

**CONNECTICUT 20TH CENTURY AGRICULTURAL HISTORY PROJECT
ORAL HISTORIES**

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Name of Person Interviewed: Mrs. Arlene Gray, Extension Educator, CANR,
UCONN (retired)

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LL: I'm interviewing Arlene Gray who had been a 4H extension agent. Thank you very much for agreeing to do this.

AG: You're very welcome.

LL: Would you start out with where you attended college.

AG: I grew up in Framingham MA and I began to be interested in the teacher's college in Framingham. This college was Framingham State College at that time.

LL: And what were your majors?

AG: I believe it was called, oh dear, was it homemaking? Um, I just saw it the other day as I was looking for some other materials. It was Home Economics, but I don't know that those were the exact words at that time.

LL : Were you going to be a teacher?

AG: No, I wanted to be a 4H Club Agent. I had been a club member and was encouraged about doing that. It was just after the depression times, 1941 that I started college, a time when there wasn't money to go away and stay overnight at a college. So this one was convenient in what I needed and I could go by bus. I rode my bicycle a lot.

LL: What was your first connection to 4H or the agricultural community.

AG: I grew up in a town so I had no particular agriculture background, although my grandmother

raised chickens in the backyard and my father would tend garden. A friend of mine invited me, I believe when I was in 6th grade to join the 4H club which was a brand new idea. We had never heard of 4H. So with a group of friends I started learning to do craft work, and sew and have lots of fun.

LL: Was this friend who was starting 4H, did he or she live in town also?

AG: Oh yes, yes.

LL: So it was in-town 4H.

AG: Oh yes. In fact that particular club was lead by some of the students at Framingham State College. I don't know who had initiated this but today is it part of the supposedly teacher training experience. Then a year or two later we had local leaders. A local woman was interested.

LL: What year did you first start?

AG: Lets see, probably 1935, something like that.

LL: Did you have brothers and sisters?

AG: Yes, one each.

LL: Did either of them go into 4H?

AG: Yes. We all did. Our leader's son was an upper teenager. He started a boys' club that did woodworking and my brother was in that. Then later when I was fifteen or so, there was a junior leader program in the 4H in MA. So my particular friend who had invited me to join, and I, became junior leaders in the little club. Then there were seven and they were my little sister who was five years younger than I and her friends.

LL: Was that the usually the size of the club?

AG: Oh they varied, from that to about a dozen. I don't know how many it would be in the agricultural club.

LL: What kind of training did you have there as a junior leader?

AG: I think it was just experience having been in a club and observing. I don't think that it was anything formal that I recall.

LL: Did you take part in activities like in the fairs and so on? Did you compete in those...

AG: In the county 4H program we competed in the county program. You see we were in the town and probably with theirs and other towns. In those days you didn't get too far out of your own town because of transportation.

LL: Did people have cars? You said that they rode...

AG: Yes, yes. We did not because we lived in the center and we could walk to the railroad station and buses went right by the house. I used to ride my bicycle a lot too.

LL: What were the roads like?

AG: Fine. No problem.

LL: So you walked to school then and you were a Home Economics major. What were your classes?

AG: Oh we had sewing and food was cooking, nutrition and actual food practice. Then we had history and biology, chemistry, English, chorus.

LL: Uh huh.

AG: And phys ed. And each year...

LL: This was in college?

AG: Yes. And as the years went by we had other ones. We had to live on campus one semester according to the institutional management.

LL: And what was that?

AG: Well, there was one particular house that girls were in at that time. It was all girls at that time. We had to do all the cooking, menu planning, taking care of the china and serving, using the dishwashers and cleaning everything.

LL: So how many people would there be in that house?

AG: A couple of dozen, I guess.

LL: Did you have class work that would have prepared you for running a school lunch program?

AG: Yes, actually at one time we had the college lunch. There was a lunch room for the commuters and that one, again, was a special course.

LL: Did you have any classes in health, like first aide or...

AG: Somewhat. We did have some kind of a number of particular teachers doing health and economics like home management of personal finances and family budget, that sort of thing. Oh we had art also, the first couple of years.

