

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

Interviewer: Luane J. Lange, CANR, Extension

Name of Person Interviewed: Cora Webb, Extension Educator, CANR, UCONN  
(Retired)

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LL: May 2, 2000. 'This is Luane Lange interviewing Cora Webb.

LL: I am interviewing Cora Webb, who had been a Home Economist with the UConn Cooperative Extension system. Cora, will you begin by telling where you attended college.

CW: I graduated from Framingham State Teachers College in Massachusetts.

LL: And what were your majors?

CW: I majored in food and nutrition.

LL: How did you happen to have your first connections to agriculture?

CW: I had been in 4H club work as a child. And my mother was active in the Home Demonstration Program.

LL: And where was it?

CW: That was in Wellsley Massachusetts. My grandfather had a farm in ME so I was quite used to the real country farm.

LL: Did you go up there and spend time or visit?

CW: I spent one summer there. And the family usually went up over Columbus Day, because that way we could usually get a long weekend and my father didn't have to take so much time off from work.

LL: Was there anyone else in your family who was in agriculture?

CW: My grandfather. I guess I would say my other grandfather was, also, in a sense, because he was a gardener for a private estate in Brookline Massachusetts. He had a green thumb. Laughs. He could make anything grow.

LL: Had he had any official or formal training?

CW: He grew up in England and whatever he learned he learned when he was working in England, before he came to this country.

LL: How old was he?

CW: I think he was about eighteen or nineteen..

LL: And what about your other grandfather?

CW: My other grandfather was a true Yankee. Generations had been there and this had been his family farm. He actually was a step grandfather, because my real grandfather had been killed. My grandmother married a second time.

LL: And where in Maine was it?

CW: This was in Otis Maine.

LL: Where is that?

CW: That is near Ellsworth, between Ellsworth and Bangor.

LL: How did you begin your career in Extension?

CW: I was a student dietitian at the Eastern Maine General in Bangor.

LL: Hospital?

CW: Yes. And I decided that, that wasn't for me. This was WWII and I could see the handwriting on the wall. I had worked for a year teaching school after I finished college. I felt I wasn't getting what I went to the hospital for in my internship and I decided that if I was going to peel potatoes and scrub pots and pans, then I was going to do something else. So I sent a letter up to the University of Maine Extension Service and just said that I was interested in a position in Extension and did they have something. The next thing I knew I had a telephone call. They said they would be down to interview me right away. They came down that night and interviewed me and I was hired and left the hospital. Laughs.

LL: My goodness. And so then where did you go?

CW: I went to Kennebunk County in Maine as a 4H club agent. I worked there for three years. From there I came to Connecticut.

LL: I'm thinking back... this is a repeated interview because the tape didn't work. As you talk some things are coming back to me. You worked while you were in college... you lived at home while you were in college?

CW: I lived at home while I was in college and I worked my way through. I waited on tables every night.

LL: When you were in college, what were your courses? You were a nutrition major.

CW: Yes

LL: What else did you have to take?

CW: Oh, it was a standard program for all students in home economics. Then in your junior and senior years you more or less majored, you had your foods and nutrition and chemistry, and Practice Teaching. Everybody at that time had to do Practice Teaching.

LL: And did you have Home Management and those kind of courses?

CW: We had a Home Management House and we had to live in it for one semester.

LL: And did you have much in the way of health curriculum?

CW: No, not really. I wouldn't say so.

LL: Family Development?

CW: No, they.. .well I think the people that had the general major had more of that than we did.

LL: Did you say you taught?

CW: Yes I taught school for a year after I finished college.

LL: What grade did you teach?

CW: I taught Home Economics in the junior and senior high school. It was a consolidated school.

LL: And what was that like?

CW: Well it was a nightmare. Laughs. Enough so that I did not ever want go back to teaching.

LL: Laughs.

CW: Because I taught Home Economics from the 7th grade through high school, two grades together because it was a small school. I ran the school cafeteria, with no paid help. I used my period before lunch to do the food preparation or else do it the night before and I took students from study hall to make sandwiches for me. I also had to coach basketball, baseball, and softball, I guess they called it then, teams. We played other schools. And, I had to do some Physical Education in the 5th and 6th grades too. Laughs.

LL: Oh.

CW: So I guess you know why that was a nightmare.

LL: How many people were in the school?

CW: I don ' t really remember the number.

LL: How many were you preparing lunch for?

CW: The whole school. But, some children brought their lunches so you never knew how many you were going to feed.

LL: So it was a rural area.

CW: Yes it was.

LL: So they bussed in.

CW: Everybody bussed in.

LL: Had you had any background in sports before?

CW: Yes I took a minor in sports in college so I was well prepared. You know, I say well prepared, as much as anybody would be to do it along with the other things.

LL: Had you ever played?

CW: Oh yes.

LL: When you yourself were in school.

CW: In school and in college I played in sports.

LL: What do you remember most about what you did when you first started with the Extension System? Now you were a 4H agent, but did you work then in agriculture? Were you to specialize in Home Economics or Consumer Sciences?

CW: When I did the 4H club work, there was 1 4H club agent per county, so you had to do everything, both Agriculture and Home Economics. Usually you had a good relationship with the County Agent (Agriculture) and he would help you out. That was more or less the understanding we had, that if there was something that the girl couldn't handle, then the County Agent would take care of it. I would have programs for the boys and bring down some Specialists from the university for people in dairy or poultry to have special programs that pertained to them; especially where I knew very little about it myself.

Laughs.

We all worked very closely together on this program.

LL: Did you, did you do club work?

CW: Yes, 4H club work.

LL: What were the clubs like, then ?

CW: Well, there were clubs and you would have all kinds of projects in one club. There would be one leader. There would be like little community clubs and each youngster would have their particular projects.

LL: So they weren't all sheep or all sewing?

CW: No, they wouldn't be all the same thing. They wouldn't be all girls and they wouldn't be all boys. It would be a mixed club. But it was more or less a community club and they would get together for their meetings and things and then if they needed help, you would have special countywide programs that would take care of the subject matter. I remember Sears Roebuck had a program on chickens and I can remember running baby chicks around in my car to the kids out in the county. Laughs . The y also had some garden projects. You were always carrying plants and seeds and things out, whatever it would be. As an agent you would just haul them into your car and off you took with them. It was during the wartime and so a lot of the people couldn't get gas to run around. So, as a agent you had the gas and could. You made the most of it you see by trying to coordinate your program with travel and the needs of the various children in the community.

LL: You obviously used your own car, did you get gas, extra gas...

CW: Yes we had extra stamps for gas, because of the job. And you were watched very closely. You had to be very careful where you parked your car because if it was seen in the parking lot then people might question it because of the sticker you had on it. So many times I walked to places when other people would have driven because everybody had a regular ration. But, because you had this other sticker you were mighty careful you didn't drive, as much as the average person did.

LL: Do you have any particular remembrances of the time in Maine?

CW: Well, I felt it was a worthwhile program that we were doing. We had a lot of these Victory Gardens for the war. We went into school with the Victory Garden Program and talked it up in school and got the teacher and the kids to sign up to have Victory Gardens. We did quite an extensive program with that.

LL: How did you happen to come to CT?

