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The University of Otago's Home Science Extension Service

1929 – 1954

Katherine Clarke

A thesis submitted for degree of Bachelor of Arts (Honours) at the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand.

October 2003
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACE</td>
<td>Association for Country Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>HSES</td>
<td>Home Science Extension Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>JHC</td>
<td>Junior Homemakers' Club</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCAE</td>
<td>National Council of Adult Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>OHEA</td>
<td>Otago Home Economics Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>WCTU</td>
<td>Women's Christian Temperance Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>WDFU</td>
<td>Women's Division of the Farmers' Union</td>
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<td>WEA</td>
<td>Workers' Educational Association</td>
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<td>WI</td>
<td>Women's Institutes</td>
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<td>WWSA</td>
<td>Women's War Service Auxiliary</td>
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<td>YFC</td>
<td>Young Farmers' Club</td>
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<td>YMCA</td>
<td>Young Men's Christian Association</td>
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<td>YWCA</td>
<td>Young Women's Christian Association</td>
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Introduction

Extension work is seeking to promote a contented rural people, a people who find satisfaction in their work, in each other, in the glory of the soil, the growing crops, the harvests, the bounteous table, the neighbourly visit…¹

The Home Science Extension Service (HSES) of the Otago University was established in 1929. The Service intended to remedy a lack in the educational facilities available for rural women. The HSES developed from the example of the rural educational work in the United States. The founders hoped that home science instruction could reduce many of the hardships and problems of rural domestic life. They wanted to improve health standards through dietary advice and educating women about cleanliness. They believed instruction about efficient homemaking techniques could reduce the toil of rural women. They also wanted to provide a source of enjoyment, by offering leisure activities and mental stimulation.

The extension of home science teaching into the community needs to be seen in the wider context of two international movements, adult education and home science. New Zealand adult education largely developed from the British adult education system, while the American model of home economics inspired New Zealand’s tradition of home science. The HSES fused these international themes in a New Zealand experiment into the possibilities for rural adult education. The home economics background is so intimately connected to the HSES’s development that it is best discussed in chapter one.

The earliest efforts at popular education focused on teaching literacy, to enable people to read religious tracts.² Education for adults first appeared in England about 1740, when adults began attending the English Charity Schools run for children.³ The first school specifically for adults in Britain was set up in Wales in 1811, and these schools gradually spread in the early nineteenth century.

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¹ Alfred Lawrence Hall-Quest, The University Afield, (New York: The Macmillan Company), 1926, 188.
³ Ibid.
The industrial revolution brought huge population growth and urbanisation. Industrial societies needed an educated work force to cope with the rapid changes and improvements in technology taking place. This was combined with the increasing power of the trade unions and the socialist movement to create an environment where a larger portion of the population wanted, and had access to, education.

The most prominent early organisations for adult education were the University Extension programme, the Christian Socialist Movement, the Literary and Scientific Societies and the Mechanics Institutes. The Mechanics’ Institutes were originally the major organisation for educating skilled workers in Britain. By the 1870s this emphasis changed, and the Mechanics’ Institutes became more of a social than an educational facility. Young Men’s Mutual Improvement Societies, debating societies and the churches also played an important role in adult education and technical colleges conducted evening classes to educate working men. These organisations did not attract popular support from factory workers, however, who were now a significant group in society.

Early adult educators were generally volunteers from the wealthier classes, or university lecturers. They believed that the benefits of culture such as art, literature, drama, music and learning should be available to everyone. Lecturers also saw injustice in the fact that many citizens were denied the opportunity to benefit from a university education. Early university extension classes did not reach the vast majority of people either. Most

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5 Ibid.
6 Ibid. After the 1860s their original work was increasingly done by state bodies and organisations, such as the Christian Socialist Movement and the London Workingman’s College who provided education for workers and a forum for discussion.
7 Ibid.
9 Cambridge University was the first to hold classes for the public in 1873. This was formalised in 1876 when London and Cambridge and Oxford Universities formed a Joint Board to organise extension education. Ibid. and Cyril 0. Houle and UNESCO (ed.), *Universities in Adult Education*, (Paris: UNESCO), 1952, 10.
of those attending these courses were from the middle and upper classes. Often they were women with a relatively large amount of leisure time because they did not work and could afford to employ domestic help.

Albert Mansbridge helped remedy this lack in adult educational facilities by founding the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) in England in 1903. This organisation appealed to a much larger audience, and grew quickly. The focus was on general 'mind broadening' education to lift the minds of the working classes from material considerations. The WEA was determined to maintain high academic standards, and initially focused on intellectual rather than cultural pursuits.

The WEA attracted people from all backgrounds, not just workers, and had support from the Church of England and Oxford and Cambridge Universities. This cooperation widened the scope of the Universities' own extension classes, allowing the lecturers to teach a much greater range of people. The WEA also popularised the concept of tutorial style classes in adult education from about 1907. This gave the participants much more involvement in their education, instead of passively absorbing information from lecturers.

Mary Stocks has provided a good narrative of the international development of adult education in *The Workers' Educational Association, The First Fifty Years*. Roy Shuker, applies this to the New Zealand context through a history of the WEA in *Educating the*
Adult education came to New Zealand with the missionaries, who often ran classes for their congregations. There were education programmes for adults on the ships transporting European settlers to New Zealand in the 1840s. English colonists also brought organisations such as the Mechanics Institutes with them to New Zealand, although these faded with the second generation of settlers.

Between about the 1870s and 1910, the churches in New Zealand made a considerable contribution to adult education and developed organisations such as the Young Men’s Mutual Improvement Society, and literary and debating societies. The temperance movement also dabbled in adult education. The YMCA and YWCA were important in fostering adult education, and the YMCA organised regular lectures and classes from the 1860s. Public libraries began holding extension lectures from about 1900, but these tended more towards entertainment than education. Technical and vocational education developed from about 1875, but there was very little official university extension work in New Zealand prior to 1915, although lecturers often spoke to public groups.

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19 Roger Boshier, Adult and Continuing Education in New Zealand 1851-1978; A Bibliography, (Vancouver: Adult Education Research Centre, Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia), 1979, 1.
20 The first Mechanics Institute was established at Port Nicholson in 1842. It contained a library and a reading room and held lectures. Hudson, 221.
21 Thompson, 48-49.
22 The temperance movement also promoted the development of important early women’s movements, which did some educational work between about 1870 and 1910, for example the Women’s Social and Political League, an offshoot of the WCTU, aimed to promote knowledge amongst women. A.B. Thompson, 50-51
23 The YWCA formed in 1878 in New Zealand.
24 Thompson, 56.
25 Canterbury College set up an Extension Council in 1901 which was abandoned the following year for lack of interest.
The WEA came to New Zealand in 1915 and gave adult education a new impetus. It grew quickly between 1920 and 1930 and reached a reasonably wide range of people. The WEA generally operated in larger towns and cities, aiming to give the educationally disadvantaged access to further education. Rural people did not have the same access to further education. Just as the WEA intended to fill a gap in adult education by appealing to the working classes, the HSES was one way to provide further education for rural people, who often had less formal education than those in the towns.

Barbara Ehrenreich and Deidre English provide a useful analysis of the development of the cult of domesticity in *For Her Own Good; 150 Years of the Experts' Advice to Women*. Domesticity has been placed in its New Zealand context by Erik Olssen in several articles, particularly “Truby King and the Plunket Society: An Analysis of a Prescriptive Ideology”. These have described the influence of eugenicist ideas and notions about the importance of family on the introduction of domestic science education and on the Plunket Society’s development.

In the early twentieth century, the idea that women needed to be taught domestic skills so that they could be good wives and wives and mothers gained popular acceptance. This idea had links to the eugenics movement that flourished during the first four decades of the twentieth century. The concept was that if women were good mothers, they could raise healthy families. Healthy sons were particularly important, because they could help maintain the strength and prosperity of the white race. These concepts were similar to those inspiring the Plunket Society, and the two movements had some of the same founding figures such as Truby King, Dr. F.C. Batchelor and Colonel Studholme.

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26 In terms of its range of work, and in enrolment numbers. These jumped from 1,496 in 1920 to 7,335 by 1930. *Further Education for Adults; Report of a Consultative Committee*, Council of Adult Education, Wellington, 1947, 9.

27 Although the WEA did have some travelling tutors who held classes in country towns.


Few historians have paid much attention to the lives of rural women in New Zealand. This is the result of a double neglect in New Zealand historiography. Rural history in this country remains an underdeveloped area of study. Until recently, there was also a dearth of research into the lives of New Zealand women.

Some useful work relevant to this investigation has been done. Sally Parker has provided valuable insights into the lives of rural New Zealand women, particularly during the 1950s, in her article “A Golden Decade?: Farm Women in the 1950s”.\footnote{Sally K. Parker, “A Golden Decade?: Farm Women in the 1950s” in Barbara Brookes, Charlotte Macdonald and Margaret Tennant (eds.), Women in History 2 (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books), 1992.} Ian Carter’s article “Most Important Industry: How the New Zealand State Got Interested in Rural Women, 1930-1944” has been useful in placing the HSES in the context of state concern about rural women’s education.\footnote{Ian Carter, “Most Important Industry: How the New Zealand State Got Interested in Rural Women, 1930-1944,” New Zealand Journal of History, vol. 20, No. 1, April 1986, 27-43.} Finally, the collection of essays titled *Standing in the Sunshine, A History of New Zealand Women Since they Won the Vote*, gives a helpful picture of New Zealand women’s lives during the twentieth century.\footnote{Sandra Coney (ed.) *Standing in the Sunshine, A History of New Zealand Women Since they Won the Vote*, (Auckland: Penguin Books), 1993.}

This investigation covers the founding of the HSES and its first twenty-five years of operation, from 1929 to 1954. The period ends in 1954 partly because this confines the study to the time before feminist movements began to openly challenge the belief that a woman’s proper role was to be a homemaker. It is appropriate to study an organisation which helped women with homemaking during a period when many believed that this was to be their destiny. The twenty-five year period also encompasses three phases in the HSES’s development: the ‘Carnegie period’; the ‘war years’; and the ‘adult education era’. The changes within the HSES during these years provide insights into wider developments in New Zealand society.

