

This year(2008), Dekalb County Homemakers and Community Leaders Council will honor the Geraldine and Tenbroeck Clubs, as they celebrate their 85th year in existence. The Homemakers clubs originally began as the Tomato Girls Program in 1919. This program taught area homemakers how to grow and preserve tomatoes as a way of supplementing farm families. Today the Clubs have very informative programs on Health, Family, Citizenship Outreach, Home, Environment, International and Community topics. All the County's clubs participate in making "Boo Boo Babies" for the Dekalb County Health Department, and donating books to the hospital for the Books for Newborns project encouraging reading to children. Every Club in the county holds fund raisers, volunteers and donates time, money and items to a wide variety of worth while community service projects. Our membership consists of women of all ages, who have a strong desire to gain knowledge, to improve the quality of their life, and better the world around them.

In 1922, the Home Extension Clubs were founded. Auburn Extension Agents designed programs and projects for the county clubs. Food preservation was the main focus in the beginning. In 1926, the Dekalb County Homemakers Council was formed and the first state meeting took place in Fort Payne. Miss Lillie Maude Alexander was the Extension Agent. By 1978, we had operated under the influence and leadership of eight knowledgeable, talented, and hard working agents. By 1962, at the end of Mrs. Douglas I. Williams' term in office, there were 32 clubs in the county. In 1970, eight years after Miss Louise Walker replaced Mrs. Williams it became necessary to make major changes in the framework of the council. Along with the state, the County Council became an independent organization. We were no longer under the supervision of the Extension Agents. The Council would be responsible for its leadership. County Agent, Sandy Coffey and later Annette Wardrup were willing to help us with programs and material, but we were on our own as a great organization. Only a very few of those 32 clubs survived that reconstruction, we believe about 13. In the 1920's food preservation was the main focus, 1930's getting running water in every farm home in Alabama was a priority, 1940's, the war effort, in the 1950's, Civil Defense and Safety, the 1960's, programs on family life, 1970's, cultural arts were emphasized, 1980's, brought community leadership programs, the 1990's community service and international involvement, and the new century brought programs on technology in all areas of home life. Over the years, the members have made boxes with wheels to carry fire wood from room to room, mattresses, etched glassware, caned chairs, quilted, and taken computer classes just to name a few.

Today we have six strong clubs in the county, Crossville, Geraldine, Ider, Lookout Mtn., Portersville, and Tenbroeck and have 150 members. Down through the years the Club's name has changed as our state changed and progress was made, some of our titles have been Tomato Girls, Home Extension Club, Home Demonstration Club, Association for Family and Community Education, and now Alabama Homemakers and Community Leaders. .

The Geraldine Club not only survived, but has not missed a monthly meeting since they banded together with the county clubs in 1926 to form the Council. The Geraldine Club

still cans, sew, makes gardens, and cooks, but also does a tremendous amount of community service projects. Over the years they have worked with Geraldine School, reading to children and helping children learn to read. They help groups such as the Red Cross, Cancer Research, Hospice and St Jude Hospital by holding blood drives and fund raisers. . Members volunteer and contribute to, the Blackwell Home, Child Advocacy Center, DHR, Christian Community Outreach, Band Boosters, Save-A-Life, and many others. Geraldine Club participates in the county 4th Grade Essay and Artwork Contest, encouraging children to learn about the “Six Pillars of Character”. The club has sponsored a Quilt Show for more than 20 years, and has several very talented quilters, artists and writers among their members. The Geraldine Club meets at the Geraldine Homemakers Building on Old Mill Road; the 4th Tuesday of each month at 1 pm and would love for you to visit. New members are always welcome, contact President Linda Daniels for more information 256-659-6678.