CW: Well I got to the point where I needed to make a change. I was registered with a teacher 's agency in Boston, and that's how I got my first teaching job. I kept on their list and I knew I wanted to make a move. So I just kept on the list and apparently Ruth Clark, who was looking at that time, was looking for a Home Agent for CT. She apparently interviewed with the agency and that's where she got my name. She was a Framingham graduate and when she saw that I was Framingham, of course that was a little help. So I came down for an interview, to CT.

LL: Were you in the same county the whole time?

CW: The whole time I was in Tolland County.

LL: What was it like when you started here? Did you inherit it from someone else or were you starting anew?

CW: No, no, there had been Agents in the county for quite a few years. The girl that had been there had left to go out to the Midwest.

LL: What year would that have been?

CW: That was 1945. I went on the job on May 1, 1945.

LL: Oh, happy anniversary. Laughs.

CW: Laughs. That's right. So I came to CT. Grace Holcolm Branford came on the same day.

She went on in New London County as a Home Agent. We both went on the staff the same day. I always remembered that. Laughs.

LL: What kind of preparation did they give you at entering CT?

CW: Well, they had a state conference. I was directed to the university to fill out some papers and forms. Then from there I went to Hartford to an agent's conference and we stayed over night at the hotel. It's no longer there. But we had a conference in Hartford for about three days and so I had a chance to meet the other Home Agents that way.

LL: How many Home Agents were there?

CW: Each County had one or two. Some counties had two, but most of them had one.

LL: What was your association with the 4H?

CW: In CT I definitely came in as a Home Agent. Because of your position in the county you worked closely with 4H, if they needed you for some programs or when I did clothing construction. In those days a lot of times women would come in that were 4H club leaders. For a while we had just a man club agent

LL: So you served as a kind of a specialist in the county?

CW: In the county I would work with them, if they needed some help. I always worked very closely with 4H and I would judge for them. We always invited the leaders to come into our classes.

LL: Did you notice any major differences between the Extension in the two states?

CW: No not really, it was pretty much all run the same way I would say.

LL: Did you go to out-of-state conferences?

CW: Uh, eventually we did, yes. We did. We used to combine conferences with RI and sometimes with MA. Not too many, but occasionally.

LL: What were your days like? Can you give examples?

CW: Well they were long days usually, because I did programs in the daytime and then I would frequently have meetings at night. This was through the war, so a lot of woman were working and transportation was also a factor. We had to watch our gas. So we would have a lot of evening programs, training classes at night, because of the fact that the women couldn't come during the daytime.

LL: What kind of programs were your most.. I wouldn't say popular, but most useful?

CW: Well I think a lot of food programs, nutrition and a lot of clothing programs. Part of it was that clothing was expensive and hard to get. It was scarce because materials were going into army needs. And the women did learn to use some of the products. Like we had the women using Army surplus. I say Army surplus because of the Cheney Mill and their nylon. They used to have nylon that you could buy quite reasonable and we would have the women get that and make sheets and pillow cases.

LL: Nylon was new then.

CW: Yes, nylon was fairly new, and used for parachutes.

LL: What was it like and what did they have to do with it?

CW: Well, you had to adjust the tension sometimes on the sewing machines so that led us to do a lot of sewing machine clinics. Mr. Clink was on the staff and he worked with us on the sewing machine clinic.

LL: He was from the Ag Engineering.

CW: Ag Engineering. I did most of the clinics myself, but occasionally he would come over if I had a problem. I would call him and he would tell me what to do. But, basically I did most of the sewing machine clinics myself because I had pretty good training in that. So the sewing of the nylon wasn't a big problem. It was the fact that you had to you know, adjust the tension and watch it because it would pop up.

LL: Threads didn't always work ...

CW: No, they did raise some problems.

LL: I think if I remember right they had to develop threads that were twisted in the opposite direction.

CW: They did quite a bit with developing a thread for home sewing and apparently they had already mastered that. I think they used a lot of things in the factory, when they made their parachutes and things. We did this particularly with the 4H club in Maine. We would collect feedbags, too, grain feedbags. They would be printed.

LL: I remember those.

CW: And, then the women would make clothes out of those and they would make potholders out of them or aprons. They would be all out of feedbags. I would collect feedbags and try to get enough of a certain print so a youngster could make a dress out of some feedbags for the dress review.

LL: Uh huh.

CW: So people would say, "I got a couple of these bags, do you think you can take them along and maybe find somebody else that has a couple?" So you would.. I was matching up feedbags ...laughs. I mean I even made clothes for myself out of the feedbags.

LL: I learned to sew on those feedbags. What was Dress Review like back then?

CW: Oh, the girls did a beautiful job of sewing. They would make all kinds of garments, mostly dresses and not too many wool things, again, because wool was scarce and also very expensive, compared to salaries and income for families.

LL: In the other sewing classes, did the women make many garments for men?

CW: No they didn't. As far as in Maine, no, but down here in CT after the war years, it wasn't due to the war, I had quite a few men come in to my sewing classes because they were interested in learning to tailor. I had some very nice garments made, jackets and tailored jackets and tailored suits made for women by the men.

LL: What were some of the greatest things that you saw change? You were with the Extension for how many years?

CW: Twenty-nine years, I think.

LL: If you had to look at those years in total, what did you see changing from with the content of your programs or the people who attended.

CW: There was quite a change there because the emphasis in the early days was on nutrition, foods, stretching the food dollar in that food wasn't available. So what could they do, um and use in place of the regular products. And we did a lot of sugar-free things.

LL: Was dry milk rather new, then?

CW: Dry milk came in, but I think it came in ... , I was thinking it was after the war or toward the end of the war. We did programs around mixing up powdered milk to show them how to mix it up so it wouldn't be lumpy, and mixing it with a quart of regular milk and a quart of the powdered milk, mixing it together so children wouldn't tell the difference, gradually working it so that they would get used to the powdered milk so the children could drink it. Now, some of the families were on farms, but there were many that weren't.

LL: Uh huh.

CW: The y needed these supplements you see and we got the women using powdered milk in cooking. That was another aspect we did. And, we also did a lot during the war with the use of soybeans and soybean products because they were readily available.

LL: What goes around comes around. Laughs.

CW: Laughs. Yeah.

LL: What about margarine?

CW: We had margarine. You couldn't buy butter and we had margarine, but it was uncolored. You had to buy your white margarine and they you had a little pack of coloring and you had to mix it up. This is what would tell, because sometimes it didn't get well mixed and you could see the little specks of color in the margarine. People could detect that you were using margarine and not regular butter. We had a point system and told what number of points you would have to give for some of these things. It would prohibit you from buying butter because...

LL: You had only so many points that you could use for fat.

CW: Absolutely. Yes. So this restricted the use of some of the products, even though they were available. You couldn't afford to get them because you didn't have...and I say afford, not dollar-wise, but in ration coupons.

LL: I remember that shoes were hard to get, too.

CW: Yes. Oh, leather.

LL: I can remember having cardboard inside my shoes...

CW: That's because leather was going into production for army needs, boots and things for the soldiers and other things that they needed it for.

LL: And as children, when we got rubber boots we always got them a couple of sizes larger and they stuffed the toes with paper.

CW: So you could grow into them...

LL: That's right, you never knew when you'd be able to get them, again...

CW: To get another pair...