Chapter one describes the origins and the development of the HSES. Chapter two covers the HSES during the ‘Carnegie period’. In this era, from 1929 to 1939, the Carnegie Corporation funded the HSES to experiment with the possibilities for rural education.
During this phase, the HSES's work was influenced by Professor Strong's quasi-missionary goal to improve rural lives, particularly health. She believed that doing so would strengthen the rural community, which would help the whole nation. During this era the HSES was determined to find the best ways to convert rural women to the principles of home science.

Chapter three describes the HSES in its second and third phases. In its second phase, the 'war years', from 1940 to 1946, the HSES altered its approach. During the Second World War, the Service was forced to limit its work by funding, staffing and petrol shortages. The HSES began to adopt a more pragmatic approach. The zeal to strengthen the race faded, and the HSES instead focused on doing the best it could in the difficult circumstances. A large part of the HSES's work during the Second World War was directed towards aiding the war effort and helping women cope with the extra challenges they faced in wartime. Although the HSES's work was greatly constrained during the war years, the experience of adapting to meet changing circumstances laid the foundations for the Service's later development. In its third phase, the HSES entered the 'adult education' era. In these years, from 1947 to the end of the study in 1954, the HSES changed its focus. It now increasingly considered what rural women wanted, rather than trying to educate them in the ideas the Service considered important.

The study has been limited by the fact that surviving written primary sources do not give much idea about rural women's perception of the HSES. Very little information remains, apart from the Service's own records about itself. This makes it difficult to measure its popularity, or how much it actually helped rural women. The HSES's reports and records do show demand for the Service, which is one indicator of success. These figures show that many of the HSES's classes and lectures were well subscribed. The HSES certainly gave women an interest, and an opportunity to socialise, which in itself is a form of success. Longevity is another sign of success and the HSES did survive through a twenty-five year period, and beyond. The HSES experiment into rural education was therefore at least partially successful.
Chapter One—Origins and Development

Professor Strong and the Home Science School at Otago University set up the Home Science Extension Service (HSES) to investigate the possibilities of educating rural women. The service aimed to provide instruction in diet and proper homemaking techniques to ease the difficulties such women faced, and to help them raise healthier families. This chapter describes the ideology and social movements influencing the HSES’s founders, and the factors leading to the creation of the HSES. The creation of a rural education service must be seen as a manifestation of social trends prominent in New Zealand and overseas. The HSES was more than an investigation into the possibilities for rural education. It is an example of social movements and ideas influencing prominent New Zealanders in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The HSES’s development was influenced by the popular belief in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that women’s proper place was in the home. As this was their main role, many social reformers argued that women should be trained for this position. They conceived that if women were trained to be good homemakers, they could ensure the health of their families, which would maintain the strength of the entire nation. The HSES’s creation was in a large measure due to the determination of the Otago School of Home Science Dean, American home economist Professor Ann Strong. The Service was also made possible by funding from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, a charitable educational institution.

The idea that women had a crucial role to play in raising children and performing housekeeping tasks, known as the ‘cult of domesticity’, has its origins in the industrial revolution. As increasing numbers of people moved to cities and began to work for wages outside the home, the pattern of domestic life altered. Previously, rural homes had been an almost self-sufficient productive unit, where men and women each had clearly defined roles. Rural women had a wide range of tasks, such as making clothing, soap, bread, butter and doing light farm work, to provide these goods for the
Urbanisation and the increasing ability to purchase, rather than make, consumer goods such as soap, meant that women had fewer tasks to perform, and their position in the family structure altered somewhat.

Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English have argued that the increased incidence of people working outside the home for wages led to a perception that life consisted of two spheres, the public and the private. Work took place in the public sphere, generally by males, and the home was increasingly seen as the private sphere, a sanctuary from the world of work. The private sphere, or home, therefore became the domain of women, whose duty was to be a wife and mother. The woman’s responsibility for this sphere was given increasing importance as the concept that a civilised society was reliant on good home life among its citizens became popular. Historians have questioned this notion, especially regarding rural women, but it retains some importance in relation to the development of the domestic science movement. The notion of separate spheres led domestic scientists to argue that women should be instructed in household arts, so they could make a success of this important occupation. Housekeeping and motherhood had taken on a new significance.

The development and spread of germ theory in the late nineteenth century also greatly increased the standards of housekeeping demanded of women. Joel Mokyr argues that germ theory meant the home was seen as a microbial environment which women needed to control in order to maintain the health of their families. The perception that good housekeeping was essential for health, combined with existing domestic

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1 Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, *For Her Own Good: 150 Years of the Experts' Advice to Women* (New York: Anchor Press, 1979), 128-129.
2 Ibid. 11.
4 Ehrenreich and English, 131.

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tasks, gave women a much greater role to fulfil in the home. As people became increasingly aware of the link between diet, germs and health standards, homemakers needed to do more cleaning, washing, cooking and nursing of children. This was because of the idea that, as homemakers, they had a moral responsibility for the health of the family, and the way to ensure health was through a clean home and good diet. Home economists instructed women that good food, clean clothes and bedding, and a generally hygienic environment were essential for a long and healthful life. The medical profession also supported this approach, feeling that proper housekeeping, particularly cleanliness, would reduce infant mortality and contagious diseases.

While industrialisation and germ theory burgeoned, the supply of domestic servants dwindled. Fewer and fewer women chose this type of employment because work in factories or shops was more appealing. This meant increasing numbers of middle class women were forced to do the majority of their own housework. The growth of the 'cult of domesticity' made this more acceptable and appealing for women. Their work was no longer simply household chores. The status of housework had been raised so it now meant women were ensuring the health and well-being of their families. The conception that children, as the next generation, were responsible for the progress and development of the nation, made this role critically important.

The industrial revolution also meant that more young women were working outside their homes. Therefore they had fewer opportunities to learn homemaking skills by observing their mothers. This fact, plus the rise in housework's perceived importance, led to the notion that women needed to be taught to be good homemakers, rather than expecting it to come naturally. By the 1840s, women such as Catherine

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9 Ibid. 21.
10 Ibid.
11 Ehrenreich and English, 141.
12 Ibid.
14 Ehrenreich and English, 170-171.
15 Swindells, 3-4.
Beecher in the United States and Mrs Beaton in England were instructing women in the correct and most efficient ways to perform their household tasks.\(^\text{17}\)

The New Zealand home science tradition largely developed from the American home economics movement.\(^\text{18}\) There, domestic instruction was greatly advanced by the Morrill Act 1862 which provided land to establish agricultural colleges. These ‘Land Grant’ Colleges did much to promote home economics teaching.\(^\text{19}\) There were separate courses for males and females, and, as the farm home was seen as being a key part of the farm’s operation, training to run it was included as a critical part of rural girls’ education.\(^\text{20}\) The colleges also conducted agricultural and home economics extension education. They organised boys and girls clubs, short extension schools, judged projects and organised correspondence study courses.\(^\text{21}\)

The idea that women required instruction to be good housekeepers became increasingly popular by about the 1890s. This was combined with the notion that scientific principles could be applied to homemaking, to form the basis of the home economics movement.\(^\text{22}\) American Chemistry Professor Ellen Richards, was instrumental in the development of this movement.\(^\text{23}\) Richards argued that the home was vitally important to the development of civilised society and wanted to both preserve its sanctity, and help it adapt to the demands of the day.\(^\text{24}\) In 1899, she organised a conference of 12 early home economists at Lake Placid. Professor Strong, who went on to develop the HSES in Dunedin, was one of these home economists. This meeting formed the basis of the American Home Economics Association in 1909.\(^\text{25}\) This Association aimed to help women be good homemakers by showing them ways to correctly use the new appliances and products which were

\(^{17}\) Ehrenreich and English, 136.

\(^{18}\) The idea developed much more slowly in Britain. There, the introduction of domestic education into school curriculum faced much greater opposition than in the United States, Canada or New Zealand, it was not seen as a subject worthy of instruction in schools and colleges for some time and unlike in other countries, was not compulsory in all areas of Britain. Swindells, 48-52.

\(^{19}\) Ibid. 4.

\(^{20}\) Swindells, 5.


\(^{22}\) The term is used interchangeably with the terms home economics and home science.

\(^{23}\) Ehrenreich and English, 136.


\(^{25}\) Ehrenreich and English, 136.
increasingly available. They also wanted to reduce women’s overall workload by instructing them on efficient methods, and gave health and nutrition advice.

The Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 brought a greater emphasis in home economics on the skills and techniques of homemakers. Instruction was increasingly given on a wider range of topics. As well as help with food and clothing, women were also given childcare and healthcare advice, instruction on housing, furnishings, managing resources and relationships.26

The first recorded domestic instruction in New Zealand appears to have been cooking and sewing classes at Auckland College and Grammar School in 1878 and 1879, and at Christchurch Girls’ High School in the early 1880s.27 The government supported home science instruction in 1882 by allocating £1,000 between the four education boards to promote technical education and to establish cooking and sewing classes.28 In Dunedin in 1885 the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) began instructing mainly working class girls on household tasks, particularly cooking, washing and ironing. This became the Dunedin Technical Classes Association in 1890.29 These classes mainly aimed to train women for jobs as domestic servants, however they also gave homemakers efficiency advice.30 Practical homemaking subjects such as dressmaking, cooking and laundry work were also taught in the Dunedin and Christchurch technical schools from 1893.

