, but records for MacDonald Creek WGGA state that the transfer date was January 6, 1927. The Minute Book, however, does not give any details about why or how the change came about. Records of AHCS/SWI, University of Saskatchewan Archives. The "Hillcrest Homemakers' Club", history prepared for SWI Office, 1985-86, mentioned that their early Club records were destroyed by fire so it is impossible to confirm their claim that they switched in 1924. While there may have been a few WGGA's that switched to Homemakers' prior to 1926 it appears likely that most did so after the WGGA folded.


14. Figures for 1918 represent $7.25 per member and 3.6 articles per member - very impressive considering that these women did not have much cash themselves and they also made clothing for their families. DeLury noted that these figures did not take into account Christmas boxes packed for local boys or work done through the local Red Cross Clubs. There were also a few clubs that failed to return the questionnaire used to compile these figures so in all likelihood they are somewhat low. Abigail DeLury, "AHCS Director's Report", presented to AHCS Conventions, Saskatoon, June 1918 and 1919.


16. Floral Homemakers' Club Minute Books, SAB.

17. Abigail DeLury, "AHCS Director's Report", presented to AHCS Convention, Saskatoon, June 1918.


19. Garnoch's first clinic in 1921 was held in a member's home and saw 35 children thoroughly examined. The second saw 74 examined in another member's home. In 1923 the clinic was held for two days in the Town Hall to accommodate the 103 children that came to be examined. Sometimes children were found to be healthy in which case mothers went home happy and proud. Where a child was found to have defects or be malformed mothers were advised how to remedy the problem by diet or home treatment. Some were referred to a dentist or optician or family doctor for a necessary minor operation such as the removal of adenoids. A pleasing feature of the work was that quite a number of children found deficient on one occasion were brought back in the following year to see if improvement had taken place. "A Baby Clinic Report", Western Woman and Rural Home, November 1923.


26. Paul, p.84.
27. The Aberdeen Association was started in Winnipeg in 1890 to provide books to rural communities. The Association provided books to Saskatchewan communities until it was disbanded in 1936. Stewart Mein, "The Aberdeen Association: An Early Attempt to Provide Library Services to Settlers in Saskatchewan", Saskatchewan History, 38 (Winter 1985), pp.2-19.


30. Although DeLury was promoting permanent libraries there was no indication of what percentage were permanent as opposed to travelling. Homemakers Clubs of Saskatchewan 1911-1961, p.39.

31. Ibid, p.38. Abigail DeLury, "AHCS Director's Report", presented to AHCS Convention, Saskatoon, June 1915, provides an example of the extent of relief work. That year clubs raised $5,109.23 and collected 8 tons of clothing in their relief efforts.

32. Homemakers' and Women's Institutes of the other provinces first considered the idea of a federation in 1912, but before action could be taken war broke out and all energies were directed towards the war effort. After the war, Miss Macissac, then Superintendent of the Alberta WI's, revived the idea that the time had come for a national link to bind the provincial organizations. She believed that it was important to organize rural women so that they could speak with one voice for needed reforms.

An interprovincial conference was held in Winnipeg in 1919 to consider federation. With the approval of the federal Minister of Agriculture the Federation of Women's Institutes of Canada (FWIC) became a national organization with Judge Emily Murphy as its first President. Catherine Clervedon, The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada, 2nd ed., (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), p.143, attributes the progressive outlook to Murphy who imparted her own boundless enthusiasm. Neeve Scarborough, History of the Associated Countrywomen of the World and its Member Societies, (Keighly, Yorkshire: Rydal Press, 1953), p.221, credits Murphy with sparing no pains to bring FWIC into prominence both nationally and internationally. Elizabeth Rand, Federated Women's Institutes of Canada 1919-1960, (n.p., 1961), pp.4-5, praises her efforts to bring the new organization into prominence through her driving power, executive ability, loving personality and concern for the welfare of rural women, but her biographers fall to mention her association let alone the influence she had on FWIC.

Without the FWIC there could be no national contacts, and no recognized authority or opportunity to share in the constructive policies of the nation. The work of the Federation was, however, limited because it lacked a national office. While a national
Office was a dream of Institute members and was provided for in the 1913 Bylaws, funds would not permit such a venture. The expenses of the Federation were met by a per capita tax on the members that was just 1/10th of that paid by Saskatchewan Homemakers'.

It was Saskatchewan's Nancy Adams, FWIC President 1953-57, who pushed for a national office. She realized that Saskatchewan was fortunate to have a Director of Women's Work assist the clubs and believed that a national office was essential to facilitate and coordinate the work of FWIC and its member associations. A Foundation Fund of one dollar per member was set up to make it possible to establish a national office with a permanent secretary. With the assistance of an annual grant from the federal Department of Agriculture an office has been maintained in Ottawa across from the Parliament Buildings since 1958.

FWIC promoted adult education through a system of Conveners of Standing Committees which were designed to coordinate the provincial units. It was suggested that provinces follow this system with minor differences to allow for particular interests or geographical position. As we shall see later this eventually happened in Saskatchewan.

Elizabeth Gow Cameron of Davidson was elected first recording secretary of FWIC and served in various other capacities including President from 1929-33. Throughout the years many other Saskatchewan women have held positions on the Board and as Conveners including Nancy Adams of Ethelton who was President from 1953-57 and Emmie Oddie of Tregarva who was President from 1979-82. Saskatchewan Homemakers' also had the opportunity to meet women from other provinces at FWIC Conventions, especially the 1929, 1949 and 1979 ones which were held in conjunction with AHCS/SWI Conventions in Saskatoon.

34. Abigail DeLury, "AHCS Director's Report", presented to AHCS Conventions, Saskatoon, June 1917, 1918 and 1919.
35. Abigail DeLury, "AHCS Director's Report", presented to AHCS Convention, Saskatoon, June 1920.
36. Abigail DeLury, "AHCS Director's Report", presented to AHCS Convention, Saskatoon, June 1925.
38. The Better Farming Trains were operated in June and July of 1915 through 1918. One coach was reserved for lectures and demonstrations of interest to women. Another was provided for the care of young children. In 1915 18,000 men, 12,000 women and 8,000 children passed through the train. L.B. Kirk, "Early Years in the College of Agriculture", Saskatchewan History, 12 (Winter 1959), pp.23-30 and A.R. Turner, "W.R. Motherwell and Agricultural Education, 1905-1918", Saskatchewan History, 12 (Autumn 1959), pp.81-96.
39. Paul, p.78, stated that Beynon believed women needed to learn about the value of money and how to buy because business clerks were taught how to sell. With the proliferation of modern devices competing for limited cash this became more crucial.

40. Abigail DeLury, "AHCS Director's Report", presented to AHCS Annual Convention, Saskatoon, June 1923.

41. AHCS, Minutes of Annual Convention, 1923, 1924 and 1925.


44. AHCS, Minutes of Annual Convention, 1922.

45. AHCS, Minutes of Annual Convention, 1924.

46. AHCS, Minutes of Annual Convention, 1930.

47. Mrs. Haight told the 1916 Convention that she requested literature from the federal government on the care and feeding of children, but was informed that none existed yet she knew that the government had literature regarding balanced rations for hogs and cattle. AHCS 6th Annual Convention Report, 1916, p.108.


49. AHCS, Minutes of Annual Convention, 1927.

50. AHCS, Minutes of Annual Convention, 1921.

51. According to the AHCS, Minutes of Annual Convention, 1922, there were eight vice-presidents that year; other years there were as many as five. Since the University covered travel and living expenses of Convention officials the reduced number lowered AHCS expenses.


54. While Motherwell acknowledged shrinking away from the question of female suffrage until the last few years she conceded that, "It was witnessing the conditions of women less fortunate than myself that awakened me to the selfishness of holding back from others a power which might help them remedy their unhappiness." Linda Rasmussen et al, A Harvest Yet to Reap: A History of Prairie Women, (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1976), p.122.
55. June Menzies, "Votes for Saskatchewan Women", in Politics in Saskatchewan, ed. N. Ward and D. Spafford, (Toronto: Longman's, 1968), p.87. Cleverdon, p.75, described Homemakers' Clubs as "hives of suffrage activity", but minute books and interviews do not appear to substantiate her claim. While individual members campaigned for votes for women and discussed suffrage during free time at annual Conventions the topic was never included as part of the Convention program according to Emma Ducie, interview, Regina, December 17, 1985.

56. Paul, p.82.

57. Ibid, p.83.


59. Abigail DeLury, "AHCS Director's Report", presented to AHCS Convention, Saskatoon, June 1919.


61. Egg circles were co-ops that the Department of Agriculture was trying to encourage in an effort to increase returns from poultry raising. Frank Mantle to Abigail DeLury, April 28, 1914, Agricultural Societies File #168, SAB.

62. AHCS, Minutes of Annual Convention, 1918.

63. Emma Ducie suggested that the reason for this was that DeLury was the only one present who really knew the interests and abilities of the members. Interview, Regina, December 17, 1985.

64. AHCS, Minutes of Annual Convention, 1930.
This chapter covers the years from 1930-1949. During this time the Association of Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan was administered by Bertha Oxner who replaced Abigail DeLury as the University of Saskatchewan's Director of Women's Work. The Association of Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan continued to grow and flourish during much of this period. During the depression of the 1930's clubs undertook relief work and impressive cultural projects to lift spirits of their communities. Oxner was able to maintain the basic homemaker training despite University cutbacks because Homemakers' started to assume some of their own administrative expenses, and it remained an important aspect of club life.

Membership first began to decline in 1941 - a trend which has continued to the present. Key factors in this change included improved transportation and communications and the migration from rural to urban areas which had begun in the 1930's. Another important factor was that despite a broadening of interest and involvement in community and provincial affairs, the Association did not seriously challenge the policy of keeping clear of controversial political issues that the University advocated and enforced to the best of its ability. Many active and talented members turned their energy towards the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, which was then emerging as an important social and political force in the province.
OXNER AND HER ADVISORY COUNCIL

Oxner, like her predecessor, had extensive training and experience in home economics and administration and so was well suited to oversee AHCS. She originally trained to be a home economics teacher at the Truro Normal School - another of the many programs set up by the founder of Women's Institutes, Adelaide Hoodless. Oxner taught in Nova Scotia before coming to teach in Saskatchewan. She obtained her B.A. at the University of Saskatchewan and then went to the University of Chicago where she obtained an M.A. She studied household science at Macdonald Institute, Columbia and London Universities and then returned to Nova Scotia to become Dean of Women at Acadia University for two years. In 1925 Oxner returned to the University of Saskatchewan as Assistant Professor of Household Science. From 1930 until her retirement in 1949 she held the position of Director of Women's Work.²

Coming as a comparative stranger to Homemakers', Oxner felt it necessary to get to know the members personally. Her first year's activities included visits to some fifty clubs. Oxner admitted feeling inward terror when she attended her first few meetings and conventions but,

> Fortunately, in the friendly atmosphere of both large and small groups, terror could not long endure. Warm hearted greetings and ready sympathy were proffered me everywhere.³

Oxner made many friends and gained a better understanding of the conditions and needs of rural women.

Initially Oxner received assistance in her new position from DeLury and two former AHCS presidents, Elizabeth Cameron and Emma Ducie. They provided advice on the administration and operation of the clubs and played a key role with her in planning the formation of a permanent Advisory Council.³
The Advisory Council was established by means of a resolution at the 1931 Convention. Its purpose was to advise the Director on matters of concern to Homemakers' and to review resolutions submitted by the clubs. The proposed Council was to consist of the Director of Women's Work, a president, vice-president, secretary and four councillors. The Council met twice a year during Oxner's term - once prior to the Convention and once at the discretion of the Director, which usually coincided with Farm and Home Week at the University. Oxner used the meeting prior to the Convention to train members in leadership skills so that they would be prepared for their new responsibilities which took effect at the Annual Convention. The second meeting, usually held during Farm and Home Week in January, was used to plan the Convention, deal with matters requiring immediate attention and to hear speakers.