LL: It was an interesting time. What were some of the changes in the way Extension did its work?

CW: Well, when I first came to CT, they were trying to develop um, the use of local leaders. But when I first came we did ... the Agent went out to every club meeting.

LL: It was held in people's homes?

CW: They were held in people's homes. Let's see, this was 1945 and there were more or less little community groups where a woman would have the meeting at her house and then all of her neighbors that could walk would come to it, because they wouldn't drive. And once in a while, somebody would drive and they would pick up everybody on the way. But you wouldn't get each one driving separately. And so, this was a big factor. It meant that the Agent was on the road both day and night, because a lot of the meetings were night meetings and some were afternoons, when the women that were home could get together.

LL: And so then you, you taught the woman's groups, all of the members ...

CW: Yes, uh huh, all of them. All that could make it would be there at the meeting. From that it became quite evident that an Agent couldn't continue to go at this pace and still enlarge and reach more people, enlarge the number of communities and number of people to be working with. So from there we went to leader training and with leader training that of course meant that the women came into a central point and had a training program. Then they went back and conducted the program for their own local Homemaking group. This enabled the Agent in one afternoon to see maybe the 10 or 15 or 20 people and it was a better use of the Agent's time. At first some of the groups resented this, they thought that the Agent should be there. Because she has been there you see, during this other time when things were tight during the war. But um, most of the groups were willing to accept it. As an Agent I would probably go out once a year or twice a year and meet with the individual Homemaking groups, so I did try to keep that contact with them, even though I was doing more of the leader training. Also, we were expanding our program to meet with other organizations and agencies.

LL: Like what, for instance?

CW: Well for instance we would do programs for a PTA or for the nurse's association or um, the Granges. We did a lot of Grange programs and so an Agent would go out and do a program for them. So by having the leader training it enabled you to do a few more, to reach a few more community organizations and to reach more people, which was really important.

LL: Where was the Tolland office at that time?

CW: The Tolland office was in downtown Rockville on Park Street. At that time we were on the 3rd floor walk up. We were there for a quite a few years, until we had a fire in the building and that ended that. And then we were housed temporarily in the old Northeast Schoolhouse in the center of Rockville. The school department in Rockville Vernon took pity on us and uh, everybody was very cooperative after the fire. So they gave us this schoolhouse had been closed and not used. They opened up part of it. Some of the businesses that were in the building moved over there , too, into temporary quarters. We did not know just what we were going to do. About that time they uh, were in the process of fundraising and got started in trying to get land and facilities for an Agricultural Center in the county. And so the fire sort of pushed it along a bit. So the building, the facility for the Tolland County Agriculture Center was activated. When the building was done, then we moved up there from the school.

LL: So how long of a period of time did that take?

CW: Well, it wasn't too long.

LL: The building was just recently named the Elliott building.

CW: Yes. It was John Elliott. John Elliott was a County Agent that worked in Tolland County for many years. He was very active in getting the Agricultural Center established. He worked endlessly on it and they did have fund raisers; but, the local people did a lot of the fund raising themselves.

LL: Its one of the Centers where they still own their buildings.

CW: Yes, they still own the buildings.

LL: Extension actually rents from them.

CW: The Extension facilities, ACS (Agriculture Conservation Service) and all of those have been renting from them over the period of the years, by paying rent it would carry the building. You had to have some finances to carry it once it got built; so that is how they did it, by charging rent. We used the facilities.

LL: What was our association with the Farm Bureau?

CW: When I first started working, especially in Maine, because things changed after the war, we were very closely tied in with the Farm Bureau. As a matter of fact when I came I was called the Farm Bureau Agent because they associated the Farm Bureau with the agricultural program and Agriculture Extension and it was not unusual. I heard it for many years. Occasionally somebody will still say, "Oh, was that the Farm Bureau that you were with?" You see, they would still remember it. So, we did have a close tie in. Part of it was that the Farm Bureau did help sponsor some of our programs and their financing was important in order to expand the facilities and programs that we were doing.

LL: Now at that time, too, we had counties in Connecticut.

CW: The counties were very active and we used to get funding from the County Commissioners , I think they were called then. But, that was done away with, both the Farm Bureau and the County Commissioners' programs. Then we really turned definitely back to the State to provide funding.

LL: I have come across some records. The Farm Bureau separation occurred because we couldn't lobby.

CW: They (Farm bureau) wanted to go into some fund raising, insurance and lobbying for some things for the farmers and so forth. We could not do that according to the federal uh government and the Hatch Law.

LL: Uh huh.

CW: Because we weren't permitted.

LL: And the counties were done away with in the 50s sometime I think.

CW: About then.

LL: As a government/political entity.

CW: Yes, because really they hadn't been functioning and doing much. They had the County Commissioners but they really, we really had no real tie in with them.

LL: Uh huh.

CW: At one time the County Commissioner I think gave us some funding, a little funding but that is when it was changed over and it all went back to the State and Federal funding.

LL: Uh huh. There were advisory boards for the Farm Bureau and that is how our advisory group system started. We continued it afterwards.

CW: Yes, we continued the same plan afterwards, because you needed to have some direction from the local people. After all, this was their organization and um, they were the ones that really focused us directly, what you did and what they wanted for programs out at the county level and what the needs were of the people.

LL: So you did your " needs assessment," as they called it, at the local level.

CW: Local, yes.

LL: Was there much State or Federal input into what you did.

CW: Not a great deal, no. The State did control to a limited degree what was done and approved what you did, but I mean it... each county pretty much did its own thing.

LL: What kind of reports did you have?

CW: We had to do an Annual Report which took weeks.. .laughs. More time than I thought it was worth. Laughs. You had to do the Annual Report and have it sent over to the university, a report of what you've done for programs during the year; the attendance of the meetings, how successful they were or weren't and um, then you made recommendations for another year.

LL: Did you have any input into what the Specialists were doing?

CW: The Specialists worked very closely with us. A Specialist would come out and do programs for us. Sometimes leader training classes and other times uh, in the earlier days they would go out and do an actual program for a Homemaking group. The women just loved that a Specialist would come direct and

do for their. .. for their own Homemaking group. But um, that wasn't too often. When we had a Specialist we tried doing leader training or countywide meetings so we could reach more people and have a better use of time.

LL: What do think were some of your biggest challenges?

CW: I'm not sure about challenges. There were many needs in the county that I found and I felt uh, that many of the farms were doing very well, but that the women didn't have perhaps the opportunity that they should have. In other words that, um, agriculture had priority in the farm and the home seemed secondary. I thought that the women needed to have more conveniences, more things to do with around the home. Because they, in the early days, were helping with the outdoor chores and the farm work and particularly during WWII, the women would go in the fields and actually work. They didn't have much for conveniences in the home and I felt that they should have...since the farmer was going to have a new tractor then maybe the woman should have a new uh washing machine or uh, maybe a new range or dishwasher. You know there came a point when anything that would make her work easier and give her more free time to help with all the outside work. So, I felt there was a great need to have better planning, better family planning, home planning.

LL: Now there was a labor shortage during the war, on the farm?

CW: Yes.

LL: So they relied more on their families.

CW: Oh yes, all the families, the kids and all would participate.

LL: Do I remember correctly that if the farms were a certain size there were deferments?