Alongside the growth in home science instruction, from the late 1880s the idea became increasingly popular that girls did not require an academic education. In fact, academic training could do them harm, as it conflicted with the role nature intended for women. Instead, as the widely held belief between the 1890s and the 1920s in New Zealand was that domesticity and motherhood was the proper role for women, social reformers increasingly argued that girls should be taught to properly perform

28 This funding was not taken up.
29 Elizabeth Gregory, “History of Home Science in New Zealand” this joined the Dunedin Technical School in 1903.
30 Heath McDonald, “This Educational Monstrosity; A Study of the Foundation and Early Development of the School of Home Science”, BA(Hons), University of Otago, Dunedin, 1984, 3.
this role.\textsuperscript{31} For example, George Hogben, the Director of Education, was strongly in favour of teaching girls domestic science.\textsuperscript{32} His influence was important in home science instruction being made part of the secondary school curriculum from 1917, although the notion was popular enough that a number of schools had already introduced home science courses by this time.

Prominent members of Dunedin and New Zealand society supported this concept of educating girls for their domestic role. In May 1909, Truby King and Dr F.C. Batchelor, members of the “Society for the Promotion of the Health of Women and Children” (later known as the Plunket Society) promoted the idea of educating young women in homemaking techniques and child care.\textsuperscript{33} Dr Batchelor argued that a knowledge of the principles of hygiene would be more useful to girls than a traditional education in French or Algebra, which he felt would be forgotten when they began their “normal career” of matrimony.\textsuperscript{34} Instead he advocated teaching girls the skills needed to be wives and mothers. He considered this would improve home life, and would have the added benefit of remedying the lack of domestic servants.\textsuperscript{35} Batchelor made his feelings about women’s role clear when he added “the main function of womanhood [is] the raising of a healthy and vigorous race”.\textsuperscript{36}

King often described the harms that an academic education could bring to girls’ reproductive abilities.\textsuperscript{37} He considered the role of motherhood as vitally important because a babies’ health was important to the health of the family, which was in turn crucial to the health of the nation.\textsuperscript{38} King spoke to the Dunedin Froebel Society in 1905 warning of the threat of degeneracy to the race as women’s domestic instincts were weakened through modern society, and men were removed from the benefits of

\textsuperscript{31} Coney, “Educating Girls”, 193.
\textsuperscript{33} “History of the Development of Home Science in New Zealand” (author unknown), undated c1929, CAPS files, 87-159 Box 5.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid. 168.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid. 169.
a natural life.\textsuperscript{39} Thus girls needed training in motherhood and domesticity, and boys in mental and physical activities.\textsuperscript{40} Therefore males and females should receive a different education, boys should be prepared for employment, and girls for domestic life and motherhood.\textsuperscript{41}

The idea that girls should be instructed in the domestic sciences was partly motivated by a concern that the white race was declining, which developed in New Zealand from around 1900. This fear was motivated by the appearance of social ills such as immorality and disease, plus a declining birth rate. Erik Olsson has argued that most of the wealthy in early New Zealand (a group which included Truby King and Colonel Studholme) believed that the ills from the Old World could be avoided by raising health standards to encourage development of strong children who could resist disease.\textsuperscript{42} This would remedy social problems and would ensure a strong race to properly make use of New Zealand's natural resources. Olsson also argues that wealthy colonial families in New Zealand wanted a strong race because they had great loyalty to Britain and the Empire. The prospect of war between the Empire and its enemies made the race's strength crucially important.\textsuperscript{43} There was a fear that the white race could be overrun by the rapidly breeding masses from Asia. If necessary, this strong race could also withstand the threat from the 'Yellow Peril'.\textsuperscript{44} During the First World War concern about the race's decline was heightened when authorities found two-thirds of service recruits did not reach the top grade for fitness.\textsuperscript{45} At this time more and more people began to discuss the concept of 'National Deterioration'.\textsuperscript{46}

Ideas of social deterioration and maintaining the strength and purity of the race were part of the eugenics movement. Eugenicists were also concerned that the falling birth rate could damage the race's future. Therefore they encouraged the 'fit' to breed and discouraged the 'unfit'. The New Zealand conception of eugenics placed more emphasis on improving the health of the race through social discipline, however, than

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 5.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 19.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 10.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 9.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 10 and 21.
\textsuperscript{46} Erik Olsson, "Truby King and the Plunket Society: An Analysis of a Prescriptive Ideology", 4.
\end{flushleft}
on encouraging selective breeding.\textsuperscript{47} Although the movement had links to social Darwinism, King who was heavily involved in the eugenics movement, was not a Darwinist. He favoured nurture over nature, believing that although negative tendencies were inherited, environmental factors could be used to overcome them in many cases, through suitable conditions and training.\textsuperscript{48}

Racial strength depended on having healthy boys, and to have these healthy boys, the nation needed healthy and knowledgeable mothers.\textsuperscript{49} The Plunket society developed from this set of ideas with the goal of improving mothers' knowledge and therefore also children's health. It combined a belief in scientific principles applied to homemaking with the cult of domesticity and especially the ideological importance given to motherhood.\textsuperscript{50}

The same ideas that training could improve the health and strength of the nation which led to the Plunket Society also inspired the founders of the Home Science School and the Home Science Extension Service (HSES). Some of the same people were involved in the founding of both these movements and the desire to increase the health and strength of New Zealanders was shown in the HSES's aims. King and Batchelor both donated £25 per year to the School of Home Science.\textsuperscript{51} James Allen, the University of Otago Vice Chancellor, and later Chairman of the Carnegie Corporation Advisory Committee was a strong supporter of King and Batchelor's ideas about the need for women to have domestic education.\textsuperscript{52}

Colonel John Studholme, a South Canterbury landowner and philanthropist, and a close associate of Truby King, also favoured domestic science instruction for women.\textsuperscript{53} He was concerned about the conditions in New Zealand homes, particularly the high infant mortality rate and the absence of good domestic servants.\textsuperscript{54}

\textsuperscript{47} Belich, \textit{Paradise Reforged}, 162.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 162, quoting Truby King in \textit{The Evils of Cram}, Dunedin, 1906, 156-58.
\textsuperscript{49} Erik Olssen, "Truby King and the Plunket Society: An Analysis of a Prescriptive Ideology", 9.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{51} Olssen, "Women, Work and Family", 176.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 169.
\textsuperscript{54} Helen and Sylvia Thomson, \textit{Ann Gilchrist Strong, Scientist in the Home}, (Christchurch: Pegasus), 1963, 38.
Studholme believed that home science teaching could reduce the amount of waste in homes, and thought the health of the home relied on the woman’s skill and knowledge, and was the “true index of the condition of the country.” Studholme wrote to Truby King:

The seeds of good or bad constitution and character are generally sown in the years of infancy when the child is almost solely dependent on its mother. A nation’s health therefore depends first and foremost on the knowledge or ignorance of its women in the proper treatment of its infants.

Colonel Studholme thought the aims of home science teaching should be “the art of living or well-being, the obtaining of health, happiness and efficiency” he also asked “what is the use of all the scientific knowledge we are collecting for so many years if we do no apply it so as to make our homes more beautiful and more healthy and unless it eases the burden and drudgery of everyday life…”

This concern motivated Studholme to attempt to set up a Department of Home Science at a New Zealand university. In 1907 he proposed endowing a Chair of Home Economics at Canterbury College. George Hogben supported the proposal and spoke in favour of the idea of home science education at university level to the Senate of the University of New Zealand.

In 1905 Studholme toured Canada for three months studying agricultural education and techniques, he also learned about the home economics extension work being conducted at the Land Grant Colleges, and decided it would be worthwhile in New Zealand. In making his offer to endow a Chair of Home Science at Canterbury, Studholme emphasised the work of the Home Science professor should include university extension work, “I believe the most valuable part of the work of the Professor will be her Extension work among teachers and other women who are not regular University students.”

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55 “History of the Development of Home Science in New Zealand”
56 Ibid.
58 Studholme offered £200 per year for three years in memory of his wife.
59 Roth, George Hogben, A Bibliography, 134-135.
Studholme's belief in the need for extension education reflected a concern which had developed in New Zealand that rural life was declining. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, New Zealand society changed rapidly. The country became increasingly urbanised, although the economy continued to rely on agriculture. By 1926, more than one third of people lived in the four main centres, and almost half in towns with more than 8,000 inhabitants.62

The desire to halt this perceived decline was based on the popular ideology that the nation's health rested on the success of its farmers. James Belich has argued that farmers in New Zealand have portrayed themselves as a 'Chosen People', particularly during this era.63 Both rural and urban New Zealand saw the farmer as the 'backbone of the country', it was a dominant ideology which few were likely to question.64 There was some truth in this, as farming exports were a significant part of New Zealand's economy, however the belief allowed the farmers' interest to be viewed as the national interest.65 If the farmers were successful, the whole country would benefit. Therefore the nation would prosper if rural women could be helped to build the health of their families, particularly the children. In this way, the idea of extending home science teaching into rural New Zealand could help the nation protect itself from the threat of invasion by the 'yellow peril'.