LL: In your sewing classes, did you have instruction or did you have pattern making or tailoring? At what level did you sew?

AG: It was construction. Later on we had to design something and choose a special project. I remember doing a short coat, which included tailoring and also some, I forgot the term, on the kind of quilting they used. Trapunto?

LL: Oh, yes.

AG: Everyone chose some unusual thing that they did not do every day to experiment with and

learn how to do. It was a long time ago.

LL: Yes it was...laughs.

AG: Laughs. Of course then, we had gone up to the 3rd year and so forth. We had Practice Teaching.

LL: And where did you Student Teach?

AG: Well it was locally, within a mile or two of the college, I did some classes and then I went to another town that was only maybe ten miles away, and had other classes there..

LL: Do you remember if your classmates were local, also?

AG: Eastern MA mostly, a few from the western part. They were scattered. One or two local, but those as I remember were in another course, in elementary teaching. We had three courses at that time, it was Home Economics and the Vocational Economics and the Home Management.

LL: What was Vocational Home Economics?

AG: They always lived in this one small house, a different place, and they had a lot more hands-on managing a home. They were trained to teach in the vocational high schools. At that time a lot of the girls would be only homemakers and raising families and not thinking of going into other out-of-the-home work, as I understand it. But, they had some courses with us. They had the clothing construction and I think foods.

LL: What was your first job when you graduated?

AG: I took a job in teaching at the moment I graduated. There were no 4H openings so I took a job teaching in Medway, which is about twenty miles from where I lived. I went by bus and changed half way. It was a project. It was interesting. It was a small town. It was my first experience with a small town. There was a school that had 7th grade through high school. They had a homeroom. In that homeroom one side was the home economics lab, the sewing machines and stone sink. I also taught a Civics class, interesting because I had never had civics. First period every day I was in charge of the study hall, which included ages 12-18. I taught history, as well as the Home Economics classes, so I was very busy.

LL: Do you remember how big your classes were?

AG: I bet they were maybe 18-20 in the civics, probably something like 20 in history. I don't really remember.

LL: And in the Home Ed courses you taught, they were all girls?

AG: Yes, oh yes.

LL: How long were you there?

AG: Just one year.

LL: Then where did you go?

AG: So then 4H jobs were opening up and I came to CT.

LL: And how did you hear about the job in CT?

AG: Well you know Cora Webb. Cora was the Home Agent here. She came from Wellsley and I knew her. She was 4 years older than I and I know that I had seen her 4H activities up there. One day I had a telephone call from CT from the state 4H Association. They asked me if I was interested in being interviewed for a job. I already had a couple of others lined up. One an internship and one in MA Cora had spoken to her about me. She knew that I was interested. It was the day before I was to move back to home; I lived in an apartment during the winter months, so I said, " Sure." So I moved back Friday night and took the train Saturday morning, went to Hartford and went to a 4H activity. I met her and she brought me up to the university. The Director saw my record or whatever and said okay, I could be interviewed. So then there was an appointment to come later, a week or two later, to Litchfield County where they were looking for someone. It was very interesting. I loved to look through the area and all of the hills: and people were interesting. The next day they were to interview someone else and I knew that person from western MA. I knew her record was about the same as mine. She was the same age and everything. They said, " We would like to offer you the job, but there is a chance if you don't want to decide right now and we like her next Saturday, you might not get it; if she did want it." So I said, " Yes, I'll take it."

LL: Laughs. Now, you mentioned that you fit that in before you actually interviewed in NH and MA.

AG: I cancelled those.

LL: You replaced someone who had retired or were they adding to the staff?

AG: That gal was married and had a child and I think her husband was being transferred so she was leaving the area.

LL: So what you your job like?

AG: It was wonderful. The fellow I worked with was very enthused and cooperative. It was '46 and it was awful hard getting cars. I had to have a car but I couldn't get one because there were very few. Everybody was trying to contact this one and that one. I started first in July and I don't think it wasn't til September that I... So, I rode with other agents everywhere and became acquainted some with Agricultural Clubs, because he had to cover those. Then he guided me through some of the Homemaking ones. Right away I was asked to teach a course at what we call a 4H Junior Short Course at the university. It was on better breakfasts.