The Tenbroeck Club was also one of the first clubs in the county. As the club evolved, sewing, cooking, food preservation, and marketable crafts were emphasized. Today, the Tenbroeck Club concentrates on community service and volunteerism. The annual “Relay for Life” campaign has been the main focus of the club since one of its members was diagnosed with cancer a few years ago. The club has raised over \$30,000 in the past ten years through a variety of fundraisers for the “Relay for Life”. The club has helped many cancer patients by starting support groups and preparing food for local businesses to raise money etc. Member Earlene Bailey contributes money every year for the Relay for Life and to that she adds money for her family members that have had cancer. She is also a cancer survivor. Members have also make quilts to help raise money for the Tenbroeck Volunteer Fire Department, Boy Scouts and many other community projects. Members participate in reading to children in afternoon school programs and on Dr. Seuss Day. Senior citizens in the area always look forward to a fruit basket at Christmas time made by the club. Members serve lunch for families that have a death in the community. Wanda Johnson has been the president of this wonderful club for the past twenty years and has always been an inspiring leader. For more information call Wanda at 256-650-4060.

It is unclear as to when the Crossville Club was first organized records and scrapbooks were not kept until recent years. Crossville has been in existence for several decades. At first Crossville Meetings were held in individual homes but as interest grew it was necessary to move to City Hall. Since its beginnings Crossville has continued with its programs and community services such as birthday parties for Crossville Nursing Home patients, blood drives, maintaining the garden at the Crossville Public Library, etc. Currently meetings are held the second Monday of every month at the Auburn Experimental Farm on Alabama Highway 68 in Crossville. The presiding president of the Crossville Club, Janice Smith cordially invites you to attend our meetings. If you have questions please contact her at 528-2540.

The Ider Club’s origin is unknown but has been in existence for many decades. The Ider Club has been instrumental in developing the Ider Library. The members make a quilt every year that is raffled off at Mule Day. We have supported the Ider Volunteer Fire

Department. We visit museums and take day trips to a variety of points of interest around our area and in Chattanooga as part of our educational programs. We love to welcome new members, our president is Linda O'Shields contact her at 632-3969.

The Lookout Mtn, club was reorganized in 1980. The highlights of 27 years are: Organized a nutrition center for Ruhama. This program gave our seniors an opportunity to visit, quilt, play games, and have great fellowship. We have sponsored this program for 20 years and given donations of \$100 to \$300 each year. Another continuing project has been the Adult Activity Center (ARC). We helped buy furniture for the building, did 8 fashion shows and the retarded clients modeled clothes. Over \$1000 was made each year with the money going to the center. We do Christmas each year for the clients. Ruhama School has been a continuing project. We put out shrubbery in 1997- buy books for the library, judge competitions, do mentoring, help buy supplies etc. We host a Red Cross blood drive each year that started in 1981. We make donations to needy families; raised \$6000 to buy land for Walker Chapel Cemetery and worked 20 years picking up trash on Colbran Gap and in our community. We have served our community well by using the money we have raised. Sandra Arther is the president of our great club; contact her at 845-9345 for more information.

The Portersville Club was organized in 1939, Edna Killian who is still an active member, was one of our founding members. The Club first met at the home of Mrs. Otis Reed (Beulah) in Collinsville. The club has met in member's homes and the Portersville Community Center since its inception. We have become an educational and volunteer based organization. Our members donated more than 1500 hours of community service last year alone. Each September, we hold a bake sale at the Collinsville Quilt Walk to contribute to the New Collinsville Library Fund. We have another bake sale at Collinsville's Turkey Trot each November to benefit the Collinsville Historical Association. We donate clothes, blankets and money to the Dekalb County Foster Children's Program. We have had programs this year on "Fire Ants", Long term Care Insurance, Safety at Home, and Flower Preservation among others. Meetings are held the third Monday of every month at 1pm. Jo Ann. Stricklin is our club president; call her at 524-3053 for meeting information.

This is a brief glimpse of our clubs and the information is what has been told to us by our past members, who were our grandmothers, mothers and friends. We will be having a reception at the Geraldine Homemakers Building on Saturday, October 27th from 1pm until 4pm the public is invited. There will be a Memory Lane display of items from the past to the present. Door prizes, and old timey refreshments will be served and several local dignitaries will be in attendance.