The United States had a strong tradition of extension education in home economics. This had developed from a desire to improve the lives of rural women through domestic instruction. This would reduce drudgery and raise living standards to make rural homes more comfortable and healthy for their families.66 American social reformer Lillian Keller said in 1928 that if women were helped to improve their homes it would do much towards keeping their sons and daughters at home on the farm.67 The development of extension education gained momentum from 1911 when

63 Belich, Paradise Reforged, 152.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid., 153.
67 Ibid.
some State departments of agriculture began to employ domestic demonstration agents. In 1914, the Smith-Lever Act provided funding for adult education in agriculture and home economics on a Federal level, creating the Home Economics Extension Service. It was organised nationally between the Federal Department of Agriculture and the State Agricultural Colleges.

The Home Economics Extension Service's Home Demonstration Agents answered enquiries from women and visited them in their homes with suggestions for kitchen and efficiency improvements. The aim of the work was to improve farm and home conditions, by increasing personal income and raising savings levels. Therefore, the focus of the work was practical, on clothing, food preparation and repairing furniture, rather than cultural pursuits or providing enjoyment.

Professor Ann Gilchrist Strong was an American pioneer in home economics and rural extension work. Strong had a Bachelor of Science in Home Economics from Columbia University and was one of the 12 founding members of the American Home Economics Association. Professor Strong's work teaching delinquent children led her involvement with domestic science. She concluded that it was better to prevent problems in the home than to have to cure the results of these problems.

Professor Strong was employed by the University of Tennessee to set up a home economics department in 1904 and founded the Women's Institute in Tennessee in 1905. Alarmed at the unsanitary conditions, poor health and a general lack of knowledge on nutrition and diet in many rural homes in the area, Strong toured Tennessee lecturing rural people on ways to improve their own health, and that of their children. She also helped organise summer schools for adult women at Tennessee and other universities.

68 Ibid., 53.
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid.
72 Thomson, 37.
75 Thomson, 36.
In 1907 Colonel Studholme met Professor Strong. Studholme was in the United States looking for a candidate to fill his prospective Chair of Home Science and organise extension work in New Zealand. Studholme was impressed with Strong and her work, and offered her the position at Canterbury College, which she initially accepted. Her letter of appointment made it clear that duties would include extension work in the wider Canterbury district. Strong said later that she thought that if she had taken the position, home science extension work would have begun in New Zealand at the same time as the school of home science at Canterbury. Strong later declined the role, and the lack of a suitable replacement, plus uncertainties about funding and local support, meant the idea of a home science school at Canterbury was abandoned.

In 1909 Studholme made the same offer to endow a chair in Home Science at Otago University. This offer received much more community backing, especially support from influential people like Batchelor, King and Allen, and a Citizens Committee was set up to raise funds for a School of Home Science. The School was set up in 1911, with a Miss Boys-Smith as the first Professor. Unlike the proposal for the Canterbury home science school, the Otago plan did not include a duty to carry out extension work.

Studholme approached Professor Strong again about a position in the School of Home Science, and she eventually accepted, arriving in Dunedin in 1921 to the new position of Professor of Household Arts. Strong was appointed Dean of the School in 1924. Under Professor Strong’s leadership, the Home Science School placed greater emphasis on the practical rather than the scientific aspects of home science.

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77 Studholme reportedly described Strong as the most able woman he had met in America. Thomson, 38.
79 Ibid.
80 Strong declined the offer because she had decided to stay in America and get married. However her marriage did not last and she returned to teaching, taking several positions in home economics including organising home science work in India.
82 Strong’s influence placed more importance on the study of food, clothing, household management and parenting than her predecessor. Carr, 487.
Strong's practical approach to the subject is revealed by her description of home science as learning the methods for attaining "...health, strength, happiness and spiritual well being" to bring about free time and financial well-being.  

Strong was instrumental in setting up the Home Science Extension Service (HSES) in New Zealand to extend the work of the Home Science School into the community. She had a missionary-like desire to spread her knowledge in order to improve the health of the nation. Strong demonstrated her motivations, using almost missionary language when she said in 1922:

Our facts are so vital, we dare not keep them to ourselves. We must give them to others...We must organise outside the class room, outside the University, and with other people....We must form a strong band of interested women in the community who will work for the health of the people of New Zealand.

Reverend Matheson recognised Strong's conviction in his address at her funeral in 1957. He said "Professor Strong thought and spoke of her life's work as a service to God. She had a deep conviction, almost a missionary enthusiasm that it is in the homes of our people that real health and happiness must be based".

Professor Strong was concerned about the decline in rural life, although her motivation seems to be more altruistic than those of people like Studholme. Strong worried that if rural women were not trained for duties such as washing, gardening, raising poultry and milking, many could break down or convince their husbands to leave the farm, which would be detrimental to the health of the whole nation. She said:

The success of the Dominion depends on the success of its farmers, and the farmers' success depends on their health and contentment. The responsibility for healthful, sanitary homes, adequate diet and happy family life lies very largely with the women folk.

Professor Strong had a genuine desire to help rural women and she recognised the difficulties they had to cope with. She said most had to raise children, be responsible for almost all of the housework and produce meals for their own families as well as

84 Thomson, 152.
85 Ibid., 192.
86 Letter A.G. Strong to Mr Chapman, Registrar, 24 June 1929, General Files AG-180-31-140, 2.
the farm labourers. Strong felt that women needed to be shown the best way to manage their money, use appliances, reduce their workload, make their homes more attractive and provide better food and clothing for families. She also believed that women should have more access to leisure activities which would make their lives more interesting, such as music, art, literature and entertainment. Strong believed that doing all this would make the rural home a happier place, thereby reducing migration to the towns.

Professor Strong felt there were many problems in New Zealand which would only be repaired through the actions of “enlightened homemakers”. She argued:

the foundations of healthy bodies and sound minds are laid in the homes, and home making training and care are the main factors in determining the mental habits, habits of living, the hygiene and consequently the mental and physical health of the nation...

She was influenced by ideas of the declining race and she argued that the national health was in danger, which was demonstrated by the increasing numbers of children being sent to health camps. Strong argued that greater demand for surgical, mental and dental services, plus the growing problems of goitre and malnourishment and “physical imperfection” in children, were examples of threats to the national health. She believed that home science education could complement Health Department medical and dental officers’ work. They could improve the health of the community by introducing healthful practices, and giving advice on family relationships and child rearing.

Professor Strong argued the ability of a housewife to manage the family income was just as important as the amount the husband earned in determining the family’s standard of living. Thus, she considered instruction in wise purchasing and money

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87 Ibid.
88 Ibid., 1-2.
89 Ibid., 2.
90 Ibid.
92 Ibid.
93 Ibid.
94 Ibid.
95 Ibid.
96 Ibid.
management would lift the living standards of families, and would have the added
benefit of encouraging production and consumption of only the most useful and
effective domestic products. Strong also thought practical demonstrations to improve
techniques and skill levels in meal preparation, home decorating and making clothing
and furnishings would be very useful for housewives. 97

Professor Strong greatly increased the amount of extra mural teaching done at the
Home Science School from her arrival in 1921, although the HSES was not set up
until 1929. 98 They worked with the School Health Department to combat
malnourishment in children. The malnourished children were taught healthful
practices and their mothers educated about correct diets. 99 A lecture and
demonstration course on budget balancing, diet, clothing and exercise was also
organised for business girls in the early 1920s, and senior Home Science students
conducted practical classes at the Manual Training Centre in Dunedin. 100

The Otago Home Economics Association (OHEA) developed from the St Kilda
Mothers Mutual Help Club. This organization’s development is a reflection of the
increasing importance given to motherhood. It was started in 1921 by a group of
mothers who recognised that mothers of young children in the district needed help
and support.101 Professors Strong and Rawson gave them lectures and demonstrations
on parenting techniques in the Home Science School.102 This involvement widened
the Club’s appeal and its membership and focus expanded. In 1922 it was
reorganised into the OHEA, and Professor Strong was elected as the first President. 103

The OHEA worked closely with the Home Science School during the 1920s and was
the basis for much of the School’s early extension work. OHEA members worked
with Home Science staff in a Demonstration Kitchen at the 1923 Dunedin Winter

97 Ibid.
98 James Allen writing on the foundations of the School of Home Science, ACE News, 16 July 1935,
p.3, in Otago University General Files, AG-180-31-233.
99 Strong, 35.
100 Thomson, 153 and letter from Mr James Allen to Mr Chapman. Registrar, Otago University, 31
May 1929, General Files AG-180-31-140.
101 D. R. Emerson, OHEA, The History of the Otago Home Economics Association, 1922-1972,
Dunedin, 1972, 4.
102 Thomson, 153.
103 Emerson, 4.
Show, demonstrating 'kitchen efficiency' in tasks such as scone making, vegetable peeling, dishwashing and using a ‘fireless cooker’. They also worked together to create a model kitchen for the ‘New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition’ in 1926. The OHEA strongly supported the HSES's creation and made a donation of £50 for five years to help cover the salary of a home science extension tutor to carry out extension work in the Dunedin area.

On becoming Dean of the Home Science School in 1924, Professor Strong began her attempts to set up rural extension teaching, along similar lines to work she had done in the United States. She was concerned that apart from a weekly radio broadcast, rural women were not benefiting from the teachings of the Home Science School. Strong considered the OHEA and the School had been able to educate town women effectively but had not done much for rural women. Although OHEA branches had spread to rural towns like Milton and Palmerston, they could not meet the demand for their help. The Home Science School and the OHEA discussed extending their work into rural areas in 1925, planning radio talks and pamphlets. This did not eventuate, but the OHEA did produce and sell regular bulletins on homemaking topics. These were advertised in the Women’s Institute newsletter by 1929.