LL: Uh, huh.

AG: So I researched breakfast and planned my course. That was one of my first projects. Then they were going to have a county 4H Fair at the end of August. They had not had one for several years because of the war and so this was a big thing to get it organized and write a Premium Book. A girl in Home Ec that I know, I guess she was an agriculture graduate of the University of Connecticut who lived in the county and had substituted in Fairfield county for two months before I arrived in Litchfield, was very helpful. She returned to the office and clued me in on all the ways to do this and that, it was very interesting.

LL: Now, you went out to existing clubs?

AG: Yes.

LL: ... that were formed out of a leader's home?

AG: Yes.

LL: And you were in a rural area,

AG: Yea.

LL: Which is a little bit different than what you had...

AG: Yes. And, I remember one club, there was somebody who wanted to start a club in one part of Litchfield, a rural part, a farm lady. So Mac drove me over there and I worked with him in getting that club started.

LL: Did each of the clubs do a number of kinds of projects or did they do special ones?

AG: They would more or less specialize, but then they would sometimes switch and do something different at different times of the year.

LL: So what kinds of things were you...

AG: So they were more like clothing clubs or food clubs. LL: Did you stay in Litchfield your entire 4H career?

AG: Yes.

LL: How many years?

AG: 16 years.

LL: How do you think, as we moved away from the war and into the 50s, how did things change?

AG: Sighs. Lots of changes and, there were a lot of things underway professionally. We were thinking more and more about the abilities of different age groups, their natural needs. Four years after I arrived there I was able to go to summer school, Extension Summer School at Cornell. That was wonderful to meet other agents, 4H agents from other states and counties. And then, we had various things turn up over the years, opportunities to try different things. I went to the Human Development Workshop which I had to do at Cornell. I believe that was 1956. Then I got work done in '57 and it was 6 months that I was there.

LL: What was your major in that school?

AG: Human Development Education at the University of Maryland.

LL: When you...in you undergraduate, did you have much in Human Development?

AG: No not really but it was more teaching methods ; goals and step by step how people would learn to use their hands and so on.

LL: How did sewing go, did they change at all? Did they get the new synthetic fibers?

AG: Oh yes, right. You know as time went on people did different things and of course much more was in the machines. The club members were always interested because it had the old time leaders and then they had newer people. So some abilities were different.

LL: What did you enjoy the most?

AG: Oh the people, and of course the members of course, but also the leaders, the parents, the enthusiasm. It was a whole world of people being in it because they wanted to be. Children were enthusiastic and their parents were very supportive, if you wanted to do something. This was a learning experience for me. It was wonderful that you worked with committees. You figured out what had to be done and the children who couldn't do it themselves. So you would ask people to help. And then they would get more brains working on a project. You'd got lots of new ideas. Some form of 4H people would come and help you at that same time and working with the teenagers.

LL: How old were the teenagers? Did you have any younger kids that kind of grew up with you?

AG: Yes, yes. Oh at that time we had age I 0, when they started, I 0-21.

LL: Uh huh.

AG: And then we did some work with older youth.

LL: Uh huh.

AG: And there was a survey being done about the needs of all of the youth that we were involved with in MA, NH and a few counties in CT. There were two professionals that did that research and we were "front line," so to speak, to work with people who did some surveys and trying to analyze what young people wanted.

LL: Did you ever work with Camp Vale?

AG: Once I was assigned up there. In fact I think that was within the first or second year. It was in the 4H building. One room had a kitchen and pretty windows and rooms so that the 4Hers could demonstrate. We worked with that and then the teenagers demonstrated square dancing...

LL: Oh.

AG: ...in the afternoons.

LL: Uh huh.

AG: ... and we were in the dormitory. We had to do that.

LL: They are doing " swing" now.

AG: Yes, it's old enough to be new.

LL: Laughs. Camp Vale was at the Big E and that was for multi-states to come in from New England. So who were they demonstrating to?