GROWTH AND DECLINE OF HOMEMAKERS' CLUBS

The early part of Oxner's term was characterized by a rapid growth in the number of Homemakers' Clubs and members. Homemakers' attracted women who had few other opportunities for social contact or home economics training; women who were anxious to help their families and communities through the hardships of drought and war. University support for courses continued to influence community clubs, such as the one at Fertile, to join AHCS. Some Red Cross Clubs became Homemakers' as well. The Herrington Red Cross Club, for example, had existed since 1914, but after repeatedly planning programs that did not materialize it joined AHCS in 1940 to get support for its educational programs. Oxner encouraged the development of Indian and Junior Homemakers' Clubs during this period, but these did not continue for long.
Although the number of clubs increased throughout the 1930's, several clubs also disbanded. During the depression many southern clubs folded as members moved North in search of better farmland. In the 1930's, however, there was a net increase in clubs because of the large number of new clubs joining. After 1940, the trend reversed as the number of disbanding clubs increased. When war broke out, AHCS lost some clubs to the Red Cross. In 1941 there was a net loss of two clubs; the following three years saw net losses of 16, 20 and 31 clubs respectively. In 1945 there was a gain of 4 clubs, and in 1946 the number of clubs remained constant. From 1947 onwards the number of clubs gradually but steadily declined. The number of clubs was down by sixty-eight from the peak in 1941 when Oxner retired in 1949, but this was one hundred and seven more than she started with in 1931.

Oxner was concerned about the loss of clubs and cited a few major causes at the 1940 Convention. The first, she believed, was the failure to plan worthwhile programs for the meetings. The second was the lack of infusion of new blood and new ideas because of a static membership. Oxner felt that the last, and perhaps greatest factor, was the view that clubs could not afford to send delegates to the district and provincial conventions and that the pressing needs of the community prohibited any contribution to causes further afield.

Two major factors that Oxner neglected to mention were Saskatchewan's declining rural population and the emergence of a popular new political party. From 1936 onwards there was a significant decline in rural, and especially rural farm population. Since most club members were farm women, it was only natural that membership would eventually decline. Although rural population declined by 10% from 1936-41, club
membership continued to expand until 1941 because difficult times com-
pelled women to continue working collectively. AHCS membership, how-
ever, declined sharply between 1941 and 1949 and in the next phase lev-
elled off to a gradual, but steady decline as Appendix A illustrates.30

The University continued to advise clubs to avoid politics so those who were interested in more rapid social change deserted AHCS after the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation was formed in 1932. Even more joined the CCF after it won ten seats in the 1938 Saskatchewan election. Many of the women who were lost to the political process had gained leadership skills through their participation in Homemakers' Clubs, but were too active and visionary to remain restricted to homemaking.

Despite continuing rural depopulation, Oxner's 1947 report opened by announcing that 21 new clubs had been formed during the previous year. New clubs were started by former members who moved to new communities without a club, or by women who visited a club in neighbouring communities. Oxner went on to state, however, that this was not a clear gain as many other clubs had disbanded.

Much of Oxner's report was devoted to suggesting reasons why clubs were folding. In addition to the reasons she cited in 1940 she wondered if Homemakers' were bewildered by changes that were taking place. Governments established Health Regions which were responsible for immuniza-
tion programs, organized larger units of school administration to improve education facilities in rural areas and set up Regional Librar-
ies and community centres. Oxner suggested that the provision of these services did not mean that there was nothing left for clubs to do because, "...there is a real job to be done to see that these new facil-
ities will be used to develop better citizens."31
Some clubs were disbanding to form community clubs, but Oxner pointed out that the Homemakers' program was flexible and that a committee of the club might serve the community just as well as a separate organization. She also suggested that consideration be given to forming clubs in larger centres as farm families were moving to town for the winter and some for the whole year, but there is no indication that she pursued this matter. Since no one acted on Oxner's recommendations, AHCS was unable to reverse the downward trend and had only 355 clubs when she retired in 1949.

CLUB ACTIVITIES FROM 1930-1949

Throughout Oxner's term as Director of Women's Work, Homemakers' continued to operate on the assumption that the most practical forms of education were required by the agrarian population and their programs continued to be well received. During the depression clubs also engaged in relief work but, realizing that one cannot live by bread alone, they continued to arrange social activities and sustain community services. With the onset of World War II, Homemakers' once again supported the war effort with patriotic zeal and unselfish service. During this period Homemakers' received requests to provide advice or members for a variety of government and nongovernment bodies, a clear indication that they were still being recognized as an important force in rural Saskatchewan.

The 1930's depression had a profound impact on AHCS. Many settlers abandoned drought stricken farms and trekked North forcing clubs to disband. The Association, however, continued to grow rapidly as northward migration progressed because "...memories of those happy outings in
former communities inspired the recent pioneers to organize Homemakers' Clubs which have been doing so much to build a sound community life. Since provincial membership fees and University budgets were reduced, Oxner was forced to readjust her plans to visit clubs. Limited funds also led to a reduction in the number of lectures and demonstrations that were given. Oxner was impressed with the work and courage displayed by Homemakers' in their efforts to overcome the depression and described this period as their finest hour.

The depression struck Saskatchewan especially hard as the province's well being was dependent upon export markets. Wheat prices dropped from $1.60 a bushel in 1929 to 40 cents a bushel in 1932. At the same time Saskatchewan endured a drought cycle aggravated by the accompanying plagues of wind, dust and grasshoppers. There had been droughts before, but the 1930's drought was more prolonged and severe than any other in recorded history. Saskatchewan, which had been the fourth wealthiest province in 1929, was the poorest by 1933. Markets recovered slightly after 1933, but better prices were small comfort to drought stricken farmers who had nothing to sell.

Homemakers' became involved in many aspects of relief work during the depression since,

The mothers, who are the homemakers, are the ones upon whom the burden of crop failure falls most heavily. Children have to be outfitted for school, they must be kept fed, the men must be kept in good heart, and in good condition for work, so the homemakers sacrifice themselves even more than usual under these adverse conditions ... I believe that their caution, their thrift, their foresight and their provision for the future ... have been effective in averting much of the trouble, if not the disappointment, of the depression period.

Within their own communities they shared what little they had with less
fortunate residents. Many clubs reported supplying food and clothing to needy families - especially clothing so that children could attend school. Northern members who shared their abundant gardens provided a more varied and wholesome diet for the families of less favoured members in the south. Homemakers' Clubs also distributed the generous contributions made by the Women's Institutes of the eastern provinces.

Homemakers' did a great deal to alleviate the depression by providing community services, arranging social events and competitions:

At times the Homemakers' faltered and became discouraged, but even in the long periods of drought and pestilence of grasshoppers and sandstorms, and real deprivation, the Homemakers' sponsored some of their most imaginative and finest projects - in adult education, in health services ... and in the cultural field.

They organized whist drives, dances and lunches with low entrance fees to avoid excluding anyone. Another interesting activity at this time was the holding of small fairs with entries of vegetables, home cooking, sewing and other categories that varied from community to community. Homemakers' arranged the exhibits and solicited prizes, but usually called on outside judges to score the entries.

Music, drama and the arts flourished during the depression and 1940's. Homemakers' played a leading role in promoting and supporting art, literature, music and drama. They purchased school pianos and performed plays. In 1930 the Women's Work Department began a much used lending library of plays. Amateur theatre was encouraged with the introduction of the Dominion Drama Festival in 1933. In 1935, 68 clubs reported performing plays. That same year, one District incorporated a drama competition into its program and other Districts soon followed suit. In 1948 Homemakers' introduced travelling art exhibits from the National Gallery to rural Saskatchewan.
Homemakers' continued to establish and expand libraries during Oxner's term as Director of Women's Work. With the appointment of Baron Tweedsmuir as Governor General the Homemakers' gained a friend and generous benefactor in their attempt to provide library services. Lady Tweedsmuir showed a keen interest in the clubs and sent several books to their libraries. Oxner reported that Tweedsmuir gave 280 books to rural Saskatchewan in 1935, and that clubs established 15 new libraries that year. By the late 1930's, 81 Homemakers' Clubs had received books through the Lady Tweedsmuir rural libraries project. They circulated the books in their own communities and later exchanged them with other groups. Through the numerous books that were given a love of good literature was fostered in many rural Saskatchewan homes.

The depression stimulated an interest in reading, particularly the study of economic and political theory. While some people read to escape from dust, wind and poverty into a world of high adventure, romance and achievement, others read to understand the societal forces that brought on the depression and to devise social and economic solutions to their problems. New and radical economic, social and political ideas found ready support because the intensity and duration of the depression led people to question the basic foundations of the existing economic system. Homemakers', however, remained aloof from political controversy and consequently lost some members who believed that radical changes were required to improve conditions for farmers.

As the drought was coming to an end, Homemakers' Clubs were faced with another war. Prior to the outbreak of the war they were active in supporting the ideals espoused by the League of Nations and passed resolutions asking for the prohibition of the export of war materials to
aggressor nations and the nationalization of the manufacture of war supplies. When the war came, however, Homemakers' came to grips with the new reality and set up a special war fund. By 1941 they raised over $2,000 to pay for two beds at the Red Cross hospital in Taplow, England. The following year Homemakers' purchased a mobile kitchen for the Canadian Red Cross at a cost of $3,100. They also raised money for the Navy League of Canada and the Women's Voluntary Service of Great Britain which bought bicycles, bicycle trailers and potato cookers with the gift from AHCS.

The war was just over when delegates met at the 1945 Convention, but they decided to continue the wartime fund in order to help with rehabilitation in Britain and Europe. Members also decided to take part in a national campaign to ship clothing to the devastated countries of Europe. Clubs continued to give assistance to the victims of war through many agencies. Some adopted orphans overseas, some sent donations to CARE and clothing to USC and some sold Christmas cards or organized Halloween shellouts for UNICEF.

The 1946 Convention, with the theme 'Swords into Ploughshares', reviewed the clubs' post war efforts. Clubs reported that they were studying provisions for training discharged persons, giving welcome home parties and gifts to those who returned from military service and showers for the many overseas brides who settled in Saskatchewan. Homemakers' completed their honour rolls and contributed towards war memorials which often took the form of hospitals or community centres.

Oxner stressed the Convenerships and generally encouraged educational activity within the clubs. She recognized that clubs were making a significant contribution to adult education for rural women by
"...increasing the knowledge of the club member so that she might be a better homemaker and a better citizen." In recognition of AHCS's work in adult education, Edward Corbett, Director of the newly established Canadian Association of Adult Education, urged the Advisory Council to become an affiliate of CAAE in 1937. Several AHCS members attended the province wide adult education conference held in Davidson that year. The following year, Oxner and two Advisory Council members attended the CAAE sponsored Western Adult Education Conference held at the University of Saskatchewan. Oxner also encouraged local Clubs to join CAAE, but was disappointed with the number that did.

Homemakers' were ready to help when the University, through the initiative of President Walter Thompson, embarked on a more extensive program of adult education in the late 1930's. In every part of the province Homemakers' organized or took part in study groups where vital questions of the day were discussed. They also continued to sponsor short courses and demonstrations delivered by University personnel.

With the drought and the absence of cash in many areas the art of making over and making do were taken seriously by Homemakers'. Courses in altering sewing patterns, making toddler pants from the tops of ladies stockings, children's clothes from shirttails and aprons and bloomers from flour sacks were in great demand. Hat making also continued to be popular. Demonstrations on home canning were useful too as few farms had electricity or deep freezers at this time. With the help of the University, members were provided with a distinctive type of adult education which made them, "Thoughtful, resourceful, and more able to face the vicissitudes of prairie life." An examination of Conveners Reports and Suggestions, which are
available from 1933 onward, provides insight into the concerns of Homemakers' and their attempts to cope with the changing nature of life in rural Saskatchewan. Home Economics Conveners' reports and suggestions reveal that a wide variety of subjects were covered including cheesemaking, honey production, canning and dehydration of vegetables. By 1946-47 clubs began studying quick freezing as community storage lockers were being established.

During the depression and war years clubs studied salvage collection, price control, economical cooking, substitution, cooperative buying and buying shrewdly and sparingly. The conveners outline for 1944-45 provides a good example of the last point - because of the paper shortage it was brief, and club conveners were asked to refer to the previous outline for more suggestions. After the war, home economics reports and suggestions showed a very different emphasis. While mention was still made of studying food and household finances, more prevalent programs included remodelling kitchens, home decoration, insulation, sewage systems and time management. With the rural electrification scheme of the late 1940's members also began to learn about appliances that could simplify and reduce their workloads.

