

# A NEW MEASURING STICK

## Reclaiming and Assessing Cooperative Extension's Core Cultural Purpose

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Presentation at "Century Beyond The Campus: Past, Present,  
And Future Of Extension, A Research Symposium Marking  
the 100th Anniversary of the Smith-Lever Act"  
West Virginia University | Morgantown, West Virginia |  
September 25, 2014



*“... the kind of life produced.”*

“The development and growth of home economics in the agricultural colleges brought to them an idealism and a cultural element not always recognized, as well as a new measuring stick. Heretofore, results had been largely in terms of livestock or crops; hereafter, the measure of successful agriculture was the kind of life produced. In spite of much fulsome oratory on the part of agriculture that successful living was its aim, the aim seems to have been such a remote one that provisions for bringing it about were pretty much lost sight of in carrying out the immediate objectives for improved agricultural practices.”

-Kathryn Van Aken Burns, 1937

# FOOD DIGNITY



Food Dignity is supported by Agriculture and Food Research Initiative Competitive Grant no. 2011-68004-30074 from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture." Or "Supported by USDA/NIFA/AFRI Competitive Grant no. 2011-68004-30074.

## WHAT?

- A democratic kind and way of life.
  - “Extension work in agriculture is a social and welfare movement. It is based on the idea that we are here founding a democracy; and democracy is not a form of government, but the expression of the souls of men and women. . . . Extension work is not intended primarily to make better crops and animals, but better men and women.” (M.C. Burritt, 1922)

## WHAT?

“Education should result, as was discussed earlier, in intelligent participation by individuals in the management of conditions in which they live. There should be constantly increasing ability on the part of a constantly increasing number of folks to do this. And Extension staff members, unless they assume the role of dictators, must work with rural folks to this end. To the extent that we treasure more and more the democratic ideal, we will provide experiences in practice of initiative, in the carrying of responsibilities, in the making of decisions, in the formation and execution of plans, and in the evaluation of outcomes.”

-Miss Minnie Price, 1938

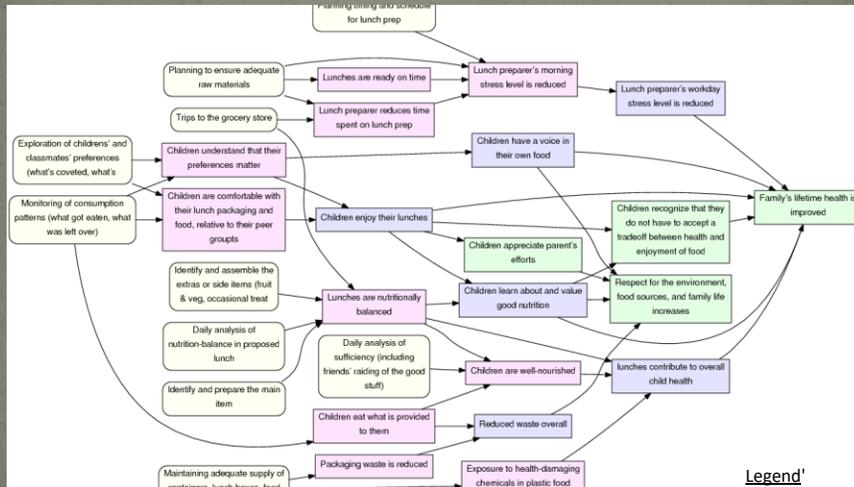
“Probably the biggest thing that adult Agricultural Extension and 4-H club work are doing for individuals and the Nation is not so much the growing of better crops or the rearing of better livestock or the making of better kitchens, but rather the giving of actual experience in the practice of democracy. . . . And it has done so not by telling people about democracy or preaching about it, but by actually practicing democracy in all phases of its work and developing its Extension program down to the smallest community and individual farm through democratic processes. And this practice of democracy in Extension since 1914 has come about because democratic processes from the outset were in the minds and hearts of those State and Federal officers administering the law and native to them.”

*-C.B. Smith, 1939, p. 2*

## WHY?

- Because it's just the right thing to do.
- Because we've inherited a commitment to do so from our forebears.
- Because there are bad things that happen when we don't.
- Because we discover promising opportunities when we do.

# HOW?



Legend'

## HOW?

- Honoring first person voice.
- Recognizing dispersed knowledge.
- Acknowledging difference and how that affects power.
- Covenantal ethics/mutual accountability
- Nurturing civic agency.

we grow

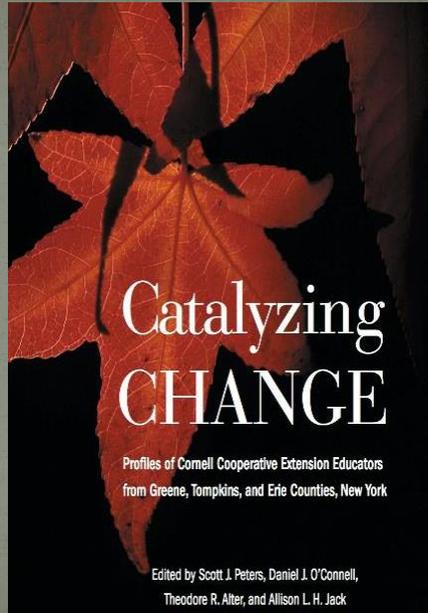


PEOPLE

Profiles of Extension Educators

CORNELL UNIVERSITY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION—NEW YORK CITY

Edited by Scott J. Peters and Margy Hittelman, Department of Education, Cornell University



Catalyzing  
CHANGE

Profiles of Cornell Cooperative Extension Educators  
from Greene, Tompkins, and Erie Counties, New York

Edited by Scott J. Peters, Daniel J. O'Connell,  
Theodore R. Alter, and Allison L. H. Jack

# The People's Colleges

A History of the New York State Extension Service in  
Cornell University and the State, 1876-1948



RUBY GREEN SMITH

NEW FOREWORD BY HELENE R. DILLARD

NEW PREFACE BY SCOTT J. PETERS



Ruby Green Smith

There is vigorous reciprocity in the Extension Service because it is with the people, as well as “of the people, by the people, and for the people.”

“Extension workers need to have faith in spiritual values and to recognize the human relationships that contribute to what the ancient Greeks called ‘the good life.’ They should believe that in the kind of homes, farms, and industries which are the goals of extension service ‘man cannot live by bread alone’; that it is not enough for people to have food, shelter, and clothing—that they aspire also to find appreciation, respect for individuality and human dignity, affection, ideals, and opportunities. These are the satisfactions that belong to democratic living.”

*-Ruby Green Smith, The People's Colleges, p. 544*

## What is the Extension Service?

The Extension Service is an educational organization. It is a cooperative organization. The stockholders in the "co-operative" are the United States Department of Agriculture, the New York State College of Home Economics and Agriculture, the men, women, and children of New York State. The cooperators exchange knowledge, information, and skills; study problems relating to homemaking and agriculture throughout the state; and report the results of their findings for all to share.

*-Ruby Green Smith, 1946*