AG: To the public. They were coming through the building.

LL: The Short Course was for their own girls.

AG: Yes. And there were little Short Courses. There were a lot of things they could sign up for, "A Better Breakfast..." laughs.

LL: Uh huh.

AG: I remember one time they learned to play golf. All kinds of things in homemaking and agriculture and in general development. It was so long ago I don't remember this stuff

LL: And how long did the Short Course run?

AG: One week.

LL: And they lived on campus.

AG: Yes, so it was an experience for them to be in a dormitory and to have a roommate and for them to eat at the cafeteria; and other recreation things.

LL: Did you ever have any experiences with IFYE, the exchange program?

AG: Yeah, oh yes. We had one of the earlier ones in the 1950s. We went to Switzerland. When we came back, we went around a lot especially within the county. Over the years, we had a lot of experiences.

LL: Did you ever participate in the Chicago Congress that was part of 4H?

AG: Uh, yes I had my turn going out as a chaperone which was really great because I had been a 4Her that won a trip to Chicago.

LL: Oh, okay.

AG: And in fact, it was my first year of college and so it was interesting to see it from a different standpoint.

LL: Laughs.

AG: Also, another thing that was found in the forefront of our work was improving the profession of an agent. Evidently just a year or six months or whatever, maybe before I arrived, there was a meeting of New England 4H agents to consider whether they should organize and exchange ideas and promote the profession. And the fella that I worked with, Kenny Kretzer was involved with that. They did organize and so every fall there was a New England 4H agent's meeting, which came after Then the national was organized. Everything was from that. I ended up at one point as president so I did a lot of special work.

LL: Uh huh.

AG: Um, on our own time.

LL: Oh yes, I understand that. Laughs. When you were president, did that entail organizing a national meeting or four regional groups?

AG: I was secretary at one time and then I was elected vice president. I think that was 1957, which I wasn't excited about because that was the year I was to go on my six month sabbatical. It meant that I did not have a choice. I had to go where I could do both jobs, so that's why I went to Maryland. That meant I was working on the program that year. Then the next year I was the president.

LL: How many people do you think were active?

AG: I think because I was secretary I had something to do with membership. It was like 350, something like that, that would come out, or was that the membership, maybe that was the membership at that time.

LL: And were your expenses paid to go to those things?

AG: The State of CT was very cooperative. They gave us I believe \$50 for a professional improvement and we could use it for whatever we wanted. Most of us used it to go to the national meeting. And we stayed at the Y and that was in the hotel and we went five or six in a car. to save on expenses, too.

LL: And how many in a room? Laughs.

AG: Laughs. Whatever. I think three at the Y. No the Y rooms were small as I remember. I think there were single rooms over there. I don't remember. Laughs. LL: When was the 4H Center formed in DC. When did the campus start?

We've stopped to look at what Arlene has, the ceremonial papers and folders and the certificate from when the national 4H center opened in 1949, which are wonderful. And we talked about IFYE a little bit too off the tape about the fact that when IFYE began... through 4H, it was one of the few international exchange programs, let alone for young people.

AG: Yes.

LL: ... and you were talking about the type of experiences that they had because their agriculture is not the same as ours.

AG: No, no. Much of it was older practices and it was just...

LL: So they truly were exchanging ideas and then when their children came over they went back with other ideas too.

AG: Yes. Yeah. Yes.

LL: I have another question, before we get into the other things that you have... what kind of support as a 4H agent did you have from what would have been called Specialists at the time, from either Home Ec people or Ag people depending on what your 4H group was. And, did you have support from USDA leadership in Washington? Do you remember any of that?

AG: Once or twice I think we had people come up, sometimes they came to speak at a conference... and the national people that they would come for a state meeting of some kind. In those, in those early

days. I don't know that much about now, but they had an Annual Extension Conference with all the agents and specialists in CT and that was my introduction to CT. They had this conference which was like a three day event at a resort early June and they invited me to come. I met the other 4H agents there and got an idea of all the Specialists and administrators Because you were at a resort-type place you were a unit and were at the same place with having meals and getting acquainted and exchanging ideas on various subjects. Speakers and discussions broke up into groups, not just 4H together there in the rooms.