Public Health Conveners suggested that clubs study disease prevention, purity of ice and water, and the menace of infected milk. Clubs reported studying home nursing and first aid as medical services were still scarce in rural areas. In the late 1930's, clubs studied cancer, respiratory diseases and mental health. With the end of the war, and the subsequent return of soldiers, the study of venereal disease was also encouraged. Many of the health activities were directed at the community through the screening of health films and the distribution of
literature on health issues. 3a

Socialized medicine was a popular issue which health conveners recommended studying. Homemakers' endorsed the principle of state medicine at the 1935 Convention but a more specific resolution submitted in 1944 was defeated "...because it was inappropriate for Homemakers' Clubs to endorse any specific plan." Homemakers' as individuals, however, were advised to "Study and enthusiastically support any group they considered worthy and effective." 35

Throughout the 1930's and 1940's the interests of clubs widened and there was a desire for a better understanding of world relations - partly as a result of the wars and partly because of the affiliation with the Associated Country Women of the World. International Relations Conveners suggestions focused on the study of the League of Nations and efforts to promote peace. When World War II broke out, clubs assisted the Red Cross in its efforts to help the victims of war. When the war ended, clubs studied the situation of refugees and some provided English classes for displaced persons moving to their communities. 37

Arts and Letters Conveners encouraged members to learn new crafts, appreciate fine music and compile community histories. In 1940 the convener encouraged clubs to present at least one play per year which many did to provide entertainment and/or raise funds. Conveners also encouraged clubs to study good literature and recommended that they write the University for book parcels. Clubs compiled historical records for future generations, many of which were entered in the Tweedsmuir History Competitions that began in 1945. 38

Education Conveners saw to it that Homemakers' learned about the many changes that were occurring in their children's education. These
women tried to keep abreast of the many curriculum changes and the larger school units that were being introduced in the mid 1940's. Education Conveners encouraged Homemakers' to learn what equipment their schools had, and what they needed to enrich their children's learning opportunities. Many clubs, realizing that their schools lacked adequate library materials, pianos, radios, films and film projectors, raised money to provide these items. Although clubs provided adult education, it does not appear that this topic was discussed at the club level.39

Agricultural Conveners suggested that because Saskatchewan was an agricultural province the first duty of Homemakers' was to study possibilities for improving the lot of farm residents. Throughout the 1930's and 1940's clubs did just that. They studied cooperative marketing of agricultural products, consumer cooperatives and credit unions as a means of improving the economic freedom and security of farmers. Clubs examined laws regarding the marketing of agricultural products and trade relations with other countries. Members were also encouraged to beautify their homes and communities to entice children to stay on the farm.

Agricultural suggestions and programs, like those of other areas, changed to meet the immediate needs and concerns of the clubs. During the depression, Homemakers' studied the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act (PFRA) which was established in 1935 to provide assistance to drought stricken prairie farmers. They also studied soil conservation, wind and water erosion and how to use eavestroughs and cisterns to collect soft water. In the war years members learned about oil seeds that were introduced to Saskatchewan in an effort to meet the wartime demand for oil and sent seeds to British Women's Institutes. After the War many clubs arranged field days to Experimental Farms where they learned about
the rapid advances being made to improve poultry, livestock and farming practices.\textsuperscript{40}

Homemakers' took part in a number of new initiatives launched by the Department of Women's Work in the late 1930's and throughout the 1940's. These included such activities as correspondence courses, Experimental Farm Holiday Schools and Farm and Home Week.\textsuperscript{41} While these programs were not exclusively for Homemakers', many of the participants were in fact club members. Homemakers' also assisted the Department to provide home economics training by organizing Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Programs for girls.\textsuperscript{42}

During the 1930's and 1940's radio became a popular means of providing adult education for Homemakers' Clubs. John Rayner, Director of Extension at the University of Saskatchewan, told the women present at the 1933 Convention, that the University Radio was going to devote three hours per week to Women's Work. In the early 1940's, a Saskatoon radio station initiated a short program for women five times per week which Oxner hoped would "...contribute to the increasing efficiency of our work."\textsuperscript{43} Women's Work staff prepared 328 short radio messages and three longer broadcasts in 1941-42; in 1948-49 they prepared 29 scripts for radio.\textsuperscript{44} Clubs also participated in the CBC Farm Forum and Citizens Forum which began in 1941 and 1943 respectively.\textsuperscript{45}

Throughout the 1930's and 1940's, Homemakers' were recognized as an important force in Saskatchewan and, as such, were asked to name representatives to governmental and non-governmental bodies. By 1948 Homemakers' were represented on almost all 36 District Agricultural Boards which provided an effective link to tell clubs about agricultural improvement programs and to enlist their support. Homemakers' represen-
tatives served on the Provincial Council of Women, Saskatchewan Farm Home Committee, Saskatchewan Education Council, Anti-TB League, Red Cross and the Agricultural Committee of the Canadian Association of Consumers. In many communities Homemakers' Clubs reported on their activities at Wheat Pool Meetings."

Although AHCS was determined to remain non-political, it took part in government commissions, committees and boards through written briefs or by having a member attend meetings. A few examples show just how wide the interest and influence of the clubs was. When the Dominion Provincial Youth Training Program was established in 1937, Isabel Currie, the current AHCS president, was appointed one of five members of the Women's Advisory Committee to the National Employment Committee. As the only rural woman, she was able to render a unique contribution and when their report was completed she was asked to continue as federal advisor on girls' projects in Saskatchewan. In 1942 the AHCS President was one of three women asked to attend a provincial Conference to make plans for dealing with labour problems.

Homemakers' were able to influence government policy by preparing written briefs which were often well received. The final report of the Health Services Survey Committee, for example, included many of the recommendations from the brief prepared by Homemakers' in 1946. The Government of Saskatchewan requested that Homemakers' prepare a brief for presentation to the Freight Rate Inquiry Board, which the Commissioners commended for its clarity and moderation. Later the government asked Homemakers' to prepare another brief for the Royal Commission on Transportation. Governments recognized that Homemakers', who represented an important sector of the rural population, were capable of
making valuable contributions to public bodies.

The Director of Women's Work was frequently asked to serve on and present briefs to governments and non-governmental bodies as well. When the Martin Commission was appointed to study Saskatchewan's educational system in 1938-39, Oxner spoke on behalf of AHCS. She was a member of the federal Department of Labour's National Vocational Training Advisory Council from 1943-47 and a member of the provincial Technical Education Committee from 1944-46. From 1946-49 Oxner was president of the Canadian Home Economics Association, and from 1947-49 she was on the Board of Directors of the Consumers Association of Canada that FWIC helped to found. 51

Oxner used written media as a means of reporting Homemakers' activity and providing information on topics of interest to club members. Since AHCS had no official organ during this time articles were prepared for and published by a number of papers. Oxner thanked Violet McNaughton at the 1935 Convention for publishing her weekly bulletin on Homemakers' in the Western Producer, and in 1942 she thanked the Western Producer and other papers for their continued support. The Department of Women's Work staff were directly involved in writing newspaper articles - they wrote 38 in 1942 and in 1948-49 they wrote 85. 52 Women's Work staff also wrote bulletins and leaflets for Homemakers', but to a large extent they distributed materials from governments and other organizations. 53

THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY

Like DeLury, Oxner was directly involved in AHCS affairs throughout her term as Director of Women's Work. While clubs no longer sent minutes of each meeting to her office, they were expected to complete a
yearly statistical report. Clubs were to let Oxner know the number of members, the number of meetings held in a year, the average number of members per meeting, the amount of money raised and how it was spent, and provide information on their programs and special projects. The results were compiled and included in Oxner's annual report to the Convention which inevitably revealed that some clubs 'forgot' to send in their reports.

The Advisory Council which was formed in 1930 to assist Oxner, did not lessen the impact of the Director of Women's Work on AHCS affairs. With only two meetings per year the Director of Women's Work remained responsible for making many decisions on behalf of AHCS. At the January 1937 meeting, for example, Oxner's suggested convention theme "Beauty in Common Things" was accepted, but details were not discussed. The June convention was discussed at the January 1945 meeting. The minutes state, however, that "no definite plans were made". Presumably Oxner and her staff planned these conventions as they must have during the drought years of 1932, 1933 and 1934 when it appears that the Advisory Council only met in June. The Council members were able to assist Oxner by visiting and organizing new clubs in their areas.

Oxner provided direction to AHCS, but it was the University that had ultimate control over the clubs. To illustrate the extent of the University's influence one need only look at an early attempt of AHCS to change its name to Women's Institutes. After discussion at the 1931 Convention, mail ballots regarding the proposed name change were sent out to all clubs. Oxner reported at the 1932 Convention that 128 of 210 clubs favoured the change so she would send a memo to the Board of Governors requesting permission to change the name. The question was con-
sidered at the October 10, 1932 Board meeting along with a memorandum from the University's President. Minutes of that meeting indicate that the proposal was rejected - "The Board view the proposal with disfavour, and trust that the traditions associated with the origin, control and name of Homemakers' will be continued." Consequently at the 1933 Convention Oxner recommended deferring the name change because "...considering our many obligations to the University, the only course of action open to us is to comply with their request."

It is apparent from Advisory Council minutes that the close connection with the University had an impact on resolutions discussed and acted upon by AHCS. Convention minutes indicate that controversial or partisan resolutions were not often introduced, and those that were introduced were either tabled, dropped or defeated. In 1931, for example, five out of six resolutions were tabled, but none of these were brought up for a vote at the 1932 Convention. In 1935, delegates passed a resolution endorsing the principle of state medicare, but in 1944 a health services motion was defeated because it was "inappropriate for Homemakers' Clubs to endorse any specific plan." As individuals, however, Oxner urged them "to study and enthusiastically support any group they considered worthy and effective."

Delegates defeated resolutions that would have seen Homemakers' request the inclusion of more women on government committees and at least one woman on each school board. Instead, they favoured less controversial resolutions promoting peace and the establishment of a Canadian Consumer's Bureau. They also asked the government to provide scholarships to train home economics graduates in housing and arts graduates in library science outside the province similar to those given men to
study veterinary medicine. Resolution requesting government action were routinely sent to the appropriate Minister after being passed at the Convention, but it does not appear that there was much follow-up to ensure that requested action was taken.

The Advisory Council, under Oxner's direction, determined whether or not to put resolutions before the Convention. The Dinsmore Club, for example, was convinced by the Council to withdraw its 1936 resolution recommending the removal of all restriction on birth control information. The following year Dinsmore submitted a more detailed resolution urging that birth control information be made available in light of unsafe and unsanitary methods being used and the resulting deaths. The Advisory Council again asked them to withdraw their resolution because many members who were opposed to birth control had written to Oxner objecting to discussion of the resolution. Advisory Council minutes indicate that the Council initiated some resolutions and amended or dropped others which it considered politically sensitive or unacceptable to the University.

Oxner was reluctant to antagonize the University because it continued to provide funds to support AHCS through the Department of Women's Work. Oxner's salary and those of demonstrators were paid by the University, which also continued to provide travel expenses, office space and administrative support - every day at 2 p.m. the President's secretary came to take letters. During the 1930's and 1940's most of the Department's work was still carried out through Homemakers' Clubs. Oxner continued to ask clubs to sponsor extension courses for women because church groups could potentially exclude some women. In 1934, for example, university representatives addressed 180 club meetings, and as
late as 1949 instruction was provided to only 21 non-Homemakers' groups. 59

Although Oxner wanted to expand services for Homemakers' when the demand for services grew in the early 1930's, she realized that financial conditions made it impossible so made the best of what she was given. 60 Until the early 1930's the University covered full railway fares of all delegates to the annual Convention and full expenses of the provincial executive and those contributing to the program. During the depression this support gradually decreased. President Murray asked AHCS to assume some financial responsibility in 1934. AHCS assumed more financial responsibility in 1935, and by 1936 it covered all convention expenses and many other expenses related to the promotion of club work. The Advisory Council recommended acceptance of these obligations so that the University could have more funds available for extension work among rural young women and girls. 61

Individual clubs paid a levy, based on the number of members they had, in order to cover some of the expenses related to AHCS. In 1931 fees were reduced from 25 to 15 cents because of the depression, but in 1934 they were raised to 25 cents again to enable the Association to cover travel expenses. Some clubs imposed a membership fee to cover the levy although a number of clubs lowered or even abolished the fee during the depression. Other clubs raised funds to pay the levy by organizing lunches, dinners, teas, card parties, bazaars and raffles. Clubs raised thousands of dollars each year, but it appears that some preferred to support the CNIB, Anti-TB League, Red Cross and various local causes rather than AHCS administration. 62

An early 1930's study of adult education in Canada, which examined
university extension departments, described Saskatchewan's Homemakers' Clubs as agents for the University in the communities they served. The author ranked the clubs high "as an agency for wise and constructive development of rural community life." He also believed that:

Their use by the University as the medium for carrying many forms of educational service to rural people makes the success of these clubs as such an agency secure, and ensures, for the rural women particularly, the very best in the guidance and development of her practical and cultural interests.53

As with other branches of the Extension Department, the direction and supervision provided was designed to encourage self-help.