CW: Oh, deferments, yes they had...there was a definite deferment that you would get if you worked on a farm, but you have to meet certain requirements. You had to have a certain number of cattle or a certain acreage, a certain production. It was all set out. I mean there was nothing that you could just make up. I mean everything had to be documented. Every County Agent worked quite closely in that.

LL: I came across your name, going back to what you just said about appliances. I was talking with somebody about rural electrification, her husband had worked for the power company. During our discussion she talked about the fact that. Now during this period most of CT had electricity, but I did discover that there were some rural areas that didn't get electricity until 1944.

CW: Uh huh.

LL: So meanwhile, people were not used to these appliances and so then after the war Let me go back to electricity for a minute. Sometimes the power company would not bring the power lines out unless the farm could guarantee they would use a certain amount of wattage. So then, the whole idea of home use began to be a selling point because the home could then add to the wattage use and allow them to get the poles out there. During that time then, right after the war, they must have just been going back into the production of the consumer and home appliances.

CW: Oh, I can remember when the first appliance came into the Rockville office and some of us had our names in for appliances. Because I just came to CT, rented an apartment and had no stove or refrigerator which was completely unheard of when I had lived in Massachusetts. When I had worked in Maine, all apartments had stoves and refrigerators. But in CT, they didn't rent them with stoves and

refrigerators. So here you are living in a house or an apartment with no stove or refrigerator . So you see there was a great need for these after the war. But, you couldn't buy one unless you could find a second hand one from somebody. So, I, myself didn't have a stove or refrigerator.

LL: What did you do to preserve your food?

CW: I had a picnic cooler that belonged to my family, an old fashion picnic cooler, a good size one, and I would get a hunk of ice and bring it up from the ice place. They had, you know, where they sold ice.

LL: Yes.

CW: I would go down and get a hunk of ice and bring it up and put into my little cooler and keep things that way. It was the only way you could do it.

LL: And then you had a hot plate?

CW: And, I had an electric hot plate because I didn't have a range. Somebody had an old waffle iron that was a combination waffle iron and grill, and I used that. I cooked everything, steaks, chops. Laughs. I was limited to what I could cook. Laughs . It couldn't be oven baked things then because I didn't have the oven. So, I had to get things I could cook on this grill or on an electric plate and in a kettle, you know. So it was an experience. I learned to do a lot of things that I never thought I would. I remember I got a stove, one of the first stoves that came into the CL&P office in Rockville. I had my name on the list and I didn't have anything. Personally you see. This was not because of my job, but just personally I had nothing. It wasn't a case of replacing an old one. It was a case of not having one, period. So I remember I got a gas stove. We had city gas in Rockville so I could use a gas stove.

LL: Uh huh.

CW: I was so glad to see that. Eventually I picked up a second hand refrigerator from somebody that had a spare in their basement. They felt sorry for me and said, "We really should give this to somebody." Laughs. So I was able to get my refrigerator. But I was there a year or two without a refrigerator.

LL: There must have been other families that had the same problem.

CW: Oh, I'm sure there were other families, especially if anybody was new in the area. This is what you would run into. If somebody was living there, they might want to replace something. If they had been living in the house for a while then they would have these things before the war, you see.

LL: Would they get priority if they had larger families?

CW: No, because there were none available . There just weren't any available, you see. There were no priorities. The priority came when they began to come on the market, you see. I remember, they gave priority to people who just didn't have any and not for replacement. I learned to do a lot of things. I had a waffle iron that somebody gave me and that worked pretty well, because I could make waffles. Laughs.

LL: Laughs.

CW: People today look at waffles as a special treat and that was an every day fare. Laughs. I would do waffles and then I would cream chicken and put on it and that would be my fancy meal. Laughs.

LL: Laughs. Oh my. So, you taught appliances, then, to the woman's groups?

CW: Oh, yes, we did. I worked very closely with CT Light and Power Company because they had a Home Service Representative who did quite a few programs. She would do the appliances and I would do the nutrition aspect of it. We did joint programs. We held them right in the Rockville office; their office was on the first floor. They had the appliances and we did a lot of programs jointly with club members and we did a lot around the county, as well.

LL: I had someone tell me that they remembered when they got their first electric stove, the woman was in her 90s, and, also, when she got a mangle.

CW: Yes, mangles were very popular, but mangles were more popular before the war.

LL: Would you describe a mangle for the tape?

CW: Oh, a mangle is a fancy ironing appliance. You don't have to use an iron, as we know an iron today, but it was like two large rollers.

LL: About how big?

CW: Oh, they would be probably 36 inches long, at least. It was on a stand and you could control it by knee pressure or by your foot. If you did a tablecloth or sheets they would roll right through it. One end would be open and that's the end you would use if you were pressing or ironing a dress, or a garment that that you could slip over the end of it and make it easier to do it so it wouldn't be as wrinkled. It was kind of hard to do things flat.

LL: So why were mangles better than.. .

CW: It was supposed to be a labor saving device. In those days, everybody ironed their sheets.

LL: Because they were 100% cotton.

CW: ... and tablecloths. People used tablecloths and so they would put those big flat things through the mangle and do it because it was a lot easier than doing them by hand. So the sheets would go through it and come through all nicely ironed and uh, look nice. And you didn't have to have too many creases in them. It was a labor saving device, but it took technique to learn to use them.

LL: I see.

CW: I can remember the women doing their shirts on them and they would come out beautifully, but that took a little practice.

LL: What about food preservation and food preparation? How did those things change over those 30-40 year s?

CW: When I first started we did all canning. Everything was canning. There was practically no freezing done at all. Then the freezing came in and it gradually went to teaching people how to freeze: what to use for freezing equipment, and the wrapping, the packaging. The first freezers were really ice cream freezers that people used, the kind that you would use to store ice cream and regular commercial foods. And that's what many of the families used. Then of course eventually, freezers were developed, first the chest type and then we went into the uprights. Most of the farms got to using freezers very early because they did have their own meat supplies and this was excellent for storing of meat and much simpler and quicker than

canning. I can remember my first project in the county. And, the first telephone call I had was from a woman; would I come out? She thought she was having trouble with her pressure canner. We used to do everything in the pressure canner when we first started, or when I first started. This woman was petrified of the pressure canner. So I went out and helped her. I said I would come out and give her a demonstration and what have you, and would drive out and work with her. I wasn't going to do it for her, but I would show her how to use it and so forth. So I went out. I got there and I found she expected me to cut up this calf... laughs.

LL: Laughs.

CW: I had not been brought up on a farm so I wasn't used to handling a carcass of meat. Laughs.

LL: Laughs.

CW: I would have cut some meat, but not a So here I am. Anyway I finally said to her, "You know you this is too much for us to do. You should just take it down to the butcher." We had some places that would do cut up and so forth. I said, "You just take it down and get it cut up into certain size pieces. Then from there I can work with you and we can put it in some jars and can it." I said, "You can't handle it like that. You got to have it cut up." So she had it cut up. Then I went back again after she got it cut up into pieces we could handle. Then we proceeded to can it in the pressure canner. I could always remember that, being asked to cut up the cow laughs.

LL: Laughs. Did you go off into smaller appliances, because those began to be on the market so much .....all the smaller, convenience appliances.

