



Pippin promoted local history

James A. (Jimmy) Pippin, 63, passed away Nov. 22 after a lifetime of involvement with 4-H and was an active member of the Ellis House Museum Board, Millstone 4-H Camp. He was also vice president of the Richmond County Historical Society and served as a member of the Rankin Museum Board. He was a retired honored Social Studies school teacher.

In part, the following story ran with his picture on the website of the Richmond Observer. In the full picture, he was demonstrating the canning device at the Ellis House:

By the Richmond County HS

“Pale faces used to be characteristic of country children, but that condition no longer exists.”

That was said in a 1935 article in the Rockingham Post-Dispatch describing results of years of efforts of Home Demonstration (now Extension) work in Richmond County.

“A bloodless face is now rare because pantries were made storehouses for vitamin-laden fruits and vegetables that have been available to most children the year round,” said Mrs. W. H. Convington who wrote the article.

Conditions had improved by 1914: “Home canning outfits have made possible a balanced diet, produced right at home and rosy cheeks and sturdy bodies are among the happy results,” she said.

Back in 1908, two simple canning devices were purchased for home use in Richmond County. Some canning enterprises struggled but canning was never widespread until 1914 when Mrs. John Sandy Covington of Wolf Pit Township became the first home agent in the county.

She spread the word about canning as she traveled around the county in her Model T Ford assisting women with canning, pickling and preserving. She began by organizing girls into clubs to can tomatoes.

After the growing season was over, girls were taught to make wearing apparel for themselves and others. And, they were taught to cook and keep house and in all matters of homemaking.

Life then for many in the country was very basic. There was no electricity, no public water and little transportation for many, except the use of horses. With no means to attend any instruction, the home agents came to individual homes and into rural communities to offer assistance.

Mrs. John Sandy Covington later organized the first womens club in the county in the Roberdel community. In a very short time, some 30 such clubs, for girls and women, were organized all over the county.

In the early days when Home Demonstration Clubs were popular, food and money was scarce, and farm families needed a lot of encouragement and individual instruction for improving their own living conditions and to make ends meet, said an undated sketch of the clubs.

Projects were expanded in the 1920s to assist with mattress making so every home could have clean, comfortable bedding. Curb markets were formed in 1923 so farm women could sell produce from homes and gardens as a source of family income.

By 1935, the Dispatch reported that many of the clubs were still strong features “in the promotion of better living in their respective communities.”

In 1993, Mrs. Earline Waddell, county Extension director, wrote a poem to Extension Homemakers including: “Don't forget you are an educational organization with strengthening families as your goal. Not many organizations have an aim as worthy. You're dealing with society's heart and soul.”