LL: So this was Ag and Home Ec?

AG: It was wonderful. Yes.

LL: Everything.

AG: Yes, everything. It was wonderful. Then some years later I guess the president realized that this Extension group was having such a wonderful conference that he said this should be on campus. Then we got to be on campus and we stayed in the dormitory. It was a different thing; being split up and moving around a lot more.

LL: Uh huh.

AG: But that was one time you might have someone from Washington. As far as the State's Specialists were concerned, they were wonderful and we could call on them for all kinds of things. They wrote our bullet ins, geared to what we were doing in the various projects in CT. I'm sure sometimes it was purchased from another state or combined or worked together themselves. They provided us with the bulletins, instructions, and leader's guides and records. So that was grand. They would come and do leader training for us and be judges at various events. They were very helpful.

LL: When did you retire?

AG: 1962.

LL: Okay, now shall we switch and talk about the other things you've assembled..

AG: Well, one thing was the county 4H foundation. One of the reasons I was hired there was they were thinking of camping. Some of the counties had had camping and Litchfield never had. I had been a 4H member in MA and a counselor and so forth. So that interested them and so in the year 1946-47, we had our first camp. We rented a, I can't think of the organization of our camp. I think it was a Y camp in a part of rural Camp Mohawk...

LL : Uh huh.

AG: ... anyway it was a part of Litchfield about ten miles or so. We had camping there two years to see how it would go. Two other counties came. There sent some youngsters there, two, or actually three. We organized the camp association called the Tri-County Camp Association. I believe it was Middlesex that sent members but did not join that exact organization...

LL: Uh huh.

AG: That group planned a program. The agents divided themselves up to work and returned in a couple of weeks. We had to plan when the camp wasn't in session. My job there was hiring the camp cook and working to prepare out menus and dining organization, supervising

the waiters; quite the little boys...

LL: Laughs.

AG: And everyone had a wonderful time. A lot of the teenage older members came to help...

LL: And how long did that camp run?

AG: It was for a week. And then I believe it was two weeks total. Then there was enough interest that the county was looking for a place of our own. They found one in Warren, which had been a small boys camp from Meriden, a Boys Club. And so that's the reason for the organization establishing a county 4H foundation. It wasn't only to own this property, but it was to do for the of the foundation encouraged to support 4H in the county.

LL: Uh huh.

AG: And the first project was to get the 4H center, we called it, because it was not related to camping. The 4H Fair later on and outings of all kinds. Then, a few years later, we started, a junior different type of experience; The county exchange. Because of having the National Agents Association there were new agents in other places. We contacted some. The first time we did it we exchanged with West Virginia, a particular county there. We sent a boy. We had interviews and all that and they filled out an application for this experience. I think he went for a month. They'd tell as much as they could tell about Connecticut and home. Then the next summer we would have someone from that family or that county come to our state, in our county. We did that until I left.

LL: Uh huh.

AG: There were a number of different states with varying degrees of success, but mostly it was very good. I understand since then it's more like a group going, more like a tour for a shorter time...

LL: Uh, huh.

AG: ... which is a different kind of thing. Also we started doing a little bit with scholarships and running rules. We had a very good board of directors with a couple of bankers on it and people that understood money and how to work with it. It was an active_ board with a broad, a lot of interests. As the times went along and there was good accumulation... we could use the reserve for things we started and scholars hips.

LL: Uh huh.

AG: And then they have done a lot more with that since the rough period of seven years ago.

LL: They sold the camp.

AG: Yes.

LL : So then they have used the money differently.

AG: Oh sure, oh sure, yes.

LL: They do, they do send the scholarships...

AG: Yeah, I underst and. well I guess from what I understood, they can't be used to be upgraded. The state had a lot of rules and regulations and they would need to do a lot of restrooms and dining halls. A lot of things that would have cost a lot of money. And perhaps by that time there was less than fifteen cabins and chances for people to go to other places. I don't remember.

LL: So when did the camp start there?

AG: '49.