CW: We didn't do much with those until quite a long time after the war, because there was too much need for freezing and the basic things. A lot of the appliances were like luxury items.

LL: Uhhuh.

CW: See, they weren't always necessary. You could supplement what you had and it made it a lot easier and so forth.

LL: I remember microwaves, when they came in with microwaves.

CW: Yes, anything, anything new came along we always did programs showing the appliance, the differences between them and what to look for when you went to purchase them. We did a lot of consumer aspects of it, what the features were that you looked for what you were paying for, what the difference was between appliances.

LL: How did you stay updated on the new ones?

CW: Actually we um, had quite a few programs on appliances through the CT Light and Power and they had facilities down in Berlin.

CW: Berlin, on the Berlin Turnpike. They had programs there and they had a Home Service Director who was very much interested in working with Extension. She knew Extension what with the work they did with regard to the women in the county. So when she had training programs for her Home Service girls she always included us. It also was a sales pitch on the appliances and what was new and the use of them and the construction and so forth and care. We would be included and invited down to take part in the program and the training session that they would have.

LL: Did you have to write many of your own materials and do your own lesson plans?

CW: Yes, we had to do actually all of our own material. There was very little that came out done for us. Sometimes the Specialists would do outlines and write leaflets and so forth, but if we were doing something that no other county was doing then we had to do it ourselves.

LL: Before we turn this (tape) over I want to have you think a bit about how your teaching methods changed over time. For example from teaching hands-on, did you do television?

CW: Oh yes, that aspect of it yes. (End of side one.)

LL: We're talking about how teaching methods may have changed.

CW: At first we did individual programs with the Homemaking groups. Then we did go into radio...did a lot of radio programs, particularly with Frank Atwood. He did a farm program, WTIC out of Hartford. I can remember doing a lot of radio programs, particularly around the holidays when people would be preparing turkeys. How to cook a turkey? Stuff the turkey or not stuff the turkey?! Which is still a question, today.

LL: Only now you can get on the computer and go "TIJRKEY.COM ." Laughs.

CW: Laughs. Then we would have different programs, nutrition programs and projects. Then when television came in we of course moved right into television. In Tolland County we worked a lot with WTIC. We always, I shouldn't say always, but as a general rule they always, laughs, invited us to come on at Christmas time and we would do a program on Christmas activities and Christmas gifts and Christmas cooking, and things that people could do at home for the holidays. This was a big feature. And part of it was because we usually did a special program in the county, in Tolland County at least for the holidays. We would have like an open house with individual Homemaking groups and we would set up exhibits, um of something special for the holidays. And then we would bring those in for the television programs because they leant themselves nicely to the television programs. The women would participate and tell how they made things and worked things. We would have leaflets and information available. That we always prepared at the County level because it wasn't done at the State level. Anything special we did in the county we did ourselves. We also did a lot of programs on, and some of this was prepared at the State office and some were prepared at the County office, foods of foreign countries and the customs and traditions. That was a strong feature and that sometime leant itself to a television program as well.

LL: Did you have a newspaper column?

CW: We used to do a local... at one point we had local papers and we would do local items in the paper. Then we used to have a joint program and we rotated it between the various counties so that we each took a turn writing for the Hartford papers, sending a column to the paper.

LL: Was there much in the way of home decorating or children in what you taught people?

CW: Oh, I did a lot with children's clothing and the type of clothing that was suitable for children, easy for children to handle and the general construction of it. We also did adult construction as well. And, we did interior decorating, home furnishing or whatever you want to call it. We did a lot with that and had a lot of programs to help the women with that. We even did slip covers, upholstering of furniture. That was a big heavy project.

LL: Uh huh.

CW: During the war you couldn't buy furnishings and things so the women had to learn to make the most of what they had until...that is why a lot of times they did furniture repairing g. It wasn't initially re-upholstering. Sometimes it was just a matter of learning to tie the springs and fix the cushions so that they could keep the furniture going. And, if they could buy new upholstery they did, but that was kind of scarce. We did a lot of refinishing furniture because you couldn't buy new furniture either, so the women were interested in refinishing so that they could make what they had look a little bit better. Laughs.

LL: Where as now it is like hobby, aesthetics or crafts.

CW: Yes. But in those days it was a case of necessity. You just couldn't go out and buy these things.

LL: Was there much done or, when did they start doing child development and raising children?

CW: Well, I can remember oh, when I first came into the county, we used to have Specialists, that I mentioned would go out to the counties and do programs. We had a nurse on the staff at that time, a Miss MacDonald, and I can remember some of the women's saying, "We brought our children up according to Miss MacDonald." Laughs.

LL: Laughs. Like Dr. Spock. Laughs .

CW: And she did... even though her training I believe was as a nurse. She did a lot with child development, family relations and this type of thing. That I would say would go way back. No matter what she did, she tried to tie in with the family and the health of the family and child development. So it's always been a strong kind of a program. Maybe not per se as such, but it tied in with whatever the program was that we were doing. We always, it was incorporated.

LL: What about fairs and judging? What role did they ...

CW: Oh, we judged many fairs, laughs, and the women had exhibits. They had adult exhibits and they had 4H exhibits. I judged so many fairs over the years; everything with them, the canning to all the vegetables, the clothing, the home furnishing. It would be for the 4H children, as well as for the adults. There were always exhibits at the fairs.

LL: Who organized the fairs?

CW: The fairs were usually by a County committee and then the 4H...

LL: Not necessarily Extension?

CW: Not necessarily Extension. It would be a County Committee that organized the fair and Extension would have its section of the fair.

LL: And 4H would also?

CW: Also have theirs, uh huh. And usually the 4H and the adult programs were pretty closely tied in together, in the same location of the fair grounds or in the same building.

LL: Did you go up to the Big E, up to Agawam (Massachusetts)?

CW: Yes, we did. We went and did a lot of that. They would have more competition between states and

more like a state exhibit and between the states and they would have some individual competitions. The women would have some individual exhibits. My women did not participate too much in the individual exhibits up there. But I did get involved in judging.

LL: Do you remember if these people originally met in homes and then as people urbanized and so on they were held either at Extension Centers or at other buildings? When Extension was on the third floor that is when they were held in homes?

CW: They were held in homes or Grange Halls. Whatever else was available. Sometimes in the churches, town halls, whatever would be available in the community. We would hold the meeting there and sometimes that would be done rather than at a person's home. It would just depend upon the location and what facilities were available.

LL: The woman I interviewed in the Middletown area, who was in her 90s, of course many of her friends are deceased, but she said they remained friends throughout their adult lives. They kind of raised their children together and their kids knew each other and ...

CW: I think this was very true. I think it became a very close-knit group and even today I find that some of the women still have contact even though they don't have the active Extension group, as such. They are too old to be too active, but they still would get together and have a relationship.

LL: It was a, a social and community group.

CW: Yes, uh huh.

LL: Can you think of any problems that you faced organizationally?

CW: Uh, not really.

LL: Funding-wise?