Strong appealed unsuccessfully to the Minister of Agriculture, the Honorable O. Hawken in 1925 for government funding so that home science tutors could work in rural areas. Strong argued that in other countries, particularly the United States, governments supported women's organisations so they could provide educational services. She also had discussions with Lincoln Agricultural College on the

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104 Ibid.
105 Ibid.
106 Letter from Mr Chapman, Otago University Registrar to James Allen, 14 December 1929, AG-180-31-146, this support continued into the 1960s, the OHEA provided the largest single donation towards a HSES demonstration kitchen built in the 1960s.
109 Emerson, 6.
110 Ibid.
possibility of rural extension work, and unsuccessfully approached the Rockefeller
Foundation for funding.¹¹³

There were no rural women’s groups operating in southern rural areas during the early
1920s, so in 1926 Professor Strong began attending the Farmers’ Union and
Department of Agriculture’s Travelling Farm Schools in Otago in an effort to educate
rural women.¹¹⁴ Professor Strong and other members of the home science staff
continued this until the HSES was formed in 1929. They gave lectures on subjects
such as ‘The Farm Home and the Most Important Crop, the Children’, at these schools
during their weekends and holidays.¹¹⁵

Professor Strong originally planned to set up a nationwide chain of Home Economics
Clubs, which would include rural women.¹¹⁶ However she learned of a North Island
plan to form a Women’s Division of the Farmer’s Union (WDFU) in 1925 and
discussed cooperation between it and the OHEA with the organiser, Mrs Polson.¹¹⁷
Strong also had unsuccessful negotiations with the founder of the Country Women’s
Institutes’ (WI), Miss Spencer, about forming a single body to educate rural women in
late 1923 and early 1924.¹¹⁸ Therefore Professor Strong concluded the Home Science
School would have to provide home science education through the WI, the WDFU,
plus the OHEA in metropolitan areas.¹¹⁹

Professor Strong felt New Zealand women’s organizations in the 1920s required
assistance to promote successful homemaking and help members enjoy leisure
time.¹²⁰ She thought the home science movement could help the organisations inspire
women to be better homemakers and would be particularly useful for young women
by giving them the chance to prepare themselves for the job of homemaking.¹²¹

¹¹³ Strong, 24.
ACE”, c1936, CAPS Files 87-159 Box 5.
¹¹⁵ Thomson, 154.
¹¹⁶ Ibid.
¹¹⁷ Ibid.
¹¹⁸ Ibid.
¹¹⁹ Ibid. Professor Strong did a great deal of work in setting up branches of the WI and the WDFU in
Otago, and in recognition of this, was made a life member of the WDFU.
¹²⁰ A.G. Strong, “Home Science Teaching for Women”, (undated – probably 1920s), CAPS records 87-
159, Box 5.
¹²¹ Ibid.
Therefore, she argued that a university department should be set up to extend home science teaching into rural homes through cooperation with the work of existing women’s organisations, government departments and the Home Science School. \(^{122}\)

Professor Strong wrote to the Chancellor of Otago University, T. K. Sidney on the need to set up the HSES. Strong reported having investigated the work done by the Workers’ Educational Association (WEA), the Government Agricultural Instruction Service and the Plunket Society and had found them lacking in terms of educating rural women. \(^{123}\) She pointed out that that while Plunket dealt with infant well-being, the needs of older members of the family and the “home itself” required attention. \(^{124}\) Strong wrote that Home Science staff members were already involved in this work, but they could not meet the requests made from all over the country. Letters and printed pamphlets were used to answer some enquiries, but Strong believed there was sufficient demand and interest from the rural community to support a specialised staff to take on the work. \(^{125}\) Professor Strong argued the service would help women and would improve the “health, happiness and efficiency of the home”. \(^{126}\)

Having exhausted all other possible avenues of funding, Strong looked to her American origins. Unlike the New Zealand education system, which was generally State supported, the United States had a much stronger tradition of private voluntary support for universities and educational bodies. Strong approached the Carnegie Corporation of New York for funding. This organisation was part of an American philanthropic tradition which made charitable donations in the hope of uplifting

\(^{122}\) A.G. Strong in letter to T.K. Sidney, Chancellor, Otago University, 28/5/29, in General Files AG-180-31-128. Government organisations such as the Agricultural Extension Service and the Travelling Farm Schools, the Education Department and the Health Department, the HSES also planned to cooperate with organisations working in rural areas such as the Farmers Union, WDFU, WI, Plunket, the OHEA and the Mothers’ League.

\(^{123}\) Letter A. G. Strong to T. K. Sidney, Chancellor, Otago University, May 28 1928, Otago University General Files, AG-180-31-128.

\(^{124}\) Ibid.

\(^{125}\) Ibid.

\(^{126}\) “Proposal For Home Extension Work in Rural Areas”, Professor A. G. Strong and Dr A. Fisher, Director WEA, Otago, 6 August 1928, AG-180-31-128, Professor Strong’s ideas were in line with the Report of the Royal Commission on University Education in New Zealand 1925. This was strongly in favour of extending extra mural and university extension teaching. The Royal Commission said that the role of rural women was equally important to that of men, and said this contribution should be recognised through state funded instruction for rural women, including courses in home economics for rural wives and daughters, Report of the Royal Commission on University Education in New Zealand, AHHR, Wellington, 1925, 44 and 92.
people and encouraging progress for the good of mankind. Strong’s proposed work seems to fit well into these goals. The Corporation also had a history of making donations for education in New Zealand.

The Carnegie Corporation was the charitable foundation of Andrew Carnegie, a Scots-American businessman. Carnegie provided an initial capital grant of $25 million to set up the Corporation in 1911. The Carnegie Corporation aimed to “promote the advancement and diffusion of knowledge and understanding among the peoples of the United States by aiding technical schools and institutions of higher learning…” Carnegie later made a second grant of $75 million and instructed that some of the funds should be donated to projects in Britain and the Colonies. Carnegie died in 1919 and Frederick P. Keppel became President of the Corporation in 1923. Keppel had a strong personal interest in adult education and the fine arts, and shifted the focus of the Corporation’s grants towards supporting them.

The Carnegie Corporation realised there was a need to develop educational facilities in a number of British colonies from about 1925, and began making donations to aid education in these countries. In March 1928, Dean-Emeritus James Earle Russell toured New Zealand and Australia on behalf of the Carnegie Corporation. His brief was to investigate the need for educational development, and to find experimental educational schemes which would benefit from financial help. Therefore Professor Strong’s goals, and the Carnegie Corporation’s needs seem to have been well suited to one another.

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128 The Carnegie Corporation donated funds for a number of New Zealand educational institutions including the Dunedin Public Library and had supported the WEA in New Zealand since 1918.
131 Stackpole, 12.
132 Radford, 10.
134 James Allen writing on the foundations of the School of Home Science, ACE News, 16 July 1935, p.4, in Otago University General Files, AG-180-31-233. Many of Russell’s recommendations for funding were accepted by the Carnegie Corporation, in New Zealand, the Corporation founded a Council for Educational Research and donated funds for adult education and libraries, Stackpole, 12.
Professor Strong organised Russell's schedule while he was in Dunedin. She discussed the rural extension work taking place and the need for funding to expand it. Russell also had contact with Colonel Studholme, and Professor Shelley at Canterbury College, who had begun a Box Scheme to distribute correspondence lectures to remote areas, and a rural travelling library service. Russell is reported to have been very impressed with both Shelley and Strong, and indicated that the Corporation would be prepared to support their proposals. He advised the Carnegie Corporation to support these educational ventures in his report following the tour.

The four university colleges in New Zealand initially planned to make a joint application for Carnegie funding. Professor Strong and Dr Fisher, head of the WEA for Otago, were invited to create a proposal for the extension of home science education into rural areas, to form part of a joint University of New Zealand application. They prepared a proposal costing £2,000, £1,500 for home science extension work, and £500 for the WEA. Strong felt the proposal should be seen as an experiment to investigate the needs of New Zealand rural women. Strong and Fisher designed their proposal to fit with the type of scheme Russell indicated he would support while visiting Dunedin, a proposal to expand the work in adult education already taking place.