The author of the study attributed the widening of Homemakers' Clubs interests to the influence of the University. Through a system of provincial, district and club conveners, which was fully developed under Oxner, members were encouraged to study a wide variety of topics. Provincial conveners prepared program suggestions which the University sent out to clubs along with advice on where to find appropriate materials.84 The preparation of these suggestions enabled members to actively cooperate with the Director of Women's Work to draft and direct their programs.

SUMMARY

The years 1930-49 were years of rapid social and economic change in Saskatchewan. This chapter shows how Homemakers' Clubs adapted to the challenges of depression and war. It documents the vast amount and variety of service work that clubs worked hard to sustain. By the 1940's, however, provincial and municipal governments had taken over the provision of some services which led a number of clubs to disband. This was also a period of rapid rural depopulation, so Homemakers', as a
rural based organization, lost members and potential members. The fact that many were living in towns meant that they had other opportunities for social interaction and education. Homemakers' Clubs were innovative and flourished in response to the difficulties of the 1930's, but as times got better in the 1940's, AHCS membership began to decline.

Bertha Oxner, as Director of Women's Work, assisted clubs with their educational activities. Although she promoted the convenerships which encouraged clubs to study a wide variety of issues, programs organized by the University continued to be centred around homemaking. In the 1930's women required skills, such as conservation, to enable them to survive shortages of food, cash and other resources. By the 1940's, however, basic needs were being met so the University promoted home beautification and handicraft courses. Courses offered in the initial years of Oxner's term were crucial to the survival of farm families, while those offered in the 1940's were not.

Throughout these years the University was intimately involved in AHCS affairs although an Advisory Council was set up in 1930 to assist Oxner. The University provided Oxner's salary and covered the administrative expenses of AHCS until the depression forced President Murray to ask Homemakers' to assume some of the costs.

Along with University support came control. During this period many members and clubs moved towards a broader interest in the political life of the province. This brought them into conflict with the University which attempted to stifle most potentially controversial activities. The University desire to avoid politics and controversy limited activities and resolutions which contributed to the decline of AHCS. Many women left the clubs and dedicated their energies to the Cooperative
Commonwealth Federation, particularly after it began to win seats in the provincial legislature in the late 1930's. This exodus of progressive and visionary women was a tragic loss to AHCS and set the stage for AHCS's further decline, particularly because the University took Oxner's retirement as an opportune moment to reduce its support.

NOTES - CHAPTER 4

1. Undated newspaper clippings, Elrose Homemakers' Club File, SAB.


3. AHCS, Advisory Council Minutes, July 30, 1930.

4. The Councillors were to be elected from four Divisions whose boundaries were to be determined by the Director of Women's Work. AHCS, Annual Convention Minutes, 1931.

5. Edith Medland, AHCS President from 1942-44 said, "Oxner ... trained us to think for ourselves, which we possibly did not appreciate so much at the time, but I for one, do now." Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan 1911-1961, (Saskatoon:n.p., 1961), p.22.

6. Farm Women's Week was initiated in January 1940 concurrently with the Farm Week which had been an annual event at the University since the early 1930's. Women's Work organized separate educational programs for the many wives who came with their husbands, but reserved some time for 'shopping and other personal uses'. Programs were centred around homemaking skills and other tasks of farm women such as poultry raising and gardening. By 1948 the Women's Program was a regular part of Farm and Home Week. Extension Division Records, University of Saskatchewan Archives.


8. Indian Homemakers' Clubs were organized by the Department of Women's Work in the early 1930's. The first was started in 1937 on the Red Pheasant Indian Reserve. Within three years there were 12-14 Clubs on reserves. Lorne Paul, "Extension at the University of Saskatchewan, 1910-1970", Typed Manuscript, 1979, p.87-89 refers to 14 Clubs, but Club Lists only record 12. When Extension staff could not conduct courses information was sent to a local woman who acted as the instructor. Local leaders conducted projects on gardening, food preservation, child care and sewing. In the late 1940's a one week course was given for 'half-breed girls' near Kinistino. They studied food, clothing and simple weaving, and the development of
native crafts was encouraged. By 1947 the Club List included only 3 Indian Clubs, but even these were no longer on the 1948 Club List. It appears that the Extension Department continued working on Indian Reservations, but not through Homemakers' Clubs. AHCS/SWI Records, University of Saskatchewan Archives.

Many Homemakers' Clubs established Junior Homemaker's Clubs for rural girls 13-21 years of age in the early 1930's because drought and depression severely reduced their opportunities. Homemakers' members led sewing courses for girls with the assistance of correspondence lessons prepared by the Department of Women's Work. These were used by six groups in 1933 and by 42 in 1935. Some Homemakers' also taught nutrition and advanced sewing after being trained by a University demonstrator in what became known as a 'train the trainer' program.

In the early spring of 1936 Homemakers' were starting 4-H Homecraft Clubs which came to replace Junior Homemakers' Clubs by 1942. Boys had 4-H Grain Clubs supported by the Wheat Pool for a number of years when the daughter of the man in charge asked if something could be done for girls. Homemakers' assumed additional responsibilities in teaching the groups and supervising the meetings. Many hours were spent attending leaders courses, learning new types of work that could in turn be taught to the girls and in helping to plan local and district achievement days. By 1939 there were 190 Homecraft Clubs - 110 of which were under the guidance of Homemakers' Clubs. Homemakers' also provided leadership and prizes for other 4-H Clubs. Paul, p.87 and Edith Rowles-Simpson interview, Saskatoon, April 21, 1986.

9. Abigail DeLury, "AHCS Director's Report", presented to AHCS Convention, Saskatoon, June 1940. At this time many Homemakers' Clubs became community clubs so they could devote all their time and money to community projects. Some women felt it a burden to pay the Homemakers' Club Levy and did not want to obligated to follow the system of Convenerships. Although it had been made known from the outset that clubs did not have to cover all convenerships each year district and provincial conveners seemed to think they should receive a report from every club. Conveners Reports, AHCS/SWI Records, University of Saskatchewan Archives.


15. In the whole of southern Saskatchewan the impersonal word 'depression' was replaced by the more personal and concrete word 'drought'. "At first 'drought' meant only what the dictionary intended it to mean - an appalling and almost total lack of moisture. But as the years went on it came to stand for almost everything that was hard and hostile in the day-to-day business of living. It still meant, above everything, drought itself, but it also stood for dust, hail, rust, and sometimes frost. It stood for fifty cent wheat and hardly any of that. It stood for grasshoppers and Russian thistle. It stood for relief - relief food, relief clothes, relief bedding, relief seed, relief fodder, relief coal, relief binder twine. John Archer and Charles Koester, Footprints in Time: A Sourcebook in the History of Saskatchewan, (The House of Grant Ltd., 1965), pp.99-100.


19. During the Depression clubs endeavoured to make it possible for all to attend social events. The Greenan Club reported that it reduced lunches from 10 cents to 5 cents and others admitted ladies who brought contributions towards lunch free of charge. "Greenan Homemakers' Club", and other histories prepared for SWI Office, 1985-86.


22. [Cameron] ed., p.43.

23. Ibid.

24. Lady Tweedsmuir also enlisted the support of Queen Mary and other friends to provide books to Homemakers' Clubs'. Ibid, p.25 and pp.49-50.


26. AHCS, Annual Convention Minutes, 1939.

27. Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan 1911-1961, p.43. See also Wartime Fund File, AHCS/SWI Records, University of Saskatchewan Archives and Abigall DeLury, "AHCS Director's Report", presented to AHCS Conventions, June 1939-45. "Inchkieth Homemakers' Club/SWI", history prepared for SWI Office, 1985-86 mentions that they made 18 quilts and 480 other items for the Red Cross during World War II.

The first correspondence courses were the ones developed by the Department of Women's Work that provided sewing lessons for women leading Junior Homemakers' Clubs. In the fall of 1936 the University began sending out parcels of books for reading courses which were received enthusiastically by Clubs since there were still few learning opportunities for women in rural Saskatchewan. Some clubs were so enthusiastic that they used a new course each year. In 1939 instruction by correspondence went to 25 groups; sewing to eight groups; rural sanitation to 30; socialization of medical services to 46; child training to 28; and other subjects to 15 groups. The expansion of correspondence courses was likely related to the successful CAAE lobby to have postal rates for books lowered in 1938 after a resolution was unanimously passed at the 1938 Western Adult Education Conference calling for "greatly reduced postal rates on library books". Ron Faris, The Passionate Educators, (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates, 1975), p. 27; [Cameron] ed., p.49; and Paul, p.88.

The first Holiday School in Homemaking was held at the Swift Current Experimental Farm in the summer of 1938. Farm staff deliv-
ered lessons in poultry and gardening; lecturers from the Department of Women's Work taught home economics and directed recreational activities. These schools were offered at other experimental farms in subsequent years to enable more women to participate in the training. Programs were also provided for women who came to the summer demonstration days at the farms and the University. Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan 1911-1961, p.41 and interview with Helena Ducie, Saskatoon, November 7, 1985.

42. In the summer of 1933 District Homemakers' Club executives cooperated with the University and local school boards to arrange the first two ten day courses for girls. These courses were designed to provide home economics training which was still not offered in all rural schools because of inadequate facilities and/or the lack of trained teachers. In 1935 there were eight such schools which provided training for 247 girls. With the introduction of the Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Program in 1937 the Department of Women's Work planned a number of programs varying in length from five days to five months. More than 5,000 girls received vocational training in the first two months of the DPYTP. Homemakers' Clubs often made local arrangements for classes and played a major part in promoting these courses. Homemakers' also sponsored most of the girls to Farm Girls Week at the University each June. Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan 1911-1961, p.48 and interview with Helena Ducie, Saskatoon, November 7, 1985.

43. Abigail DeLury, "Directors Report", presented to AHCS Convention, Saskatoon, June 1942.

44. Paul, pp.88-89.


47. Ibid, p. 41.


49. The AHCS Brief was prepared by Mrs. Manning according to the June 16, 1947 Advisory Council Minutes.

50. These two submission were prepared by Mrs. Wade of Glenbush, Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan 1911-1961, p.45.

51. Undated newsclipping, Elrose Homemakers' Club File, SAB.

52. Paul, p.88-89.


55. University of Saskatchewan Board of Governors, Minutes, October 10, 1932.

56. AHCS, Minutes of Annual Convention, 1933.

57. Correspondence files contain letters from Bertha Oxner to various Ministers who politely informed her that they would look into the matter. In many cases no action was taken, but there is no correspondence to indicate that Homemakers' pursued their resolutions beyond informing Ministers that they had been passed. There were, however, some exceptions where the government did act - in 1945 Oxner was able to report that the first of three Library Science Scholarships had been awarded by the provincial government; Homemakers' were asked to advise on curriculum revision after passing a resolution in 1949 regarding time spent on oral and written composition. "AHCS Director's Report", 1945 and Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan 1911-1961, p. 46.

58. AHCS, Advisory Council Minutes, 1930-49.


60. Interview with Edith Rowles-Simpson, Saskatoon, April 21, 1986.

61. AHCS, Minutes of Annual Convention, 1935; [Cameron] ed., p. 17; and AHCS Financial Statements, AHCS/SWI Records, University of Saskatchewan Archives.