CW: Funding wasn't too much of a problem because you know we got along with very little funds. Laughs. Uh, and uh, so, really, we could have used more funds, I mean for programs and things, because we didn't always have the money to go out and buy the stuff that we needed for our programs. A lot of times as an Agent you would bring everything from your own house that you needed for the program, um, rather than having stuff at Extension. Then in Tolland County, when we got our Agricultural Center built, we did develop a kitchen there, so we do have demonstrations and things there. We finally got that pretty well equipped so that you could use the equipment and things there and the people knew where to come for training program. That was the big advantage in that. The women knew where the building was and they wouldn't have to spend time hunting for it. Before that, if we met out at the Grange Hall or something, sometimes the women did not know where it was and they felt that it was a little difficult driving into a strange place. So, the Agricultural Center did serve a very good point from that. The women said they would rather come to one set place, rather than rotating to a different place each time.

LL: And more women were driving, too, by that time.

CW: Yes, by that time more people were beginning to drive, more people had cars. Gas was available then so that made a big factor.

LL: I know that you travel a lot. Where did your travel ... where did your wanderlust come in? Has it always been there, laughs, or did part of it come through international home economics programs?

CW: Yes, I became very much interested in the international programs, particularly after I had had my stint overseas.

LL: Talk about that.

CW: I went with the International Corporation Administration, ICA.

LL: You took a sabbatic leave?

CW: No, it was not a sabbatic, it was just a straight leave.

LL: Oh okay.

CW: There is a difference. Laughs.

LL: Laughs. Oh, yes, there is. Laughs. So how did you happen to want to do this?

CW: Well I had heard about the programs overseas and was always interested in it. I had heard of the program that the girls were doing in the various countries and I thought, geez this would be interesting. I think I would like to just maybe do something. "Maybe its time for a little change." So, I talked with a couple people from the Washington office

LL: International Exchange office?

CW: Laughs. Our Federal Extension. And I said, "I have been out, I had my sabbatic and gone to Cornell and got really exposed to some of the programs when I was at Cornell."

LL: What was your major?

CW: I took a master's in Extension Education.

LL: Uh huh.

CW: And so, I had gotten exposed, there, to some of the overseas programs that were going on. I thought well that seems like a sensible thing maybe to do something like that. So I had mentioned I might be interested in it. So, with a follow up through the State office and through the Federal Extension, I filled out the forms and things that they send you, you know. Laughs. Then I didn't hear anything for quite some time and all of a sudden I had a telephone call. Would I be interested in going to Bagdad, Iraq to work on a community development program, which would be similar to our Extension program? And I said, "That sounds interesting. I learned about that country in ancient history in the ninth grade. I remember it very well." Laughs. I had an outstanding teacher and I guess that maybe that was one reason. And so, I said, "Yes, I thought I would be interested." So I got more information and brochures and before I knew it I was on my way to the Middle East. I spent a considerable time there. It was supposed to be for two years. It was about a year and a half. I worked in rural areas, there. We were setting up training sessions to work with the women, they were girls really, young girls, to go back into the villages to teach simple things. We had simple things.

LL: So you taught them and they went back to the villages.

CW: To the villages, yes. Because of relationship there, you wouldn't have had a relationship with the

village women.

LL: Uh huh.

CW: Because of your culture.

LL: Uh huh.

CW: And so we were teaching them simple things like to have a good water supply in the villages. We worked with the health department on that, getting wells into the villages. You had to work with the sheik in order to get him to be willing to replace the parts because you know a pump wears out and somebody in the village has to be responsible. So we had to get the sheik, who owned the village, you see, and the land, to be responsible for replacing the parts of things that wore out. So we were getting water in through the health department. We had a health contingent over there. And then we were working with the girls and teaching them about bathing their children, boiling the water from the irrigation ditches and about the diseases that were transmitted through the irrigation ditches. And we were trying to have them, and again working through the sheik, to have little village gardens. Now these people worked in the gardens for the sheik, but everything that was raised was shipped to market and the people weren't allowed to bring home a tomato. If they were caught bringing home a tomato that was the end of it for them.

LL: They were shot?

CW: Well, no but they wouldn't have any more work. They would lose their job and it they wouldn't get any income.

LL: Were they paid for their work, or was it like the "company store?"

CW: Well sometimes they were paid and sometimes they would get some produce from the gardens.

LL: What did it take to have the sheik allow you to come in to do this?

CW: Well, uh they had to have a good relationship. If you didn't have a good...

LL: So it was the central government who arranged the...

CW: No, no, no, no. We did work through the central government in the, in the country and we worked out in the rural areas. And uh, we had a contact with the individual sheik.

LL: And USDA did this?

CW: No it was not USDA, it was ICA, International Corporation Administration.

LL: Under who?

CW: The State Department. Also they used agriculture people. That working relationship came on this side of the water. They employed these type of people, going out and doing the program.

LL: Uh huh.

CW: And um, so we were trying to get the sheik to let these people have a little plot of land that they

could have for themselves, where they could raise vegetables and things they needed and feel free to pick um and eat um. And so, you were also trying to teach nutrition, how important it was for the children to have some of these foods and of course this meant working with the sheik as well. You had to teach that this was important that these children have these things, as well as the adults. So when we were teaching the girls food preparation, of course all this stuff needed to be cooked rather than eaten raw.

LL: Did you have training before you went, on their culture, and was there a translator? Did you learn the language?

CW: I had a translator with me. I tried to learn the language, but I didn't really have time to do it, with traveling as I was. I would travel from Bagdad out into the rural area, where we had a training program set up. A Center, really. We would bring the girls into that Center and keep them there and boys as well. Boys came in...

LL: How were the girls and boys selected?

CW: They were selected through one of the agencies, a government agent would have selected one and then it was a problem. It was a problem. The boys were not so much of a problem, but you get the girls and had to get permission for the girls to come into a rural area to live away from home, especially to do the teaching, because you wanted to have them do the actual teaching. They did have a school or college in home economics at the women's college, but to get those girls that graduated from that college to come to work in a rural area was very difficult, because their families would not accept this.. They did not accept the girls living away from home out in the rural area.

LL: Uh huh.

CW: So this was a very, very unusual family that would let the college graduate in home economics come out to live, at one of the village centers. Then , to the village centers we brought in the girls from the rural villages.

LL : And, how were they selected?

CW: They were selected by Minister of Social Affairs. One of their workers would go in and try to recruit people to come into the center for training. It was a six months training. The boys were learning agriculture and they were also learning how to build houses, brick making We got brick making equipment in and all that was done through our funding, not our funding, but US funding. We got brick making equipment and supplies and things you needed to teach them how they could make their own bricks. They used to have like a self-help housing program. So, we were getting the trained into the villages. Another area was to have latrines in the compounds instead of finding excrement left anywhere. Also, to have the animals housed separate from the people.

LL: Uh huh.

CW : And animals, the animals just ran wild and were in the house with the people. So we were trying to get them to keep the animals out of the house and into a special area. So these were very simple problems that they had. The y were simple problems, but they were very serious problems.

LL : But you were also changing the culture.

CW: Yea, that's right, uh huh. But you see in order for them not to lose all those little children that were

dying from malnutrition, and diseases and so forth, you had to do something. It had to start there, really, I think, real rural and at a basic level. It was hard to see those little children. You would see such malnutrition. They did get UNICEF (United Nations Infant and Children Emergency Fund?) . I did see UNICEF food come in and the children aide programs.

LL : What years were you there?