Strong and Fisher suggested setting up a scheme for rural education to work alongside the existing organisations, and be supported by them. It would initially operate on an experimental basis in the South Island, and, if successful, would be extended to cover

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135 Thomson, 155.
137 Strong, 25.
139 Ibid.
140 Letter A. G. Strong to Mr Chapman, Registrar, Otago University, 16/8/29, AG-180-31-140.
141 Letter A. G. Strong to Mr Chapman, Registrar, Otago University, July 13, 1928, Otago University General Files, AG-180-31-128. However they faced opposition from the University of New Zealand, who had decided to apply for only £4,000, to be divided evenly between the colleges. Professor Strong criticised this decision, saying £1,000 would be insufficient to properly investigate the benefits of extension work, and that the Carnegie Corporation would be unlikely to support such a limited experiment, Carter, *The Life and Times of James Shelley Gadfly*, 145.
the whole of New Zealand.\textsuperscript{142} The proposed women’s extension work would cover “Physical Conditions” including food and nutrition, clothing, child training, home management and gardening. They would provide for the “Intellectual and Social” life with classes in music, literature and art, handicrafts and other entertainments.\textsuperscript{143} They also wanted to reduce the isolation felt by some rural women by giving them advice and contact with others.\textsuperscript{144}

The Carnegie Corporation consulted Colonel Studholme on the proposals and the best way to allocate funding. The Carnegie Corporation subsequently granted Otago £1,500 per annum for five years in 1929 for home science teaching in country areas.\textsuperscript{145} It was expected that the Government would take over funding the scheme and extend it once its viability was established.\textsuperscript{146} In his 1929 Annual Report, the Otago University Chancellor described this as “the most important new development in the University during the year.”\textsuperscript{147}

The other colleges of the University of New Zealand were unimpressed that the grant for rural extension work had only been made to Canterbury and Otago. The Council of the University asked Professor Strong to explain the circumstances surrounding Dean Russell’s visit to Dunedin, and the way the proposal had been put to him.\textsuperscript{148} There was a feeling that Otago had “gone behind the backs” of the other colleges and made a separate proposal.\textsuperscript{149}

\textsuperscript{142} Letter A. G. Strong to T. K. Sidney, Chancellor, Otago University, May 28 1928, Otago University General Files, AG-180-31-128.
\textsuperscript{143} Proposal For Home Extension Work in Rural Areas, 6 August 1928, AG-180-31-128.
\textsuperscript{144} McDonald, 78.
\textsuperscript{145} Strong, .25. The Carnegie Corporation’s donation to Otago University and Canterbury University College was a significant portion of the Carnegie Corporation’s overall donations to New Zealand, totalling $102,500 over the years, out of a total for donations to New Zealand between 1927 and 1960 of $718,789, Stackpole, 13 and 23.
\textsuperscript{146} Emily E. Carpenter and Sadie Andrews, “Thrice a Bridesmaid”, New Zealand Journal of Adult Learning, Volume 18, Number 2, October 1986, pp.65-87, 67. Professor Strong envisaged that the Government policy of the time to provide a £1 for £1 subsidy on private donations could be capitalised to provide an ongoing source of income for the service when the Carnegie funding expired. However the subsidy only continued until 1932 when it was cut to reduce government expenditure during the depression. Government funding to expand the scheme was not forthcoming.
\textsuperscript{147} W.P. Morrell, The University of Otago, A Centennial History, (Dunedin: University of Otago Press), 1969, 141.
\textsuperscript{148} Carter, The Life and Times of James Shelley Gadfly, 149.
\textsuperscript{149} “Home Science Extension Teaching in Country Districts”, Otago Daily Times, (undated) c1930, in CAPS Files 87-159 Box 2. Ian Carter argues the Otago-Canterbury proposal was accepted because it had the personal support of Dean Russell, who was an influential member of the Carnegie Corporation
The New Zealand Carnegie Advisory Committee was created in 1929 to administer the grants to Otago and Canterbury. The Committee consisted of the Chairman Sir James Allen, a former Member of Parliament and University Vice-Chancellor, lawyer Norton Francis, Colonel Studholme and Dr James Hight. Professor Strong was named director of the newly formed Home Science Extension Service.  

The HSES worked with the WDFF and WI to educate rural women on Home Science information, aiming to be:

...a connecting channel whereby all the findings of research and experience that can increase human health, efficiency and happiness in the community, can be brought to the knowledge of the rural homemaker.'  

The HSES planned to run study groups and spread information through lectures and demonstrations, radio talks, a box lecture system, correspondence courses, pamphlets, the press and through a Bureau of Inquiry at the headquarters.  

Professor Strong felt that the HSES had a more difficult task than similar organisations in Canada or England, where there was just one organisation for rural women, or in the United States, which had a Farm Bureau run by the State Colleges, to provide Home Economics extension. Strong felt that providing extension education would have been easier if there was no organisation in existence at all, rather than the three bodies, which did not cooperate well with one another.  

The HSES was a branch of adult education set up as an experiment to investigate ways to remedy a lack in educational facilities for rural women. It aimed to help rural women to be good homemakers, and provide practical advice to lighten their burden. The founders thought rural woman faced a difficult task and that their role was crucial.

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150 It was formed in 1929 with three staff members - a Tutor-Organiser, a Tutor and an Office Assistant, all of whom had graduated from the Home Science School at Otago University McDonald, 71.  
152 Letter A.G. Strong to Mr Chapman, Registrar, 24/6/1929, General Files, AG-180-31-146, 2.  
154 Ibid.
to the health of their families, and rural life, and as the 'backbone of the nation', to the country in general. The HSES was inspired by home economics extension work in rural areas of the United States and was made possible through the enthusiasm and work of Professor Strong, Colonel Studholme, and by finance from the Carnegie Corporation.
Chapter Two - The 'Carnegie Era'

This chapter looks at the first ten years of the Home Science Extension Service (HSES), from 1929 to 1939. In this period HSES attempted to put the aims of its founders into practice. These years can be described as the HSES's 'Carnegie period'. It was characterised by a number of factors. Firstly, the Service was funded by the American Carnegie Corporation to experiment with the possibility for extension education in rural New Zealand. During this period, the HSES investigated ways to educate rural women, using radio broadcasts, a system of boxed lectures, loan packets and lecture-demonstrations, run by travelling and resident tutors. In 1935, the HSES combined with a rural travelling library service and drama tutor operating from Canterbury University College to provide a wider range of services for country people. This new organisation was called the Association for Country Education (ACE) and was also funded by the Carnegie Corporation. The ACE lasted only until Carnegie funding ended in 1939, after this the combined service ended and the HSES went back to operating on its own.

The HSES set about its goal of teaching rural women to be good homemakers to increase the health of the nation during the Carnegie era. This had varying rates of success. Rural women took on board some aspects of the HSES's message and avoided others. It is extremely difficult to judge the HSES's success during this period. The sources are frustratingly silent as to how well this work was received in the community. The records of the organisation show the demand for classes, which can certainly be used as a measure of success, but unfortunately the voices of the women being instructed are not available. There is no way of knowing whether the HSES actually was able to build up the health of the nation through its work. The HSES did achieve more limited aims of investigating the possibilities for rural adult education, interesting people in its message, reducing isolation, giving practical advice, and, to some extent, improving nutritional knowledge.
Professor Strong was firmly convinced of the need for adult education. She argued that people could not be taught everything they needed to know during childhood.

our living has now become so complex that it is quite impossible to teach or learn during childhood or youth all that is necessary for the conduct of life... the individual must continue to grow throughout life it he would be sure of subsistence and if he would hold any place in a rapidly changing industrial and economic order...if he is to be a participant rather than a victim of civilisation.  

Strong told a Women’s Division of the Farmers Union (WDFU) Conference in 1938 that adults needed education to help them make correct choices as more products became available. She also considered that the increasingly difficult financial times meant people needed to be shown the best and most economical way of doing things.

Professor Strong wanted to put these ideas into practice with the HSES. She thought the home science tutors could help women make their homes healthier and more convenient, and could provide advice on nutrition and child rearing. The organisers saw the HSES as a medium to connect the University’s scientific advances with the community. It would be “...a connecting channel whereby all the findings of research and experience that can increase human health, efficiency and happiness in the community, can be brought to the knowledge of the rural homemaker.” Her belief was that advances in medical and scientific knowledge were useless unless used to educate the community to prevent pressing health problems like dental cavities and goitre.

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1 Professor Strong in “What is the Home Science Extension Service?”, 4YA Radio Talk, 31/1/33, CAPS Files, 87-159 Box 5.
2 Professor Strong said that the previously common idea that only young people needed to be educated was wrong. She said it was now clear that education for adults was possible, and in fact necessary. Strong quoted Dr Edwards, whom she describes as an “eminent psychologist” and said that people’s maximum ability to learn was between the ages of 20 and 65. Report of Professor Strong’s address to the WDFU Conference, The Dominion, 15 July 1938, in AG-180-31-266.
4 Ibid.
7 Violet Macmillan also questioned the worth of a knowledge of nutrition unless it was put into practice. Goitre was a major health problem in New Zealand during the 1920s and early 1930s, see Muriel E. Bell, Nutrition in New Zealand, Forty Years History, 1920-1960, (Dunedin: John McIndoe), 1962, 5-6.
The HSES targeted rural women who might otherwise miss out on instruction in new homemaking methods. Tutor-Organiser Violet Macmillan said the HSES’s focus on rural women was not a criticism of their abilities, rather it was because they knew that rural women faced many extra challenges. The country woman had to be a good manager and organiser otherwise she would not get all her work done properly, and have time left for other interests. She had to be resourceful, skilful with her hands and farsighted, as shops and tradesmen were so far away. Living so far from neighbours and doctors also meant the rural woman needed to know how to raise a healthy family and be able to cope with minor ills and accidents.

The Home Science Extension Bureau was set up in 1929. It had an Organising Tutor, Mrs Robin Allen, two Tutor Demonstrators, and Professor Strong took on an overseeing role as the Director. The HSES cooperated and shared resources with the Home Science School. However, they remained separate entities and were separately funded. The Carnegie Corporation Advisory Committee rather than the University directed the HSES's funding, although the University oversaw its day-to-day operation.

Professor Strong described the first years of the HSES as being ‘experimental’ while they investigated the best way to reach rural women. She made use of her American background in the home economics movement, contacting several university extension departments asking for advice and the use of their brochures and publications. Strong recognised the work would be extremely difficult but she was also confident that the

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8 "What is the Home Science Extension Service?".  
9 Advice of V. Macmillan on the Need for Home Science Instruction in Minutes of Advisory Committee Meeting, 'Report for February and March 1938, AG-180-31-266.  
10 Ibid.  
11 This name was soon changed the to the Home Science Extension Service because it was considered this name would be better accepted by the New Zealand community, Emily E. Carpenter and Sadie Andrews, "Thrice a Bridesmaid", New Zealand Journal of Adult Learning, vol. 18, No. 2, October 1986, 65-87, 67.  
12 The Tutor Organiser and the other two Tutors were all graduates of the Otago School of Home Science. In 1932 Edith M. Reid became the Tutor-Organiser of the HSES, Reid held this position until October 1934. In January 1935 Violet Macmillan was appointed the Tutor-Supervisor. Staffing levels of the organisation fluctuated between three and seven staff until 1939.  
13 Letter A.G. Strong to Mr Chapman, Registrar, 23/1/1930, General Files AG-180-31-146.  
14 Letters in reply from several American Universities are included in the Faculty of Home Science Records 163-90 Box 5.
HSES could be a success in “assisting the community efforts towards health and right living”.