LL: '49. And do you have an idea of when it closed?

AG: It was after '62 anyway, so it probably was '63, '64, '65, something along in there.

LL: All right, very interesting. I would like to borrow this. We can make copies.

AG: This was Extension when I started. We of course were Federal and State and local employees and the local was the Farm Bureau.

LL: That's right.

AG: And so they had to send their own newsletter that went out every month.

LL: Uh huh.

AG: The thing in this article is because the Home Agent, Ms. Moss, who had been here a long time retired just before I started and so this, and it continues on another page, and it tells a wonderful lot about what she did.

LL: Oh thank you very much.

AG: And she was one person we put on our foundation board.

LL: I ran across her name before too and I might have something else. So, she lived in Torrington with her sister.

AG: I guess I was going to say that unfortunately, I believe there were three sisters. One married and her daughter was in college with Al and married one of his roommates. But they are both gone now, so she couldn't tell us about her uncle Albert.

LL: I think it's a forestry person I have been looking for.

AG: Yes, yes. Now that family has sons and they are in South Windsor and anyway Al knows the ..they are in CT and so if they... they may have some information about that.

LL: Very true.

AG: Their great uncle.

LL: Now the other thing is that you said that they took in boarders.

AG: Yes. The other Ms. Moss stayed at home and kept the house. And her way to earn some income was to care for boarders. I don't know how many they had. This was before me. So it was all hearsay.

LL: Yes.

AG: When I came, it was Eleanor Moss who had been the Home Agent. It was like a camp on a farm in Winchester. I don't know, but anyway, they...it was a home.

LL: Uh huh.

AG: And this was very nice. They would cater meals and you could go there, arrange ahead and have lunch or dinner.

LL: Oh.

AG: And we had a number of our county 4H foundation annual dinners there.

LL: Uh huh.

AG: It was great and of course they both prepared it. It was mainly, I don't remember her name, the sister, she was the chef. So, that was one way in retirement they did that, as income.

LL: Sure. Very interesting. Now you brought us something else that I meant to go back to. When you were working with the young people, what were their homes like back then in the rural areas? I'm thinking of, because I think of people who talked about when they didn't have certain appliances and when they began to get more consumer items and so on. Do you have any recollections of things like that? AG: Oh mainly as a person coming from the city.

LL: Uh huh.

AG: I remembered the big houses, the big farm houses, the high ceilings with big rooms, and sometimes the fireplaces, which is something new for me to see. I'd heard about them.

LL: Uh huh.

AG: Often the club would be sitting around the dining room table for their meeting.

LL: Oh yes, all right.

AG: The reason, I have this and I want this back, is that this was a publication of the First National Stores.

LL: Oh.

AG: "Food Marketing in New England," and they edited it for years. We all got copies of it or in the office, always wonderful information about farming in New England, photographs, articles of every kind.

LL: This is a wonderful picture.

AG: Yes.

LL: This is rare.

AG: Um, uh lets see. New England Telephone...

LL: Boston Phone.

AG: Oh this is the Swan Boat.

LL: Okay.

AG: Just across from the city of Boston. Cows in VT. Now um, back to that... but look, this is a painting and they identified it was done in May sometime. The people posed for it and it had to do with the old fellas coming in to sit down and talk around the fireplace, um the stove.

LL: You know part of the story that happened, too, in CT, and New England, but CT was first. I was reviewing a transcript from another man that I interviewed, who had an orchard. He formed an association who used to have First National as their primary outlet for all of their fruit. It was the largest one in the area.

AG: Uh huh, uh huh.

AG: Yes. This is quite an article. I believe it has something to do with egg production.

LL: Uh huh.

AG: Anyway, the reason I wanted this out was that my grandmother, had a distant cousin who married an O'Keefe. That fellow came from Ireland. He was brought over to MA by his uncle Mike, Michael O'Keefe, to work in his grocery store. Now three small grocery chains came together to form First National. One was O'Keefe, one was O'Connor...

LL: Laughs.

AG: ... I don't know the name of the other one.

LL: Uh huh.

AG: But here is a picture... this is telling about the history of the First National and because of the connection there, in the picture...

