



## SOUTH CAROLINA FAMILY AND COMMUNITY LEADERS

Affiliated with  
National Volunteer Outreach Network, Country Women's Council, U.S.A., Associated Country Women of the World  
and in partnership with Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service

### Well - Behaved South Carolina Women Do Make History

#### Objectives:

1. Participants will become aware that March is Women's History Month.
2. Participants will celebrate the lives and contributions of some SCFCL women.
3. Participants will promote the history of SCFCL and increase membership in the organization through wide distribution of the book, The Quiet Revolution: A Seventy-Five Year History of Women's Extension Clubs in South Carolina, written by Dr. Clyde T. Mounter.

#### Introduction:

National Women's History Month's roots go back to March 8, 1857, when women from New York City's factories staged a protest over working conditions. International Women's Day was first observed in 1909, but it wasn't until 1981 that Congress established National Women's History Week to be commemorated the second week of March. In 1987, Congress expanded the week to a month. Every year since, Congress has passed a resolution for Women's History Month and the President has issued a proclamation.

It was not long after that first International Women's Day, that a South Carolina organization began in 1921 as the South Carolina Council of Farm Women. Dr. Mounter documented the history of the first seventy-five years of women's Extension clubs and noted that membership "...is now open to both men and women, but throughout history it has been an organization of women. The accomplishments of the 'fairer sex' through this organization over the years has been remarkable. 'Never underestimate the power of women' – particularly when their interests and concerns center around the home and community in which they live." (p. 7)

#### Impact on History:

Some of the projects claiming the attention and concerted efforts of the Council through the years were as follows:

- Passage of a law requiring a 24-hour waiting period between application and issuance of a marriage license.
- Testing of cattle for tuberculosis in an effort to wipe out the dread disease.
- The vitamin enrichment of all corn and rice products sold in the state. This effort was followed by an aggressive educational program teaching housewives not to wash rice or grits before cooking.
- Enactment of a compulsory education law and helping to develop a means of enforcing the law.
- The Council worked closely with Dr. Wil Lou Gray to establish the state system of Opportunity Schools to help reduce illiteracy.
- The Council supported the movement that resulted in libraries and book mobiles that put reading materials within reach of all South Carolinians.

- The Council supported the State School Lunch Program and worked to improve the nutritional content of the menus used.
- Not just once, but on several occasions through the years, when appropriations for Extension work were scheduled to be cut, the Council has used concerted efforts of its membership to contact legislators expressing their concerns and explaining the need for expansion rather than cutting funds for the program.
- Maintaining contact with legislators and reinforcing the Council's position as supporters of the Extension program. (pp. 7-8)

### **Discussion:**

Which impacts of the Council/SCFCL have made the most positive differences in the lives of South Carolinians?

What impacts of SCFCL have been made since Dr. Mounter published his book?

### **Contributions of Individual Women in SCFCL:**

Most members of SCFCL know of the contributions of Dora Dee Calhoun Walker. She was the world's first home demonstration agent with 65 years of public service including 30 years as a teacher and principal and 35 years in production and conservation work with the United States Department of Agriculture in cooperation with Clemson and Winthrop Colleges. She was an artist, agriculturist, author of short stories, church worker, classical scholar, decorator, farmer, genealogist, Good Samaritan, home demonstrator, homemaker, horticulturist, landscape designer, mother, playwright, pianist, pioneer, poet, public speaker, researcher, social worker, wife, writer of magazine articles and publications, and visionary!

There are many other distinguished women who have made significant contributions within SCFCL and in their families and communities.

### **Discussion:**

Who was the most famous SCFCL member in your county? If you cannot decide, read [The Quiet Revolution](#) for some ideas. What were the contributions of that SCFCL member?

What are some characteristics of women who are considered "famous"?

### **Suggested Activities:**

- Prior to the meeting, ask members to choose well-known or famous SCFCL women and research their lives and accomplishments. Encourage members to look at women who came from your county or geographic area.



- If there are special sites in your local community associated with a SCFCL woman, the group could plan to tour it.
- Recognize an outstanding SCFCL member in your community or county. Have a membership tea to honor this member. This would be an excellent program idea for Spring Council or District SCFCL meetings.
- The last copies of The Quiet Revolution have been distributed to SCFCL counties along with the educational lessons for 2010. Copies of the book make excellent speaker's gifts.
- Take a copy of The Quiet Revolution to the local library and ask the librarian to create a display or bulletin board for Women's History Month featuring SCFCL. Mention the support given by the organization to libraries and book mobiles in the past. Be sure to take SCFCL brochures and membership forms to be distributed.
- Give a copy of The Quiet Revolution to the local historical society or local museum and ask them to feature the book in a display. Be sure to take SCFCL brochures and membership forms to be distributed.
- Develop an SCFCL oral history project. Encourage members to record recollections of their life: school, jobs, marriage, children, SCFCL activities, etc. These recollections could be documented as audio recordings, scrapbooks, posters, or written for publishing in newspapers, magazines, or as a book. An excellent example is the book, Farm Life – As We Remember It, published by the South Carolina Master Farm Homemakers Guild in 2003. Providing a copy of this book along with The Quiet Revolution would enhance SCFCL's contribution to local libraries and historical societies. (Copies are available from Betty McGregor, SCMFHG Treasurer, 5209 Lower Richland Blvd., Hopkins, SC 29061-8642; 803-776-2712; cost is \$10.00.)
- Present a program to a youth group or school class on outstanding SCFCL members and some of the accomplishments these women carried out. Discuss women's roles today.

*Source: Nancy M. Porter, Ph.D., Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service, Clemson, South Carolina.*

CLEMSON  
EXTENSION