In 1930, the HSES tutors visited 17 different towns in Otago and Southland each month and gave 119 lectures. The initial HSES programme was organised in consultation with representatives from women’s organisations in Otago to help the Service assess Otago women’s needs. They agreed the topics should not be too serious at first, and practical advice should be used to generate interest in the organisation, although all agreed there were serious issues to address. They organised study groups and broadcast weekly radio talks. The HSES also held demonstrations at the Dunedin Winter Show and at travelling farm schools on topics such as thrift, diet and household conveniences. At these events, the tutors informed people of the extension services available, and gave practical advice for avoiding dental cavities and goitre, demonstrated salads and uses of vegetables and distributed recipes. The HSES organised free lectures and demonstrations in Dunedin for women’s and public health organisations.

The initial response to the HSES seems to have been positive. The HSES’s reports from its first year of operation said lectures were well attended and that audiences had responded enthusiastically. A newspaper columnist in 1930 supported this, reporting a HSES lecture “Feeding the Family in Winter” was “not the high brow affair that many people thought it would be” and that it was actually “simple, interesting and amusing” and went so far as to say that “a jolly and profitable afternoon was spent”.

An Otago Daily Times report of a farmers’ field day at Clydevale in 1933 also shows that the HSES was able to successfully generate interest. The article said the HSES exhibit

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15 ‘Report on the HSES 1929-34 and Home Science Tutorial Section of the ACE 1935-6’, c1936, CAPS Files 87-159 Box 5, it should be noted that the University of Otago district covered Otago and Southland.
16 She consulted the OHEA, the Otago branch of the WDFU, the President of the League of Mothers and other women’s organisations, ‘Report of the Work of the HSES November 11 – January 11 1930’ AG-180-31-146.
17 †Ibid.
18 ‘Report on the HSES 1929-34 and Home Science Tutorial Section of the ACE 1935-6’.
20 “Our Ladies Column”, ODT 24/6/1930, in CAPS Files, 87-159 Box 2.
was busy, "interested spectators thronged the stands during the intervals between speeches" and that the:

persistent stream of questions which was directed at the two executives showed very plainly the value of the work and the manner in which the Home Science Extension Bureau is arousing the interest of rural women in the important problems of domestic science.21

The newspaper report also suggested that "Perhaps it was less in the exhibit than in the actual contact and discussion with the women present that these two workers did the greatest good and conferred the highest benefits."22

The HSES also saw success in the fact that many visitors had called at the Service’s headquarters and they had received many letters and enquiries which "proved our efforts had been much appreciated."23 To cope with the strong demand for the HSES’s help, the Service employed a fourth tutor and an office assistant in 1931. These results show the HSES was able to successfully generate public interest in their work, which may in itself be considered a sign of success. Generating interest in rural women about home science ideas was crucial for the next stage of HSES work, the goal of actually getting women to put these ideas into practice.

The HSES contacted women and organised lectures and demonstrations through the WI and WDFU. A.B. Thompson argues that some members of these organisations were initially sceptical about the HSES and doubted the benefits of home science instruction.24 He quotes a provincial president of one of the rural women’s organisations saying in 1930 that:

...the country women of Otago and Southland would be helped far more by the Carnegie Corporation if the £1,500 it proposed spending on the HSES was divided up and each woman given her share – approximately 1/6.25

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21 "Farmer’s Field Day", ODT 16/2/33, CAPS Files 87-159 Box 2.
22 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
But, the resistance did not last very long, at least among WI and WDFU leadership and they soon began to support the HSES.26

The HSES experimented with a number of ways of reaching rural women. One of these was a set of box lectures for study groups.27 The boxes included typed university lecture material, with pictures and diagrams. The HSES tutors or subject specialists from other University departments prepared the lectures.28 These were based on the Box Lecture System for adult education operated by Professor Shelley and the WEA from Canterbury College.29 The idea was that women could be responsible for their own learning and the HSES could provide education without a tutor present.30 The HSES encouraged the groups to meet in member’s homes. They considered this would give the meeting a social aspect, which was important, as social opportunities for rural women were often quite limited during the early 1930s.31

The early boxes were lectures on ‘Dressmaking for Children’ ‘Present Day Fashions’ and ‘Dyeing’. Professor Strong hoped to expand these subjects to offer more ‘serious’ courses in later years.32 The box groups were initially popular, 72 study groups in 1930

26 The attitude shift was probably caused by two factors. Firstly, the organisations had always been concerned about New Zealand’s shortage of domestic labour, particularly in rural districts. They supported the HSES because they realized it could help women become efficient housekeepers, preservers and bottlers, which would reduce the need for domestic help. The second reason was that working with the HSES gave them access to study programmes, lectures and demonstration. This made the organisations themselves much more popular. Membership of both organisations at least quadrupled after they began to work with the HSES. Thompson, 138 and Letter A.G. Strong to Dr. L.D. Coffman, 13/11/31, CAPS Files 87-159 Box 5.
27 The study groups generally had between eight and twenty rural women who met fortnightly or monthly. The women mainly came from the WDFU or WI in the area, although they were open to everyone. Box study groups also operated in Dunedin city and these were arranged by the OHEA.
28 The HSES was concerned that the lectures should be of a suitable academic standard and having subject specialists prepare the material helped ensure the standards remained high. Letter M.C. Allan to Registrar, Otago University, 16/9/30, General Files AG-180-31-157.
29 The staff consulted Professor Shelley and used some of his boxes to create the first HSES box lecture ‘The school child and his lunch’, ‘Report on the Work of the HSES November 11 – January 11 1930’, AG-180-31-146.
30 ‘Home Science Extension is Still Pioneering’ (undated) in Press Releases Folder, CAPS Files 87-159 Box 5.
32 By 1935 the HSES had expanded the Box lecture topics to cover a range of home science topics such as home economies, furnishing, gardening, cleaning, hygiene, clothing, nutrition and meal planning. There was even a series of lectures on ‘Social Activities’ this included party preparation, table service and
increased to 107 groups within a year.\textsuperscript{33} This growth did not last. By 1935 the number of groups had dropped significantly and many women had lost enthusiasm. Some women certainly enjoyed the boxes. One group wrote to the HSES, “Never before in the history of the branch have members received such definite help due absolutely to the box scheme of instruction”, however most were not so enthusiastic.\textsuperscript{34}

The initial success and then sharp decline may be explained by the appeal of something new, and a chance for women to socialise. However the study was reasonably demanding in terms of time and effort, and may have required a bigger commitment than busy rural women were able to give.\textsuperscript{35} Unless they were genuinely motivated to learn home science concepts, the box lecture system was probably too dry for women and the boxes were not as stimulating and interesting as having a live speaker.

The HSES also had an information service to give women practical help with specific household problems. This was much more popular. Women from all over New Zealand could contact the HSES to ask questions or request recipes and information. The HSES’s office also wrote newspaper articles and broadcast radio talks. The HSES tutors worked with the Medical and Dental Schools, the Karitane Hospital, the Red Cross, St John Ambulance and the Agricultural Extension Department to ensure their information was correct. They also worked closely with the Home Science School and used their library for research.\textsuperscript{36}

The HSES began radio broadcasts at the end of 1929. Initially these were weekly 15-minute talks on subjects such as cooking, sewing and healthcare. The radio broadcasts were very successful and were a major source of contact with housewives. Because of their popularity, the HSES added a second weekly talk in 1930. One covered dietary and

\textsuperscript{33} ‘Home Science Extension is Still Pioneering’.
\textsuperscript{34} “Home Science Extension Report for June”, \textit{ODT}, June 1930 (exact date unknown) in CAPS Files 87-159 Box 2.
\textsuperscript{35} Emily E. Carpenter and Sadie Andrews, “Thrice a Bridesmaid”, New Zealand Journal of Adult Learning, Volume 18, Number 2, October 1986, 65-87, 68.
\textsuperscript{36} A.G. Strong in ‘Proposals for Dr L.D. Coffin’, 31/11/1931, General Files AG-180-31-178.
food issues, and the other dealt with more general homemaking subjects such as dressmaking and household problems.\textsuperscript{37} These were broadcast in Dunedin and were then circulated to other radio stations around the country, giving the HSES national exposure.\textsuperscript{38} The HSES records report receiving many letters in response to the radio shows. Unfortunately none of these letters have survived but they mainly asked for copies of recipes broadcast.\textsuperscript{39} This shows a certain level of HSES success. The Service had an interested audience who were prepared to try HSES recommended meals.