62. Pinkham, for example, reported that no membership fees were collected in 1934. West Weyburn just reduced fees first to 50 cents and then to 35 cents until 1944 when they were raised to 50 cents again. The Pense Club which had decided at the outset that no money would be raised from dancing, cards or gambling rescinded this motion in 1937 when they realized the great potential for raising funds from these sources. "Pinkham Homemakers' Club/SWI", "West Weyburn Homemakers' Club/SWI" and "Pense Homemakers' Club/SWI", histories prepared for SWI Office, 1985-86.

63. Sandiford et al, Chapter 3, p. 21.

64. From 1935 onwards the Women's Work Department sent out suggestions to all clubs so they could be received more quickly, but the change was not intended to relieve District Conveners of their responsibility. AHCS, Minutes of Annual Convention, 1935.
CHAPTER 5
INDEPENDENCE IS GRANTED, 1949-1986

This chapter covers the years from 1949, when Bertha Oxner retired, to 1986 when SWI celebrated its 75th Anniversary. The membership of AHCS/SWI declined from 6035 to 1460 (76%) during this period because of continuing rural depopulation and a number of other factors. There were, as well, many changes in the relationship between the University and AHCS/SWI which further weakened the movement. Throughout this period, the University devoted most of its resources to on campus teaching and significantly reduced its support to AHCS/SWI. The University's Board of Governors drastically cut the Department of Women's Work budget in 1949 and amalgamated it with the Extension Department. The University, however, continued to administer AHCS/SWI through the Extension Division until 1982 when it withdrew funding for a staff member to oversee SWI affairs. Although there was excitement within the movement during 1986 because of SWI's 75th Anniversary, it had difficulty maintaining an office to support the movement which the University had put so much effort into organizing 75 years earlier.

THE NEW DIRECTORS

Alice Stevens replaced Oxner as Director of Women's Work at the University of Saskatchewan in 1949. Stevens was a graduate of the Manitoba Agricultural College at the University of Manitoba. She taught school in British Columbia and was in charge of the laboratories and public relations for a canning company before moving to Saskatchewan in
1948 to work as a home economist in the Department of Women's Work. A year later, when Women's Work and Extension were amalgamated, she became the Assistant Director of Extension in charge of Women's Services which included responsibility for AHCS affairs.¹

Stevens spent much of her three years with AHCS on sick leave so the AHCS President, Mary Entwistle, assumed a major role in directing club affairs with the assistance of Margaret Pattillo who became Director of Women's Services upon Stevens' death in 1952. Pattillo was a graduate of the Truro Normal School Home Economics Program and obtained a B.Sc. in Home Economics from Acadia University in 1937. She taught until 1943 when she joined the Royal Canadian Air Force. At the end of the war, Oxner wrote to Pattillo asking her to apply to work at the University of Saskatchewan Women's Work Department. Pattillo took charge of the Dominion Provincial Youth Training Program at the University from 1946 until 1952 when she became the Director of Women's Services.²

Minutes of Advisory Council meetings indicate that members assumed more responsibility during Stevens' illness. They became active in preparing plans for Conventions and began to keep their own minutes, but they did not assume total control of the Association. Under Pattillo's direction AHCS's Advisory Council became the Advisory Board in 1958 to reflect its increased responsibilities.³

At the 1966 Convention Pattillo stated that the organization had led a sheltered life because previous Directors of Women's Work had accepted responsibility for directing the clubs. She went on to say that under her direction members took over running the organization such that Women's Services came to carry out policies made by the Board, compile figures and act as a source of information.⁴ From 1966 onward Pattillo
referred to herself as the Executive Secretary of AHCS/SWI because she did not believe that she should 'direct' the organization. Pattillo believed that members should determine future directions and that the clubs should not remain dependent upon the University.

As Director of Women's Services, however, Pattillo continued to direct the affairs of AHCS/SWI until July 1981, with the exception of 1978-80 when Marie Dunn was SWI's Executive Secretary. Pattillo was an efficient administrator who ensured that individual clubs continued to send in yearly statistical reports outlining the number of members, number of meetings held, funds raised and projects undertaken. She was constantly amazed that the concern for training came from Women's Services, not the clubs or districts. It appears that the clubs lacked initiative when it came to requesting programs from Women's Services, but were willing to accept Pattillo's assistance with such things as District Program Planning and Training for Directors when she offered it. Clubs tended to wait for Pattillo to offer direction because they were reluctant to ask for too much from the University.

Although Pattillo claimed that the organization was becoming more independent, she really maintained control over SWI. In addition to arranging courses for the clubs Pattillo arranged the Annual Convention by herself - at the January Board meeting she "fished out an appropriate theme based on the needs members saw." Then she balanced the Board's needs with University resources to develop the Convention program. With the assistance of University secretaries and bookkeepers, Pattillo continued to carry out the day to day work of the organization.

In 1978 the University appointed Marie Dunn to be SWI's Executive Secretary for two years, primarily to arrange the 1979 FWIC Convention
that was held in Saskatoon. Dunn, like her predecessors, had extensive home economics training and teaching experience. She was also a graduate of the University of Saskatchewan's Master of Continuing Education program so was well suited to coordinate the FWIC Convention and SWI affairs. When Dunn's two year contract expired Pattillo resumed the role of SWI's Executive Secretary until her retirement in July 1981. Then Sylvia Robinson, another home economist/adult educator, took over as SWI's Executive Secretary. Saskatchewan Women's Institutes retained Robinson's services when the University withdrew funding for SWI's Executive Secretary in 1982. When Robinson resigned in 1984, SWI was able to select its own Executive Secretary, Margaret Peterson. Prior to 1982, SWI had no say whatsoever about who the University appointed to administer AHCS/SWI affairs.

FURTHER DECLINE OF THE CLUBS

The decline in the number of Homemakers' Clubs and members that began in the 1940's continued to 1986 with few exceptions. When Stevens took over as Director in 1949 there were 6,035 members in 355 clubs. By 1986 numbers had declined to 1,460 members in 110 clubs - a net loss of 244 clubs (73%) and 4,575 members (76%).

Rural depopulation continued to be a critical factor in declining membership since Homemakers' Clubs were still primarily made up of farm women. Saskatchewan's rural farm population declined by 55% from 1951-1981 so it was not surprising that membership in SWI declined, but Appendix A illustrates that the drop in membership was higher than the rate of depopulation. Club members were caught up in the administration of their own clubs and did not have the time or energy to stimulate
clubs in neighbouring communities. The University's failure to devote resources to expanding clubs or membership as it had in earlier phases, therefore, meant that the clubs declined because no one was encouraging the formation of clubs in urban areas.

Many farm women who moved to small towns no longer saw the need for clubs because other opportunities for social interaction, recreation and education were available. Even women who remained on farms were less isolated than they were a few decades earlier. Improved roads and automobiles shortened distances thereby making services in larger centres more accessible. Improved communication networks - telephone, radio and television also reduced the feeling of isolation.

Many clubs cited lack of members as their reason for disbanding. While some clubs with 10 or 12 members found it impossible to carry on, others continued until they had as few as three members. Declining club membership made it more difficult to find members who were willing to take on the responsibilities of conveners and club officers. Some clubs, having relied on the services of a president or secretary for several years, disbanded when the driving force behind the club moved or passed away. With half the members over sixty years of age it is not surprising that a large numbers of members were lost by death each year.¹⁰

SWI did not attract younger members to any large extent. Many young women found it impossible to attend afternoon meetings because they were working full time or had young children to care for. A few clubs switched their meetings to evenings in an attempt to accommodate these women and at least one club hired a babysitter to enable young mothers to participate in SWI meetings. But there were many young women who did
not join SWI because they viewed it as a traditional organization that was not prepared to confront current social and political issues. These women were unwilling to criticise older members ways and instead formed new organizations such as Saskatchewan Women's Agricultural Network or worked through the more 'progressive' National Farmers' Union.

The growth of larger school units in the 1950's and 1960's contributed to the decline of several clubs which were organized to do work around local schools. Larger school units also improved the overall level of education in rural areas and made home economics training more widely available. Although advances were made in the area of home economics rural women had opportunities to learn about them through magazines, radio and television and community adult education classes.

The introduction of Community Colleges throughout rural Saskatchewan in the early 1970's contributed to SWI's decline. Community Colleges began to take over the provision of skills courses that the University Extension Department used to provide. SWI Education Conveners encouraged SWI members to sit on College Contact Committees in their local communities to help plan programs, to take courses and to teach them. The proliferation of Community College courses in smaller communities meant, however, that SWI's own educational programs were no longer the only option open to women in rural Saskatchewan who wanted to learn new skills.

The need to revitalize SWI and to involve young women in the organization was a recurrent theme at SWI Conventions, especially in later years. It was the focus of the 1950's leadership training and the theme of the 1965 Convention. In 1972 convention delegates identified priorities for the 'new' organization which included attracting younger mem-
bers. Delegates to the 1980 Convention were asked to help increase membership and in 1985 clubs were asked to increase membership by 75 to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the organization. With the exception of 1982, when SWI had a net gain of 200 members, efforts to get new members were unsuccessful. During this period the University did not employ staff to actively promote the formation of clubs as it had in previous periods.

Although the trend was for clubs to disband a number of new clubs have emerged since 1949. The reasons for forming new clubs were not unlike the reasons of earlier clubs. Neighbouring clubs or a former member who relocated were still factors in the formation of new clubs. Other clubs were formed by women who wanted to replace disbanded community clubs, hospital aids or church women's groups or to expand their work. Some University instructors encouraged the formation of clubs as did at least one Agricultural Representative. The SWI pilot project on wife abuse in 1984 spawned a number of community groups, including the Leoville Women's Institute. 

CLUB ACTIVITIES FROM 1949-1986

In the years from 1949 to 1986 AHCS/SWI continued to provide community services and educational programs in rural areas. Many clubs collected funds on behalf of a number of charitable organizations or made donations to them from club funds. Committees, Commissions and Boards also continued to ask local clubs and the central office at the University for assistance.

Many of the remaining clubs, however, were less active than they had been in earlier years. The University had cut back on the delivery of
courses to individual clubs and the provincial government had taken over the provision of services which Homemakers' had established and run for many years. Since SWI was unable to attract young women, most surviving members were older and consequently less able to sustain their former energy levels. The social aspect of club meetings remained important and even kept some clubs going.

The Association of Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan advocated expansion of government services to rural areas, but provision of these services took responsibilities away from the clubs. The government instituted the Regional Library system during the 1960's and it was often through AHCS efforts that branches replaced the libraries which Homemakers' had established in small communities. While some Homemakers' Clubs abandoned the provision of library service, others donated their books to the new libraries and became active on library boards. When the provincial government took over the operation of a number of small hospitals, many SWI clubs continued to raise funds to purchase new pieces of equipment and some donated linens and food to assist with operating funds. A series of workshops on family violence in 1984 encouraged SWI clubs to urge the government to set up shelters for battered women in rural areas which Women's Institutes support by donating furnishings or sitting on boards.

Several SWI clubs undertook community services to benefit seniors since most members were older and could readily identify with the lack of services for the elderly in rural areas. They assisted with Home Care Services, such as Meals-on-Wheels, and they made substantial contributions to the establishment and/or expansion of special care homes. They provided food and linens to keep operating costs down.
clubs held regular meetings at these homes where some of their long time members resided; others sponsored annual Christmas parties, card parties or teas for the residents.

Women's Institutes continued to support community recreational activities. They contributed time and money to assist various youth sports teams, arenas and curling rinks. They also sponsored dances, community suppers and bazaars although not nearly to the same extent that they had in earlier years. When clubs disbanded, they frequently turned over remaining funds to community clubs, arenas, senior citizens' homes or other community uses.

Although the first President of the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada urged Women's Institutes not to degenerate into money making machines, most clubs spent time fundraising for community projects and other charitable causes. Many clubs also canvassed their communities on behalf of the Heart Fund, the Cancer Society or Donor's Choice. In 1950 the Director of Women's Services reported that clubs raised almost $40,000 for charitable causes; in 1951 they raised $45,721.12 of which only 10% went towards club administration (i.e. the Levy and Million Member Fund). Although clubs raised considerable amounts of money, there was resistance to using funds for club administration or covering such things as delegate's expenses to district and provincial conventions.