CW: I went over there in 1957, ' 57 and '58. And I would have stayed longer except that we got to the point we no longer had a working relationship because we had been through a revolution.

LL: Oh.

CW: The king had been killed and the government was unstable.

LL: And the sheik no longer ?

CW: Well, we, we couldn't go out into the rural areas. It wasn't safe for us to go out into the rural areas.

LL: Uh hull.

CW: You had to have permission from the central government to go outside of Bagdad and we couldn't get that because the central government wasn't strong enough. And, no one really knew who was the central government. Laughs. So that this is one of the reasons that we finally had to we left the country because of that. There just wasn't anybody to work with. There was no one designated really and the whole government was in turmoil.

LL: When you got back did you pursue education in other countries again or did this transfer, just to a personal interest?

CW: Uh, I didn't, no I didn't t go back out again, because I had , I had mixed feelings about it, about the whole program and what we went through. Part of it was because I didn't like the way the US government treated us.

LL: What, for example?

CW: Well, at the end, when things were no longer feasible for us to go out into the villages to work we were kept there in the country for a month or two without being able to go out to work. That part I could accept, but then at the end all you got was a little notice saying that you were fired. After all of this and um, after being through the revolution and staying on trying to work and so forth for several months, well actually six months after the revolution. We didn't leave until December. A lot of the men were transferred to other countries, but there were several of us girls and we were just plain given a written note, not even a transfer or temporary duty. And I just didn't like that. I said, " I got a two year leave and so then they fire me in the middle of it?"

LL: Do you think that it was not putting value on the role of family life ?

CW: This had nothing to do with the foreign people. It had to do with the US.

LL: But I am thinking of what might have been our own (US) interpretation of what was valuable in developing countries.

CW: Yea, but I think uh, it could be that. But then later on, after you got back into the states and back to Washington and you found they were shipping people out to other countries and filling all the vacancies, you know. So it was just one of those things. I just didn't like the way it was handled. I could find myself down the road, asking where am I going to be, what am I gonna do? What future is there in that? I could see no security in it. This coming up every six months. I just didn't like the insecurity of it. I would have gone out again perhaps if um, oh things had been a little different. I think if I had seen them handle things a little differently. I decided I would stay where I knew I had a permanent job. I had to think about myself and my future. And what was ahead for me. And I didn't have family or anything I could turn to or live off of I was alone in the world and I thought, "Well, gee, I got to look for some security."

LL: What about your professional life has brought you the most satisfaction?

CW: I think working with the women was probably the most satisfaction. I felt that way more so, because I could see how the families appreciated it, which is a lot of work I did in Tolland County. They needed help. The women appreciated what you did and they showed it.

LL: They were not as mainstreamed as they are?

CW: No, oh no.

LL: I interviewed a woman who is now quite active and she said she went to a meeting dressed in a suit and someone said to her, "You don't look like you are a farm wife." And she said, "That's what we look like." And so that whole thing hadn't happened back then.

CW: No, well I would say, I mean, I never really felt that you could have picked the farm woman out; once in a while, yes, but not as a general rule. No I always felt that from the standpoint of dress, they were very well dressed. We did a lot clothing construction so they did a lot of making of their own clothes and this type of thing.

LL: So it's a myth in someone else's mind?

CW: Yes, I would say, that wouldn't show.

LL: Uh huh. But it was an interesting comment, in today's world.

CW: Yes, it was an interesting comment, and maybe it was how she felt. Maybe how people felt. LL: Who in the group, this woman would happen to be and...

CW: Yea that's right, uh huh.

LL: Are there people whom you have stayed in contact with as a result of your work? I know you traveled and are very active as a retiree. Do you do things with former colleagues?

CW: Yes, uh huh.

LL: Did you form friendships with people who you worked with or people who you taught, do you think?

CW: I think probably with more people that I worked with. Uh huh.

LL: Oh I remember something you talk about on the other tape, you talked about being single and how, that it was difficult sometimes to be in the community.

CW: Yea very difficult sometimes to be in the community.

LL: Talk about that, would you?

CW: Sometimes it was very difficult and a lot of times people um, wouldn't include you in things because you were the Home Economist... food preparation and so you wouldn't get invited into a private home. You would go to a home for a program or a meeting, but to go in as a private individual you did not get invited. I felt it very difficult to um, have friendships with local people, outside of Extension because of the fact that, as a Home Economist they were a little reluctant to invite you into their home, either for a meal or just into their homes. I always remembered when I came into the county somebody passed a comment on to me. I went to make a call out in a rural area and I had gotten the directions from the county agent, Mr. Tucker. I went up to call on this particular family and they were a farm family. I was there quite a little while and finally she invited me in and we went in and we sat down and we talked. After awhile she said to me, "You probably thought it was very strange that I didn't invite you in at first, we just stood at the doorstep and talked." and I said, "Yes." And she says, "Did this happen to you before?" I said, "Oh yes, it has happened quite a few times. I haven't been invited in and I just have been left on the doorstep to talk." And she said, well part of this goes back, I tell you, you' re going to have a hard problem in this county." This was shortly

LL: You know that is interesting because years ago I had an opportunity to speak with one of our ag people and we were doing a... Veronica Zanelli and I were doing a time management workshop for all of our staff. We had an in-basket/out- basket activity, and they had to make choices as to what you would do if suddenly you had this much time and this came up in the day. What would you do? Some of them were family activities and some of them were work activities. Everyone checked them off and then they would talk about them. One man had picked his work and another older Agent said, "Don't do that. You need to have time with your family ... "

CW: Uh huh.

LL: ... He said, " As I've gotten older I realized that I sometimes made the wrong decisions. I picked my work responsibilities that came up in a hurry but then I let go of some of my family things." To me, it was a most interesting discussion between two different age groups of agents. So yea. Extension has a lot of obligations that are at unusual times.

CW: Yes, that's right, uh huh. And I think that is another reason that it was so hard. And I think people, families, you know, I think automatically had things to, that took them to do things in the communities.

LL: Uh huh. Or they had a spouse who picked up and did what needed to be done while they did their things.

CW: Uh huh, yep.

LL: Whatever it may have been.

CW: Yes, that's right, uh hum.

LL: What have you enjoyed most about retirement?

CW: Well, I've been able to pick and chose what I wanted to do, when I wanted to do it. Laughs.

LL: Laughs.

CW: I think, I make my own decisions. Laughs

LL: Laughs.

CW: And also being free to travel. Because in work you had to plan your vacation, so far ahead, that sometimes it wasn't always what you wanted to do, but it was what would fit into the time.

LL: Uh huh. If you had to do it over again, would you have picked Extension as a profession?

CW: I think I would, yes, uh huh. Because I enjoyed my work, I enjoyed it. If I hadn't I wouldn't have stayed in it. That I know, because I had my other two experiences, in teaching and at the hospital. So I know myself well enough to know that if I hadn't enjoyed it, I wouldn't have stayed in it. And I did change from 4H to the adult program. So I had those changes and if I hadn't enjoyed it I wouldn't have stayed in it.

LL: Are there any other things that you would like to talk about, any anecdotes that you remember about your work or your time away or your time in college? You have sister?

CW: Oh yes. I had two brothers and a sister.

LL: Did any of them go into teaching or Extension?