LL: No I will protect this and get it back to you.

AG: Its amazing. These are real 1902 and...they came together I guess in the early 30s to form the First National...

LL: Um, um. Okay.

AG: This was always an interesting publication to come in. It always good pictures and interesting articles and Al met the, editor one time. I felt very badly. I did not know he was going to meet him or I would have gone with him... to tell him how I enjoyed that publication over the years.

LL: Okay.

AG: Now, we had sometimes very good publicity. Litchfield County has a wonderful lot of scrap books with photographs and many kinds of works. It was absolutely wonderful pictures. We had a 50th anniversary of the 4H foundation last September and they held it at the former 4H center, which is now owned by the town of Warren as a recreational area.

LL: Uh huh.

AG: ... and it took a year to plan it. It was wonderful to see it and they had exhibits in the office of all of their wonderful scrapbooks so people could look through them and help them identify some of the people in them that they didn't know.

LL: So would the foundation have these or would Laura Marek have them?

AG: I think Laura would know where they are. I think we were fortunate having good publicity for our 4H programs. Waterbury's Sunday paper used to give this one at one time.

AG:... you could get an idea. This was 1959. And this was a 4H week in March, with all kinds of 4H things happening. This is Waterbury Republican newspaper too and here is Ann Kertzer and I...

LL: Uhhuh.

AG: This is when we first camped, the first camp in 1949 at the 4H center. And here are pictures of the staff... Lets see, you can see the boys slept in Army tents...

LL: Laughs.

AG: ... Army cots and the girls used the 4 little

LL: Uh huh. That's wonderful. Absolutely wonderful. Now did they make copies of these from this? Do you know, for the scrapbook?

AG: I don't know. I don't think so. I think they would do just pictures that other people had taken, though I could be wrong. I'm not sure... they would have a lot of camp pictures. Oh this is just when I was elected president of National

LL: Okay, uh huh.

AG: and this is a grocer who did international association ;

. promotion at the National 4H Congress where there were agents accompanying delegations from all over the country.

LL : Uh huh.

AG: So many of the states looked on 4H work as a wonderful training ground to begin adult work.

LL: Uh huh.

AG: The agents who were only there a short time, learned how to organize clubs and then work with people in committees; and they improved and worked as Home agents or Ag Agents. So this was a stepping stone and so we were trying to encourage this

LL: Now this one, here you are, Mrs. Gray...

AG: That was later when I got an award from the National Association.

LL: Okay. At this time you had left your 4H work.

AG: Right.

LL: How did you and Al meet?

AG: Actually we met at the first 4H camp at the 4H center in 1949. He was doing summer work out of the state 4H office and his assignment was to go to all the camps around CT and spend a week here and there and all that. But he was a college student so I looked down on him, young kid.

LL: Laughs.

AG: Laughs. And so I passed in class a lot because it was important he was over here, so we always were good friends and all that so...

LL: You didn't get together for a long time?

AG: ... for a long time... That was an event's programs...

LL: The one that goes with 58?

AG: Yes, that's the one I worked on when I was vice president.

LL: Okay.

AG: But those are, you know out of CT.

LL: Uh huh. Um...

AG: This was the last leader's recognition dinner we had in Litchfield county before I left. I don't know why that happened to be in Al's things, so he must have come over it.

LL: Uh huh.

AG: The leaders did not have to pay for their dinner. The Bankers' Association had it. It was probably at a church or a hall where the local people cooked the dinner. They recognized the leaders and had a special speaker.

LL: Interesting that the toastmaster, this one was Joe Ruwet.

AG: Yeah. Laughs.

LL: Laughs. Small world.

AG: Now this um, the... since we had mentioned camp this was the news about the 4H Center. And that was in April.

LL : May I borrow these?

AG: Yes. As long as I know what you have.

LL: Oh, we will make a list.

AG: And so there may be other stuff in here, you know all kinds of other stuff that might be good. We had an Extension Service Review. I don't know whether they still have that or not.

LL: I used to get it, up until, the last five years.