Executive Secretaries and Presidents since 1949 continued to promote the educational aspects of Homemakers'/SWI. Individual club members arranged programs for regular meetings under the convenerships. Although the University no longer developed programs specifically for club meetings, the Director of Women's Services continued to assist
conveners with the preparation and distribution of reports and suggestions to ensure that these programs changed to keep up with developments in such areas as home management, agriculture and current affairs. The Advisory Board formally acknowledged SWI's educational mandate by having the organization become a member of the Saskatchewan Association for Lifelong Learning (SALL) when it was formed in 1972.¹⁸

Leadership training was a major focus of University support to AHCS since the early 1950's. Members were provided with training to encourage them to take on leadership roles and to enable them to plan more effective programs. This aspect of club work became a priority of Extension since it made more effective use of its decreasing resources.

In 1951 the AHCS President attended a one week Leadership Training Course put on by the Manitoba Women's Institutes. Upon her return she encouraged the Advisory Council to offer similar programs for Saskatchewan Homemakers'.¹⁹ With the support of the University, AHCS began to provide leadership training to its members in 1952. The first Leadership Day was held immediately prior to the 1952 Convention for District Delegates, Provincial Conveners and members of the Advisory Council. Nine leadership courses were offered that fall to over 400 women. The following year eight Club Clinics reached 300 women from 74 clubs. The courses provided general training in leadership and covered such topics as club management, how to conduct meetings, program planning and the aims and objectives of conveners. These courses encouraged women to take on positions of responsibility within AHCS.²⁰

In 1958 AHCS, with the assistance of Extension personnel, planned and conducted Home Economics Conveners Courses to help conveners do their jobs better. These one day sessions brought together club conven-
ers, many of whom did not know what was expected of a convener. At
district wide courses conveners learned how to plan programs, got ideas
for resources/speakers and learned new skills that they could pass on to
club members. 21

In 1960 one-third of all Home Economics Conveners attended one of
the 14 courses held. These courses were so well received that the Advi-
sory Board decided to hold courses for other conveners in subsequent
years. Conveners courses helped to develop the role of convener by
inspiring women with the confidence to take on responsibility.

When the Department of Extension was reorganized into the Extension
Division in 1963, direct personal contact with AHCS members was further
reduced. The role of the new Division became one of 'train the
trainer'. One area where this was evident was in the delivery of sewing
and other craft programs which had been provided to individual clubs in
earlier years. After 1963 University instructors taught at larger
centres where they trained instructors who would pass on their skills
when they returned to the smaller communities from which they came. 23

The issue of leadership training was raised at the provincial con-
vention in 1974. In response to the request for training Wilma Mollard,
Acting Executive Secretary, and another Extension Division staff member,
Thelma Howard, developed a three part leadership training course. Since
the Extension budget was cut, Mollard decided to approach the Secretary
of State for funding. After much negotiation and clarification of SWI's
image, funds were received to carry out the three part training program
in each district.

The goal of this training was to strengthen the ability of women in
rural areas to attain their rights. Participants indicated that the
program was very useful. It helped women to recognize the importance of voluntary groups in improving social conditions; gave them a greater knowledge of other rural women's groups and an appreciation of the interests and abilities of other women in their communities and increased their own self-concept and self-confidence.

In an effort to continue developing leadership, SWI began holding annual Inter-District Extra Assemblies (IDEA Workshops) in 1976. The August 1976 Board meeting was used to train Divisional Directors in adult education methods and evaluation techniques so that Directors could lead district workshops. Based on the 1974 needs survey, this workshop provided information on SWI and its procedures, as well as skills in group development. Participants thought these workshops were very useful. As one woman noted, she felt more confident in tackling executive jobs now.²⁴

Most participants were "In favour of having more [workshops]" so Pattillo submitted a funding proposal to the Secretary of State for a Program Planning Workshop in 1977. While it was a struggle for Hollard to secure Secretary of State funding in 1974-75, Pattillo was unable to get her proposal approved because of the severely reduced budget the Department had after International Women's Year. The University Extension Division, however, was convinced of the need for the workshops and agreed to cover participants' travelling costs. Extension staff were also provided to design and deliver subsequent workshops which covered such topics as FWIC Priorities and Structure, The Associated Country-women of the World (ACWW), Producer-Consumer Relations and Demystifying the Media.

The 1983 IDEA Workshop focused on administrative planning and super-
visory skills. It was planned by the new Extension Specialist in charge of women's programs, Glenis Joyce. She held four workshops which looked at how to change the status of women, how to ensure that SWI survives and how to hold better meetings. These meetings were not well received, however, and Joyce was not asked to conduct subsequent SWI programs. Since 1983 SWI has not relied on the University Extension Division to organize or fund IDEA Workshops.

Speakers at the 1984 Convention encouraged SWI to take up the issue of shelters for battered women in rural areas. The Board decided that this would be the focus of the fall 1984 IDEA Workshops. Since the University had cut support to SWI, Margareth Peterson, the new SWI Executive Secretary, was forced to seek assistance from other sources. Peterson was able to obtain funding from the Secretary of State Women's Program, possibly because the topic was more acceptable to the Secretary of State than the earlier leadership development program that Pattillo had proposed. Peterson was also more determined to secure funding since she knew that SWI could not fall back on the University if she did not succeed. These workshops reached 1,000 women and were a highly successful catalyst for the formation of support groups for battered women in rural areas and for SWI's participation in the Saskatchewan Battered Women's Advocacy Network.

In 1985 SWI was again able to secure Secretary of State funds to provide leadership training and education programs. This funding enabled Board members to participate in two two day Strategic Planning Workshops to look at the future direction of SWI. It also enabled SWI to hire a resource person to deliver twelve "It's Just Your Nerves" Workshops on alcohol and drug abuse. In 1986 SWI received Secretary of
State funding for some of its 75th Anniversary events and some clubs secured New Horizons funding for special projects such as a photo exhibit.

Although the number of clubs continued to decline, SWI was still asked to provide members for government and non-governmental bodies, or to provide input. A few examples illustrate just how extensively AHCS/SWI was consulted. In 1952 AHCS Past President, Nancy Adams, was the only woman appointed to Saskatchewan's Royal Commission on Agriculture and Rural Life. The Commission also surveyed Homemakers' to study the needs of rural women in the province. In 1978 SWI was called upon to coordinate the Saskatchewan section of the Canadian Council on Rural Development Study on the role of rural women. In the same year, Ned Shillington, provincial Cabinet Minister, asked for an SWI representative to sit on the province's 75th Anniversary Council. The following year Harold Baker, Director of the Saskatchewan Rural Area Development (SCRAD) project, asked SWI for a representative.

Throughout the 1980's SWI continued to be consulted on various matters of concern to rural women. For example, in 1980, the University of Regina's Secretary urged SWI to seek seats on the University of Regina and Saskatchewan Senates, and by 1983 SWI was represented on both. Saskatchewan's Premier, Grant Devine, asked SWI's President for input into the May 1985 Western Premiers' Meeting. The Farm Credit Corporation also asked SWI to identify members who would be willing to sit on its Appeal Board. In August 1984 the SWI Board was asked to support the University of Saskatchewan's bid for the Prairie Regional Chair for Women's Studies by Naomi Hersom, Dean of the College of Education, who commented on the strength of the organization.
The need to publicize SWI's achievements was a concern of Advisory Boards and Executive Secretaries, particularly during the period since 1949. Pattillo compiled many reports about club work which were regularly featured in the *Western Producer* during the 1950's and 1960's. In later years, however, Saskatchewan Women's Institutes had difficulty trying to update its public image because many of the articles Pattillo submitted were not published. In spite of the fact that clubs provided community services and were involved in social action projects, what little media coverage SWI received was often limited to reports of such things as winners of poetry and quilting competitions. In an attempt to overcome this problem SWI held workshops on Demystifying the Media in 1982 and the Executive Secretary encouraged clubs to use the media kit prepared by the Extension Division to seek recognition for their work.  

**UNIVERSITY SUPPORT IS WITHDRAWN**

University support for AHCS declined after Stevens took over Oxner's position as Director of Women's Work in 1949. That year the Board of Governors found it necessary to drastically reduce the Department of Women's Work budget. The cut was so severe, in fact, that Women's Work lost its Departmental status and was amalgamated with the Extension Department. The reorganized Extension Department was divided into three sections: (1) General Extension; (2) Agricultural Extension; and (3) Women's Services which replaced the Department of Women's Work. With the amalgamation of Agricultural Extension and Women's Work in 1950, Stevens became the Assistant Director of Extension in charge of Women's Services which included administrative responsibility for AHCS. When Agricultural Extension and Women's Work were amalgamated, it
was achieved by administrative decision. The amalgamation was not done at the request of the Department of Women's Work, nor were Homemakers' Clubs consulted about the proposed change. The clubs objected to the change and sent a delegation to the President of the University to protest. They pointed out that the change would put Women's Work under the College of Agriculture which had no experience and had shown little interest in work for women. It would also replace direct access to the President with the cumbersome and undesirable route via the Director of Extension and the Dean of Agriculture. In spite of AHCS protests, budgetary considerations won out and the two services were united in the newly constructed Kirk Hall on the University of Saskatchewan campus. These changes did not, however, result in changes in programs offered to women, except that they were administered through the Director of Extension and were more integrated with agricultural and adult education services.

The creation of an Extension Division separate from the College of Agriculture in 1963 had a major impact on the provision of services to AHCS. The Division's major concern was with leadership development so direct personal contact between Homemakers' Clubs and Extension staff was reduced. Primary attention was given to the 'trainer of trainers' role where the staff trained local instructors to deliver programs. Women's Services then paid local instructors who conducted courses such as clothing construction, homemaking and club management to individual Homemakers' Clubs. Service to Homemakers' Clubs was further reduced when the reorganized Extension Division began to develop programs for urban women after 1968.

As a means of cutting costs the 1976-77 Extension Division Annual
Report suggested that a reduction in services to organizations (SWI, 4-H, and Agricultural Societies) might be feasible. The Report cautioned that the implications of this move would have to be carefully considered because of the large number of persons involved and the long standing relationships between the University and the organizations. It went on, however, to suggest that the reduction of services be delayed until the staff members for SWI and the Agricultural Societies, who were in their senior years, retire.27

The 1970's were difficult years for SWI since University budgets failed to keep pace with increased costs, particularly in the Extension Division. In an effort to cut costs, the Extension Division virtually eliminated non-revenue bearing educational activities in its 1977-78 budget.28 Budget cuts to the Extension Division were so severe in the 1970's that 25% of its staff was lost over a three year period.29 Positions of Home Economics and Agricultural Extension Specialists were often not filled upon retirement. While the Agricultural Representatives employed by the Department of Agriculture could carry on work formerly done by the University's Agricultural Specialists, there was no equivalent home economics service in the province to which Women's Institutes could turn. Consequently, services provided to SWI clubs were cut back as the Division simply did not have the personnel to continue delivering sewing, homemaking and craft classes.

When Pattillo informed the SWI Board that she was planning to retire, the Board was concerned about the possibility of her position not being filled. In an attempt to prevent this situation from arising, Marie Dunn, SWI Executive Secretary from 1978-80, prepared a brief for the University administration at the direction of the Board. The paper
entitled "A Continuing Role for the University in Support of SWI and Programs for Women" outlined the long and fruitful relationship that had existed between SWI and the University and urged the University to continue its support.40

The Board presented another paper to Glen Hass, Associate Director of Extension, prior to his meeting with the SWI Board on August 27, 1980.41 The Board urged the Division of Extension to make every effort possible to maintain the SWI Executive Secretary position after Pattillo retired. When Hass received Pattillo's official letter announcing her intended retirement, he wrote the Academic Vice-President requesting permission to advertise the position.