CW: No, no, no, none of them. They were far from it. Well my brother, one brother worked at the Air Base in Dayton Ohio. And he got out of the service and came home. He had been in the air base there right along, Patterson. He was stationed there, and then he went back to work as a civilian under the same fella he worked for when he was in the service. So, he live-d there. And then my other brother was a policeman. And retired from the Wellesley Police department and my other brother died young. Then my sister has been an invalid since birth and that has been quite a different problem. I think that has made a difference in the whole family.

LL: So now, did she live at home with your parents?

CW: Yes my mother took care of her up until my mother no longer could do it. She must have been about twenty-five I think. My mother finally had to put her into a nursing home. And she has been in one ever since. It's a good many years. My mother was a strong person in that I don't think a lot of woman could have probably done what my mother did.

LL: Well, I want to thank you. I think that gets us through all of my questions, unless you can think of something else you want to add in and we can...

CW: Well I remember one of the things you asked about when you first came, the farm home planning.

LL: Yes.

CW: Originally you had asked me about the farm home planning that we did. We did that in the early days of Extension because I think I mentioned about the home not having too many appliances and the women needed to get out and do things. They (Extension) finally decided they would put a team on who would go and do fanning home planning. We had a team in the County, a man and a woman, who went out and worked with the farmers to analyze their farm situations and to do this farming home planning and make recommendations for the expansion of the farm; whether it was feasible to ex'J)and it and also

for purchasing appliances and things for the home, and also for the farm and how to get a good production going. Some of our farms had just recently been electrified. When I came into the County we had one farm as I understood it, one farm that wasn't electrified and that was in Stafford Springs. Rural electrification had done very well in Tolland County because the lines had to really be extended out for quite some distance. But, this one was really at the end. The farm and the home team did go out there to work with them. I went out on several of the visits when they went to farms. This one was a farm owned by a count. I remember them discussing it. A count from what country or where he came from I don't know, but apparently he had come in and purchased this farm and all this land. And his was the last place to be electrified in Tolland County.

LL: Now he was there or did he have a farm manager?

CW: No he was there. He was living there.

LL: Now when, I go back thinking about Michigan, my cousin, up in northern, Michigan didn't have indoor plumbing around 1945 or so, when we went to visit their farms.

CW: Uhhuh.

LL: And I could remember when they had their indoor plumbing installed.

CW: Oh yes. Well, I can remember when we went out to the Grange Halls and places like that, they didn't have indoor plumbing and some of the schools didn't have indoor plumbing. They had the outside privy. I can remember, one of the programs we did was to have the various communities put screening on the windows of the outhouses.

LL: Uh huh.

CW: And so, a lot of those schools worked that way. Another thing, too, some of them were still using the pump down the road you know for an outside pump for water supply. And we um, did quite an extensive health program there in the early days, to have them get the water supply tested that they were using for these schools, because some of them were getting water from farms which the water had never been tested. And so um, we pushed for the homemakers, the Extension Homemakers groups to be active in the community and get this project done. And so they would take the initiative to get it done. There were facilities through the State that you could get these things tested and okayed.

LL: That's how Home Economics started, actually.

CW: Uhhuh.

LL: It was the water, it was community development and policy from way back.

CW: Yea. Uh huh.

LL: Because the women took a role in bringing about certain community changes.

CW: Yea this was very important and I guess no one ever thought too much about it 'til it was called to the attention of these children, "What do you know about that water supply?" (Added later: In the health area, a county study was done. There were many areas where no doctor was available and the State Medical Association took note of this. As a result, doctors were encouraged to settle in some of the rural areas.)

LL: You talked about women working outdoors, and that some women had more input into how the farmers managed than others . Did they help with other farm things, like the bookwork?

CW: Oh yes, many times the woman kept the books, but on other farms the men did everything and the women had no idea. There were even many homes, they didn't have to be farm homes, many of the homes that we worked with, uh or families we worked with, where they, the women, would have no idea of their financial setup.

LL: So as you brought in financial management, that kind of changed the culture of that family?

CW: Family, yes it did considerably. And we did quite a bit with that with financial planning over the period of the years, because it was important. Even to this day I know there are still women that really have no knowledge and are completely lost if the husband dies. This amazes me, because they still haven't ...

LL: Well the project that Annette Holden Fitzgerald did with AARP was one of the test programs in the country to do women's' financial management. They originally did several models of it and then AARP picked the Extension model as one of two that they then promoted around the country; so, this was within the last twenty years.

CW: I know even today there are a lot of women that are just completely lost.

LL: So what are we saying, that women still have no sense of math and planning or is part of the way they are raised?

CW: I think it' s a cultural thing. I think the women could do it, but I think it's a cultural thing and some of the men just don't want to release it, the information and they want to be "it." There are still a lot of them out there.

LL: We did a workshop one time, on raising children. It was a diverse audience. We had Hispanic women that came in and we had a Latino woman address them from Planned Parenthood. It was all off the record and the women had interesting stories. The fact that they were even at that meeting sometimes had gone against their husbands' wishes. With our new immigration patterns, we still have some of the ways from other countries that we had, here, years ago.

CW: Yea that's right, uh huh.

LL: And some of the Yankee farmers...

CW: Oh some of them are very, very strong-willed.

LL: What has been interesting in this project, I will put this on the tape and hope to remember it later, is the way farm land was passed on from generation to generation. Some fathers took in their sons as partners, others hire.ct them and paid them and when the father passed on there may have been no connection to the next generation. So there were a lot of different models, of fami ly cultures (and of how land was passed on.)

CW: This , this has always been a problem I think with farm people, the passing on the farm property and especially if um, there were two or three 3 children. When we did the farming home planning that was one of the aspects that we would run into. That they needed to think what was going to happen down the line and it was fine that they would know the son was going to work on the farm with the father, but if

something happened to the father what then? That poor young fella that stayed on the farm and worked all his life on the farm; could end up with nothing, So this is where the farm home planning team spoke about the whole picture. Something had to be provided for that young person if you wanted him to stay on that farm. How was the farm gonna continue if something happened to the father . He would have to pay off his siblings, their share of that farm.

LL: Uh huh; or what happens to the mother.

CW: Or the mother. Because she has the use of the farm for life and is she gonna control it then and the kids still be out on the fields?

LL: What was the reaction to going into this kind of thinking?

CW: Well I think that some farms decided that they were not feasible to continue on in this day and age, Um, that down the road it probably wouldn't be advisable and in this case the young person should probably uh, go out and look for some other work or else recognize the fact that he is just being employed on the farm, that the farm would be sold if something happened to the father. So it was a decision that the family would have to make.

LL: Did you ever find that people, we are making the assumption that people come to these meetings because they want to, which is always part of Extension. But did you ever find that people got upset with what they learned or some part of the family got upset with what was learned and taken home?

CW: Oh I think a few times they did, If it didn't go along with their thinking, but on the whole; not; I would say not as a general rule. I think people would go home and think about it and it would stimulate them, I think it gets them thinking and talking . And sometimes that was the purpose of our meetings , Just to get them to do some thinking.

LL: That they might now have done on their own,

CW: Yea, uh huh.(Added later: I did church and community kitchen planning with groups that were putting on meals to raise money, They needed to have running water , work areas, etc.)

LL: Well thank you very much for adding that.

(End of Interview)