AG: This is 1958 and it was the insight in 4H the whole thing. And I was asked to write an article in it. You may have this, if you want it.

LL: All right.

AG: Um, this is kind of the philosophy we were working on at that...in general at that time in '58, but I think it kind of summarizes...and these are wonderful.

LL: Okay. I will give them back to you.

AG: No, you can, if you want you can have them.

LL: Okay, all right, okay.

AG: One time we had a chance for this magazine Seventeen. They wanted to do an article. This is their teachers' publication. They evidently worked with Home Ec teachers and pointed out to them certain things that were in the magazine that they could use in their class teaching. They came to Litchfield. We were convenient to New York City so they could "buzz" up. They asked if they could come. We had a group and brainstormed so that's what we did. It was a lot of fun. And they had quite an article here. They wrote... what we could do with them, it was in the summer time for an issue that was going to be for Christmas gifts. Four pages of all these... some of these are members and a couple of leaders and um, Mary Reed was at that time an assistant, a summer assistant and just happened to be an old friend from MA... she was a Home Economics student at Framingham State.

LL: Uh huh.

AG: And then applied to CT to be an assistant in with us. So we still... she lives in CA, so we don't see much of her, but occasionally...

LL: You can tell here, too, your eyes, your eyes never change.

AG: Oh, laughs. Now these two I don't...from when we got the Agricultural Center...

LL: Oh all right.

AG: The offices, when I started there were upstairs over a grocery store. And then at one point, I believe it was

LL: This was '51 and this is '58...

AG: ...in both 1950 anyway, there was a fire in the store and there was smoke damage upstairs. There wasn't a lot of destruction, thank goodness. Uh, but the Farm Bureau and Extension people thought well, we ought to have an office anyway, because we have to climb a long flight of stairs to get up to it and there was a line of small rooms. Anyway they found a building, they found it down the street, it was available and this is what they did.

LL: I see.

AG: Now this is something that would be interesting because it tells about the whole thing, the Farm Bureau and all the sponsors that worked and then the constitution.

LL: This is about gallop poll in 4H.

AG: Its pretty old, I know that, but...

LL: They don't give any prices for these rentals that's interesting. They don't give any prices. Oh here it is, \$110 a month in Atlantic City.

AG: Uh, it was quite a while ago.

LL: Laughs.

AG: Laughs. The gallop poll said that the 4H was going to go. I was going to throw that out, but just thought well...

LL: I will put it in the whole pile with these, so go ahead and then...

AG: This is the only 4H yearbook I could find and this is 1959 and it was the 25th anniversary.

LL: Okay, all right.

AG: This is a ----- and this a book, a booklet that became
one of the 4H when he died and Stanley-----

Wonderful and this is my only copy of that. Why it's a personal family picture in it, too, but, um, the children of course are all the 4H members and went to camp and all that. And then in the back they had contributions from many people, uh, some are just relatives and friends, but many of them are 4Hers.

LL: There's Mark.

AG: Mark Ruwet.

LL: I saw him yesterday. Laughs.

AG: That is who had a lot of the 4H old friends -----and uh...
it was quite a few days . Then Mr. Dudley came...

LL: Oh yes.

AG: The Dudley family...

LL: In all this, what do you think were some of your greatest challenges working in the program?
Or working with Extension?

AG: Laughs.

LL: Either one or both.

AG: Oh dear. Oh I guess the idea of raising all that money for the 4H Center in Litchfield County, because I had had no experience with money raising; a few food sales is what I knew about; but working with the foundation and thinking big...laughs..... was quite an experience. And working on new things. At one point it was to get more enthusiasm for the food projects. We were looking for ideas and other food specialists and they would find something, say, in New Jersey, the Food Shelf there.

LL: Uh huh.

AG: So one of the agents got together with her and brainstormed and came up with idea of a Favorite Food Show. That was quite a challenge. They had to present it on the table space with a setting. Some were quite imaginative: the centerpieces and everything and a menu of how this food would be used. Then, to cap the day off we had a potluck supper with the parents and the 4H...

LL: The tape is about out. Thank you so very much.

(End of Interview)