Hass believed that there was no one in Extension who could be reassigned at that time and he stated that the public outcry would be very detrimental to the University if the position was not filled and service to SWI was discontinued.42 The Vice-President replied that it was not his desire to discontinue service to SWI although he suggested that the amount of service to SWI be reduced to a level which still met their most urgent needs, but occupied distinctly less than a full time job.43

By the time Pattillo departed in June 1981, Sylvia Robinson, who was on contract with the Extension Division as a home economics specialist the year Pattillo retired, was hired to oversee SWI activities. Robinson's position, however, was a one year term appointment, and 35% of her time was to be devoted to home economics program development.44

Taking over Pattillo's role with SWI was a struggle for Robinson because her other Extension responsibilities limited the time she could devote to SWI affairs. But it was beneficial for the SWI Board, which had become dependent upon Patillo's knowledge and experience. The orga-
nization and its Board often looked to Pattillo for direction during the twenty-nine years she spent overseeing AHCS/SWI affairs. The Board respected her expertise and was dependent on her for such things as compiling lists of worthwhile organizations that Homemakers' Clubs could support. It took some time for Board members to realize that Robinson needed their help, but after a short while the Board took a more active role in directing SWI affairs and learned to be leaders.

It soon became evident that Robinson's one year term appointment was not going to be renewed. While the Director of Extension assured the SWI Board that the University was committed to SWI, Robinson received different messages from him. She was also warned to watch out for cuts by several long time staff members, and witnessed SWI's office space being surveyed for other uses.

Robinson kept Board members informed about what was going on and set up meetings between the Board and the Acting Executive Director of Extension, Roy Wagner, to discuss SWI's future relations with the University. At the February 1982 Executive meeting, Wagner attempted to justify cuts to SWI by explaining Extension's need to prioritize. Then in March, Wagner attended the full Board meeting where he offered to share the cost of hiring someone to investigate government and other sources of funds for SWI.

Betty Pepper, former Saskatoon Community College Principal, was hired in April 1982 to examine alternate sources of funding for SWI. She concluded that Saskatchewan's Department of Agriculture was the most logical place to seek financial support for SWI and prepared a proposal requesting $49,368 for 1983-84 core administrative costs. A change in government, however, delayed presentation to Cabinet until the fall of
While the Minister of Agriculture agreed to assist SWI, the support was limited to a matching grant of up to $10,000 for 1983-84. In an effort to help meet the organization's added financial responsibilities, SWI instituted a Survival Fund which relied upon voluntary contributions from the clubs. The University also agreed to split the cost of employing Robinson from August 1, 1982 to March 31, 1983 to ease the financial burden SWI was forced to assume. Saskatchewan Women's Institutes was to be totally responsible for all salary costs by March 31, 1983. With only a $10,000 grant from Saskatchewan's Department of Agriculture, it was a major burden for SWI to retain an Executive Secretary. The Board asked the University to continue support which resulted in Robinson being seconded to the Extension Division for three months to assist SWI during the transition period.

The University did not abandon SWI altogether; the Extension Division was prepared to continue providing office space and furniture, postage, telephone costs, secretarial assistance when time permitted and to print educational materials. The SWI Executive Secretary was, however, to assume routine typing and mailing duties as well as account keeping which were formerly handled by Extension staff. Terms of the 1984-85 agreement were the same as those for 1983-84, except that no salary was to be provided for the Executive Secretary. By discontinuing funding for a staff person to oversee SWI, the University finally abdicated its responsibility for designing and delivering courses which it had gradually been cutting back on since the 1930's.

It became apparent to SWI's Advisory Board by April 1984 that the $10,000 matching grant was not going to be renewed by the Department of
Agriculture. The Board, which had requested that the grant be increased to $20,000, was very concerned, and asked members to write their respective Members of the Legislative Assembly and the Premier concerning continued funding. Members wrote several letters outlining the need for SWI, including one from the Marie Kilden District which referred to their sense of betrayal! It appears that the Board resigned itself to the fact that the University was not prepared to increase its support and concentrated its efforts on getting Department of Agriculture funding.

On May 7th Margareth Peterson, the new SWI Executive Secretary, met with the new Minister of Agriculture, Lorne Hepworth, regarding the grant. He informed her that a grant of $10,000 would be coming for 1984-85, but there was no guarantee for continued support. In May 1985, however, Hepworth wrote Peterson to inform her that the Department of Agriculture budget provided for a $10,000 matching grant to SWI.

The former Acting Director of Extension's claim that the SWI staff position was cut from the Division's budget because of a lost faculty position is not totally accurate. The 1981-82 Extension Division Annual Report noted that as of August 1, 1982 Robinson's position was assigned to Glenis Kreutzweiser. Her responsibilities included coordinating University teaching and community service in the area of women's studies and working with Home Economics faculty to develop professional programs. Only if it was absolutely necessary, was she to become involved in the administration of SWI affairs. More accurately then, the elimination of SWI's salary support reflected the Extension Division's new priorities - to make educational support and leadership development programs broadly available to both urban and rural Saskatchewan women.
SUMMARY

The years from 1949 to 1986 were troublesome ones for AHCS/SWI. With continuing rural depopulation membership declined by 76% from 1949-86. For a variety of reasons SWI was unsuccessful in its attempts to attract younger women. Improved transportation and communications networks reduced the isolation that encouraged women to organize Homemakers' Clubs in earlier years. Services that were formerly provided by Homemakers' were taken over by Governments. Community Colleges and Regional Libraries provided learning opportunities for women that were formerly only available through AHCS. The University contributed to the gradual demise of AHCS/SWI by discontinuing the provision of extension courses through Homemakers' Clubs, and by abdicating the responsibility of having a staff member oversee the Clubs.

The Association of Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan relied a great deal on University support and resources to carry out its programs. With increasing demands placed on the Extension Division's shrinking budget, it was difficult for the University to maintain the same level of service it had in the early years. Women were no longer employed by the Extension Division to actively encourage the formation of clubs, nor were lecturers sent out to speak to individual clubs. Instead the University tried to train trainers and leaders to work directly with clubs. Rural women lost their direct contact with the University and felt abandoned because they were unable to influence extension programming for rural women. As a result of the withdrawal of University services, clubs became dependent on their own members to develop relevant programs and many were unprepared for this responsibility.

Changes in University priorities resulted in SWI being given inde-
pendence in 1982. The decision to cut the SWI Executive Secretary's salary from the Extension budget was an abrupt one, and one that was made without consulting SWI's Executive Secretary or Advisory Board. Although the Board lamented the University's withdrawal of support, it was not prepared to fight for continued support since the University had always encouraged members to avoid controversy! Because SWI had become so dependent on the University to provide direction it was not prepared for independence.

While the severely reduced University support was a problem for SWI, the organization was able to continue. A small matching grant from the Department of Agriculture and the 'Survival Fund' that clubs supported allowed an Executive Secretary to be kept on. Grants from the Secretary of State enabled SWI to continue providing educational workshops for its members. The Extension Division's provision of office space, postage, phone and printing costs also contributed to the continuation of SWI.

Although SWI continued to exist to celebrate its 75th anniversary, the organization was in a critical state of decline. Over half the members were more than 60 years old and the few young women who resided in rural areas were not joining the clubs. Many clubs were dependent upon one or two dedicated members who ensured that the club carried on, but as these committed members moved on there was no one to keep the club from disbanding. Several clubs indicated that they were just hanging on to join in the anniversary celebrations and would not continue beyond 1986.

Younger farm women continued to work out cooperative solutions to their problems, but they did not turn to SWI. They recognized that the solutions would have to be political and that SWI was clearly not inter-
ested in political solutions. The close University connection which prevented SWI members from discussing controversial issues and kept them out of the political arena for so long contributed to their demise. Without University support they no longer had the leadership or initiative to adapt. Despite leadership programs, SWI failed to develop leaders who were capable of expanding the organization when the University withdrew most of its support. Younger farm women who recognized the need for political solutions to the problems facing farm women shunned SWI and created new organizations that are prepared to work for political change.

NOTES - CHAPTER 5


2. Ibid and interview with Margaret Pattillo, Saskatoon, November 8, 1985.

3. Ibid, p.47.


5. Interview with Margaret Pattillo, Saskatoon, November 8, 1985.

6. Ibid and various "AHCS Director's Reports", presented to AHCS Conventions, June 1952-81.

7. Interviews with Margaret Pattillo, Saskatoon, November 8, 1985 and Marie Dunn, Saskatoon, September 25, 1986.

8. These figures were usually given in the "AHCS/SWI Director's Reports", presented to the AHCS/SWI Convention. When they were not given Club Lists, AHCS/SWI Records, University of Saskatchewan Archives and SWI Office were used to provide the figures.


14. Education Conveners Reports and Suggestions, AHCS/SWI Records, University of Saskatchewan Archives.


17. Many clubs, in fact, cited the high fees they were required to send to the central office as a factor that contributed to their decision to disband. Since the University withdrew its support for the Executive Secretary clubs made voluntary contributions to the Survival Fund, which was renamed the Administrative Fund in 1986, to cover administrative costs of the central office. Members were also asked to pay a higher compulsory membership levy in 1987, a decision which resulted in expressions of concern from many members. See for example "Eastward Dorcus Homemakers' Club" and "Ryerson Homemakers' Club/SWI", histories prepared for SWI Office, 1985-86.

18. AHCS, Advisory Board Minutes, January 1972.

19. Margaret Pattillo, "AHCS Director's Report", presented to AHCS Convention, Saskatoon, June 1952.

20. Margaret Pattillo, "AHCS Director's Report", presented to AHCS Convention, Saskatoon, June 1953 and 1954.


27. Royal Commission on Agriculture and Rural Life, The Home and Family in Rural Saskatchewan, (Regina: Queen's Printer, 1956).


29. Ibid and SWI, Advisory Board Minutes, April 19, 1983.


32. SWI, Advisory Board Minutes, August 1984.

33. After speaking to the Women's Editor of the Western Producer in 1974 Pattillo reported to the Advisory Board that she was pleased with the number of articles that were being published. SWI, Advisory Board Minutes, June 1972 - June 1975 and Sylvia Robinson, "SWI Office Report", presented to SWI Convention, Regina, June 1982.


36. Ibid, pp.81-91.


38. Ibid, p.16.


40. Marie Dunn, "A Continuing Role for the University in Support of SWI and Programs for Women", paper prepared for presentation to University Administration, 1980.

41. Hattie Curry, "A Presentation from SWI to the Division of Extension and Community Relations", sent to Glen Hass, August 22, 1980.

42. Glen Hass to M. Preston, November 12, 1980.

43. M. Preston to Glen Hass and Brock Whale, November 24, 1980.

44. The "Extension Division Annual Report, 1981-82", p. 7 states that Robinson replaced Joan Finlayson, not Margaret Pattillo.

45. AHCS, Advisory Board Minutes, January 1962.

46. Interview with Sylvia Robinson, Regina, November 4, 1986.

47. Interview with Sylvia Robinson, Regina, November 4, 1986.


54. See Marie Kilden District to Grant Devine, May 2, 1984 and other letters in Communication with Government File, SWI Office.


59. Willick, p.18.
It will be recalled that the primary purpose of this study was to document the history of an important adult education movement in Saskatchewan - Saskatchewan Women's Institutes. A secondary purpose was to critically examine, in historical context, the relationship between SWI and the University of Saskatchewan. A third purpose was to make a contribution towards the building of Saskatchewan women's history by rectifying a serious oversight - the absence of history about SWI.

These purposes were accomplished by bringing together, for the first time, a considerable quantity of primary source material including original correspondence regarding the possibility of organizing clubs for rural women in Saskatchewan. The study traced the rise and transformation of the movement on the basis of extensive archival records which included minutes of Advisory Council/Advisory Board meetings and provincial conventions as well as Directors' Reports and correspondence. Interviews with former members and University Extension staff provided some insight into SWI as did reports about individual clubs. This study is organized chronologically because it is a first step in the documentation of SWI's role as an adult education movement and its contribution to the development of rural services.

Each chapter documents the role of SWI in the provision of adult education and community services and the relationship with the University during a phase in the organization's history. This final chapter provides a brief summary of SWI's rise and decline in relation to Unive-
sity support and the social conditions of the time. It also highlights the impact which SWI had on the education of rural women and the establishment of rural services. In this chapter the observations which were considered, in the judgement of the author, to be most significant and potentially generalizable are highlighted, and some recommendations based on them will be made.

On a general level, the study shows that SWI was strongly affected throughout its history by the level and nature of University support and socio-economic conditions of rural Saskatchewan. The study examines the transformation of the organization in four phases: (1) the formative years from 1910-1913; the growth of Homemakers' Clubs from 1913-1930; the finest hour and beginning of decline from 1930-1949; and independence is granted which covers the years from 1949-1986. Each of these phases is dealt with in a separate chapter.

Chapter Two explains that during the first phase from AHCS's inception in 1910-11 to 1913 the organization grew rapidly because rural women were in desperate need of social contact and educational opportunities to help them cope with their harsh and changing environment. It also grew rapidly because the University encouraged the formation of Homemakers' Clubs as a vehicle to deliver extension services to rural women. Although Women's Institutes were organized in all three prairie provinces, they were most numerous and successful in Saskatchewan. This was undoubtedly a consequence of the encouragement and/or support provided by the University since the organization grew when University support was given, and it declined when support was withdrawn.¹

The second phase of AHCS's existence from 1913-1930 was examined in Chapter Three. During this phase there was phenomenal growth in the
number of clubs and members primarily because of the efforts of Abigail DeLury who was hired by the University to organize and administer clubs. Although rural women still had a desperate need for social contact and educational opportunities, it is unlikely that this factor alone would have generated such phenomenal growth. The provision of extension services to rural women continued to be a University priority. The University commitment was evidenced by the allocation of substantial Agricultural Instruction Aid Act Grant funds for this purpose, and the University's continued support when the Agricultural Instruction Grant was terminated. The extensive adult education service that the University provided was a key factor in attracting women to Homemakers' Clubs during this phase. By the time DeLury left the University in 1930, AHCS had become an impressive adult education movement.

In many communities services were developed in response to problems that members identified during the course of discussions at regular club meetings. While the University was directly involved in the provision of adult education assistance, it's role in the establishment of services was limited to sharing news about club undertakings and to providing encouragement. The resources required to establish libraries, community centres, and health services were provided by the clubs themselves. During DeLury's term as Director of Women's Work rural women invested a lot of creative energy in raising funds to provide these community services.

Chapter Four examines the third phase of AHCS's transformation when Bertha Oxner replaced DeLury as the Director of Women's Work at the University of Saskatchewan. One important change that occurred at the start of this phase was the establishment of a permanent Advisory Coun-
cil in 1930. The Council was established to assist Oxner with the transition, to provide suggestions for club activities and themes for the annual convention which Oxner organized. Council members reviewed convention resolutions and heard speakers. Some council members also took it upon themselves to organize new Homemakers' Clubs during the 1930's depression when Oxner's travel plans were curtailed because of cuts to the University's budget.

The social conditions of the 1930's intensified Homemakers' need for adult education programs and their efforts to provide community services. This contributed to the rapid expansion of membership despite the onset of rural depopulation and the cutbacks in University support. When social conditions improved after World War II, however, Homemakers' Club membership dropped off sharply. Prior to 1941, rural women had few, if any, other opportunities for social contact and education, but with improved transportation and communication networks this was no longer the case. Throughout the 1940's the provincial government also began to take over the provision of services such as health care, and created larger school units which diminished the need for Homemakers' Clubs.

The fourth phase is characterized by cutbacks in University support to AHCS and a steady decline in membership. Chapter Five documents how the University took advantage of Oxner's retirement in 1949 to further reduce service to AHCS. Without consulting AHCS members, the University's Board of Governors amalgamated the Department of Women's Work with the Extension Department. Responsibility for overseeing AHCS affairs was given to Alice Stevens as Director of Women's Services within the reorganized Extension Department. Members did not appreciate
having their direct access to the University's president taken away, nor did they like being under the direction of the College of Agriculture, but they were reluctant to protest. Homemakers', which had been encouraged by the University for so many years to be non-controversial, accepted what they were given and did not confront or challenge the University cutbacks.

Service to Homemakers' Clubs was cut further in 1981 when Margaret Pattillo retired as the Director of Women's Services, but she suspected that cuts were coming and urged the Advisory Board to ask the Acting Director of Extension to maintain support to SWI. The Acting Director assured SWI that the University was committed to continuing service, but a year later, the University withdrew funding for an Extension staff member to oversee the clubs. After seventy-one years of providing service to rural women through SWI, the Extension Division finally decided it had other priorities, and SWI was forced to seek other sources of funding to maintain its administration and few remaining programs.

CONCLUSIONS

Saskatchewan Women's Institutes met the objective of bringing women of various backgrounds together for social contact. While urban women of the 1900's often joked about 'being clubbed to death' rural women were not so (un)fortunate. Chapter two described how it was important to create clubs for rural women who were often unable to meet each other because of factors such as religious and political differences. Homemakers', however, may not have attracted non-english speaking immigrants since the University only provided english literature and lectures. Although this objective became less important in later phases when women
had other social and recreational opportunities, there are some clubs which have continued to exist primarily because the members appreciate the social aspect of club meetings.

The University's purpose in establishing Homemakers' Clubs was primarily to provide adult education services [homemaker training] to rural women. With the assistance of various sources of federal government funding, the University was able to develop and deliver quality education programs to the clubs in the early phases. Although the first Director of Women's Work noted that assistance was not limited to Homemakers' Clubs, she endeavoured to keep the clubs an integral part of the University by providing extension courses exclusively through them. The University also encouraged the members to present educational programs at regular club meetings. By providing lists of study topics, and even papers that could be delivered by club members, the University created a dependency. Clubs soon came to expect direction and resources from the University. Many clubs were reluctant to ask the University for too much, so they simply accepted offers of support when they were made without regard to assistance that might have been more appropriate. When this support was cut, many clubs disbanded because they were unable or unwilling to cope with this added responsibility.

The educational services offered to the clubs by the University were initially confined to homemaking skills. During the early phases of Homemakers' Clubs existence this type of training was required to assist rural women in the struggle for survival since many women had little, if any, training in these skills. The nature of homemaker training changed to keep pace with new developments, such as from canning to freezing demonstrations, and from meeting basic needs to household renovation and
beautification projects. In later years, however, women were able to get these skills from a number of sources including radio, television, magazines and Community Colleges. Although the University had encouraged clubs to broaden their study topics by adopting the system of convenerships which the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada instituted in 1919, the educational programs developed by the Department of Women's Work continued to focus on homemaking skills.

The nature of educational assistance shifted from the provision of basic homemaking skills to leadership development and some craft classes after 1950 when AHCS came under the direction of the Extension Department. The provision of leadership training, however, appears to have been too little and too late. Membership had already declined significantly before the University attempted to deliver leadership training and there is little evidence to suggest that this training developed strong leadership for SWI. Much of the training was based on preparing women to be club conveners or officers. The typical Convener, however, was responsible for arranging one program per year, and sending a report of this program to the District Convener. Instead of developing strong leaders to direct AHCS/SWI, the development of leadership abilities gave many women the self-confidence they needed to move on to other organizations. Many women came to realize they could not fulfill their aspirations through Homemakers' Clubs and that they no longer required the comfort and security of a women's only organization.

Advisory Council/Board members played a role in directing the affairs of AHCS/SWI, but leadership varied from Council to Council and member to member depending upon interest and extenuating circumstances. It was dependent on the rapport that developed between the Director and
individual Council members and on the Director's willingness and ability to facilitate members' participation by channeling their abilities in appropriate directions. At the start of Oxner's term the Advisory Council was able to play a major role because the members were more familiar with the traditions of AHCS. Later Advisory Councils, however, became more dependent upon Oxner to provide direction. When subsequent Directors were hired the Advisory Council was able to orient them to AHCS/SWI although it was sometimes a struggle to get them to realize their capabilities, particularly after they had come to depend on the expertise of a Director such as Margaret Pattillo who had directed SWI for 29 years.

The University staff members who were responsible for overseeing SWI affairs played a significant role in directing the clubs, particularly the three whose terms endured for 17, 19 and 29 years respectively. The fact that the Director was employed by the University, meant that AHCS was in the hands of highly qualified home economists who were well experienced in administration. Their skills, and the status they had as University staff members, gave them credibility with club members and with the Advisory Council/Board. The University connection also gave them access to resources that could be devoted to the clubs. These factors led club members to respect the judgement and direction which these women provided, and to defer responsibility for administering and directing the clubs to them.

At the local and district level, however, members played a more significant role. From the outset when the first District was created in 1922, members were responsible for administering and financing them. With a large membership base, and a desire to share ideas with women from other clubs, this was not a particularly onerous responsibility in
the early years. As membership declined, however, it became impossible for some districts to be maintained and larger districts meant that members were less willing or able to participate in district conventions and training programs. While local clubs received direction from the University, and in the early years many had University staff deliver lectures and demonstrations, they were ultimately responsible for planning their own programs. The quality and relevance of club programs varied considerably. Clubs which developed programs that were relevant to the needs of their members, or those with strong leadership, were able to continue despite declining membership.

This study showed how University assistance created dependence and how it endangered freedom. Although Homemakers' were agents of social change in Saskatchewan, the University connection prohibited them from becoming directly involved in political issues and therefore limited their potential contribution to the evolution of the province. The rapid growth of the clubs in the province's formative years enabled the clubs to influence the transformation of the province by establishing community services. These services formed a base for governments to build on. Many government operated rural libraries and hospitals, for example, were conceived of and run by Homemakers' Clubs well before the government was willing or able to take on these responsibilities. Several Homemakers' Club members were also able to make valuable contributions to the province by sitting on government bodies and commissions.

The University's insistence that clubs be non-political and non-controversial encouraged women to join AHCS in the early years, but later it came to discourage membership and contributed to SWI's demise. The most rapid drop in membership occurred from 1941-51 when many tal-
ented women left Homemakers' to work for social change through the more radical Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF). Since that period AHCS/SWI has had difficulty attracting new members because the few younger women who have remained in rural areas did not want to join clubs that focused on homemaking and excluded political activities.

The University and Homemakers' worked together to achieve solutions to the problems of rural women, their families and their communities that neither could have achieved on its own. The University had an ally in its efforts to extend University services throughout the province. Homemakers' Clubs hosted travelling University lecturers and arranged facilities and advertising for the short homemaking courses these women provided. Homemakers' were able to provide valuable assistance to the University in its efforts to deliver home economics training to young girls and assisted the University in its provision of homemaker training to native women in the 1960's. The University provided rural women with quality homemaker training that enabled them to improve the standard of living in rural Saskatchewan. Women were also given the opportunity and encouragement to work collectively with other women to establish community services and the confidence to approach the government to extend services to rural areas. The University liberated rural women from the physical exertion and drudgery of homemaking, and encouraged them to undertake community projects, and it instilled in them a commitment to the extension of adult education opportunities to rural communities.

To close this study I would like to suggest future studies that should be undertaken and to raise two implications for women's organizations and community based adult education movements that arise from this study. The first implication is the danger of allowing oneself to rely
upon a large formal institution for support. This study clearly demonstrated that the University did more than facilitate or assist the growth of SWI. It controlled the organization and placed constraints on it which prevented it from moving in directions that might have made it more relevant to the needs of rural women today. The second implication is that of becoming irrelevant. The University and SWI leaders could have encouraged real participation at all levels of program planning, or assessed the needs of rural women to keep programs attractive.

A number of prospects for future studies emerged out of this study. There is much more to be recorded, for example, about the contribution of individual women to SWI's development, such as Abigail DeLury, Bertha Oxner, Margaret Pattillo, Emma Ducie, Nancy Adams and Emmie Oddie, just to name a few. Many clubs and individual have records of their achievements that need to be preserved from fires and floods. It would be useful to do a comparative study of individual clubs to find out how and why they were formed. Since the SWI records contain no specific information regarding the clubs that existed on Indian Reservations in the 1930's and 1940's, it would be useful to make a special effort to track down records of these clubs, particularly to see if there was an attempt to integrate these clubs into the overall AHCS structure. One could also analyze the factors that keep current members and clubs going, and the factors that discourage others from continuing or joining SWI, to see if SWI's time has come to an end or if the clubs could be revitalized to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of SWI in 2011.

NOTES - Chapter 6

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