The HSES tutors wrote articles and columns for the newspapers \textit{The Envoy} and the \textit{Evening Star} each week during the 1930s. These included nutrition advice, tips for stain removal, ideas for healthy meals, and recipes.\textsuperscript{40} The Service also tested recipes which the public sent them, and tested products for businesses. For example in 1931 R & W Hellaby Ltd. requested that the HSES help them create a firm recipe book. Staff also tested the efficiency of a vacuum cleaner model for the Electrolux Company.\textsuperscript{41} This shows that the HSES was certainly undertaking practical work in the community in an effort to benefit housewives.\textsuperscript{42}

By 1932 the HSES staff had concluded that one off public lectures or demonstrations, although popular and enjoyable for women, were not very effective in motivating them to adopt scientific homemaking principles.\textsuperscript{43} Tutor Hazel Johnson also said the lack of local HSES representation made it difficult to maintain interest between meetings.\textsuperscript{44} The concern indicates the HSES's determination to introduce home science principles to rural women during the Carnegie era.

\textsuperscript{39} A HSES report from 1930 described receiving "hundreds" of letters in response to the radio talks.
\textsuperscript{40} 'Report on the Work of the HSES to December 1930', Ibid.
\textsuperscript{41} Letter A.G. Strong to Mr Chapman, 25/8/31, General Files, AG-180-31-172.
\textsuperscript{42} Although such work could also have been a good way for the HSES to promote itself.
\textsuperscript{43} Letter H. Johnson to Professor Strong, 2/8/46, Faculty of Home Science Records, 163-90 Box 5.
\textsuperscript{44} 'Report on the HSES 1929-34 and Home Science Tutorial Section of the ACE 1935-6', c1936, CAPS Files 87-159 Box 5.
In response, Professor Strong and Tutor-Organiser Edith Reid, decided to train women in each district to be HSES instructors. However this experiment was not successful. Even women who were keen to learn home science principles probably did not have the motivation to teach them. The role also expected a great deal of (unpaid) time and effort.\(^{45}\) Professor Strong also noted "many rural women were diffident in accepting the responsibility of leadership".\(^{46}\) The idea was abandoned in 1933, and the HSES went back to the lecture-demonstration system. It shows that the rural women were probably not as motivated about home science instruction as the Service would have liked them to be. Women were probably also not so receptive to homemaking advice from one of their neighbours as they may have been to instruction from an outside expert.

The HSES began holding classroom style instruction rather than just lecture-demonstrations from 1933. Tutors would spend four or five days in a district running these classes. Dressmaking classes proved to be especially popular and became a big part of the HSES's work.\(^{47}\) The success of dressmaking courses is shown by the constantly high demand for them and dressmaking was often the only HSES course women were interested in.\(^{48}\) HSES Tutor Ray Robins thought this preference was because most women needed to be able to sew and make clothing for their families.\(^{49}\) Most clothing was homemade during the 1930s, it was expensive to buy and many rural women took pride in their sewing ability. Therefore, through the dressmaking classes, the HSES brought practical benefits to rural women. The rural women were open to those aspects of the HSES which provided them with tangible benefits.

The HSES's tutors were frustrated by women's overriding interest in dressmaking classes. They regarded other elements of their 'message' such as nutrition instruction, as

\(^{45}\) 'Report on the HSES 1929-34 and Home Science Tutorial Section of the ACE 1935-6', c1936, CAPS Files 87-159 Box 5.
\(^{46}\) Report in the Evening Star, 22/2/33, in CAPS Files, 87-159 Box 2.
\(^{47}\) By 1934 a total of 190 women had attended clothing courses of eight to ten classes, 'Report on the HSES 1929-34 and Home Science Tutorial Section of the ACE 1935-6', c1936, CAPS Files 87-159 Box 5.
\(^{48}\) 'Report of HSES and HS Section ACE'
\(^{49}\) 'Report of Ray Robins', (undated) c1947, CAPS Files 87-159 Box 5.
much more important and valuable. In 1937, the HSES tried to combat this with new system of resident rather than travelling tutors. The theory was that a tutor living in a district would be able to get to know people in the community, and their needs, and would have more opportunity to help women individually by making home visits. In general this was successful. The HSES found that it helped build interest in the most important, rather that the "superficial", aspects of home science. Most women initially only wanted dressmaking classes, but after the tutor had been in a district several months, she could gain the confidence of women and interest them in the "really fundamental" aspects of home science - nutrition and care of the home. Tutor-Organiser Violet Macmillan commented:

...whereas the main interest in food subjects formerly lay in baking competitions, as a result of the tutor’s work, there is now a greatly increased appreciation of the role of nutrition in the maintenance of health. Lectures and discussions on this subject are now popular, and in many cases those attending the meetings are actively endeavouring to apply sound dietetics principles to the planning of meals.

The HSES constantly emphasised nutrition instruction during the Carnegie period although Macmillan acknowledged there was certainly more to being a homemaker than just “feeding the family”. The HSES wanted to convince women that healthy eating would prevent sickness, in line with the HSES goal to improve rural health. Violet Macmillan applauded the majority of rural women for being very skilled bakers, but was concerned that they tended to focus on making perfect cakes, pastries and jams rather than spending time to plan nutritionally adequate and balanced meals. Nutrition

50 However the Organisers also showed a level of pragmatism, it recognising that fees from the dressmaking classes were an important source of funding, particularly in the late 1930s. ‘Report for 1938’, 22/12/38, General Files AG-180-31-282.
51 ‘Report of the HSES and the HS Tutorial Section of the ACE’ c1936, 87-159 Box 5.
53 The tutors reported varying levels of success, mainly because some communities were more accepting than others, Violet Macmillan, ‘Report for 1938’, 5. 22/12/38, AG-180-31-282.
54 ‘Report of the HSES and the HS Tutorial Section of the ACE’ c1936.
56 Minutes of Advisory Committee Meeting, 31 March 1938, AG-180-31-266.
58 “What is the Home Science Extension Service?”, 4YA Radio Talk.
knowledge advanced rapidly during the 1930s and the Service really wanted to use this to benefit the rural community. At the 1938 WDFU Conference, Professor Strong estimated that up to 25 percent of all illness could be avoided with a good diet.59 By this stage, the motivating ideals had faded somewhat, good health seemed to have become a virtue in itself. There was no mention of maintaining the strength of the nation.

The HSES’s diet courses were practical, combining lectures with meal preparation and sampling.60 They focused on the major health problems of the day and provided nutrition advice not otherwise available to rural people.61 New Zealanders often had insufficient calcium intake in the 1930s, so the HSES advised using milk and eggs.62 Professor Strong advised women to eat more vegetables, considering the lack of green leafy vegetables a major problem in the New Zealand diet.63 Strong also advised women to increase vitamin consumption and told them how to alter cooking methods to retain the vitamin content.64

Diet classes were never as popular as dressmaking instruction. Violet Macmillan noted rural people were reluctant to pay fees for diet instruction. She felt this was because most country people were happy with their food, and thought it would be extravagant to pay for a diet course.65 They were willing to pay for library and drama services, because these provided a direct source of enjoyment, and expenditure on dressmaking classes seemed a worthwhile investment. This shows the community had not completely

60 ‘ACE Organisation and Activities’, 4YA Radio Broadcast 8/5/1935, CAPS Files 87-159 Box 5, for example, a lecture on anaemia prevention would be followed by the group preparing a meal in line with the advice from the lecture, so the women could see and taste the anaemia preventing meals.
61 The Chairman of the Waimate Advisory Committee praised the ACE’s work in 1939, saying it had achieved a great deal. He said he felt nutrition classes were especially important, particularly as this type of information was not available to the public through any other means, Minutes of Advisory Committee Meeting, Waimate, 24/11/39, AG-180-31-282.
62 Bell, 10 and article in Otago Daily Times, July 1938, in General Files AG-180-31-266.
63 “Balclutha District News”, From ODT 5/5/1929, Caps Files 87-159 Box 2.
64 “Report on the 1938 WDFU Conference” and article in Otago Daily Times, July 1938, in General Files AG-180-31-266. For example, Strong told women to avoid cooking cabbage until “yellow and slimy”, that potatoes were spoiled by undergoing peeling, then soaking, and then boiling and that, where possible, people should eat fresh not stewed fruit.
accepted the HSES’s message. They continued to use those aspects of HSES work they wanted to, without being fully converted to its message.

The HSES also ran homecraft courses in the late 1930s. Again, these courses were mainly practical. They combined lectures on the principles for attractive, manageable homes with ‘working bees’ at class members’ homes. The group worked together to make loose covers, repair and revamp furniture and redecorate rooms. Through these courses, the HSES was promoting the home science movement’s ideal of the attractive domestic sphere. However the women probably took the courses because they provided practical help and were a chance to share ideas and socialise. The HSES also expanded domestic ideal concept by giving talks on personal hygiene, which were judged to be “popular” in 1939.

The HSES did make some progress in interesting rural women in the critical home science principles, however in general women responded best to the practical courses during the Carnegie years. The women seemed to be most interested in courses which would provide tangible benefits or social opportunities. The theoretical aspects of HSES instruction were not so well received, such as box lectures and nutrition instruction. This situation has similarities to Belich’s description of the Maori “incorporation” rather than conversion to Christianity in early New Zealand. Professor Strong and the HSES tutors had an almost missionary type motivation to educate rural women about home science. The rural women, or ‘natives’ modified the message and accepted only the aspects useful to them.

Professor Strong also expressed concern for rural girls. She noted there was a lack in the educational facilities available for young rural women who had left school and remained in the country. Strong felt that the existing organisations, the Otago Boys’ and Girls’

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69 Belich, Making Peoples, 217-223.
Agricultural Clubs, only catered for the interests of males. Therefore, she reorganised their female members into Girls' Bottling Clubs in 1930. HSES tutors gave bottling demonstrations, and organised bottling and fruit and vegetable preserving competitions. The HSES wanted to encourage girls to preserve fruit and vegetables to improve rural diets during the winter, when they were not readily available.

Delyn Day has pointed out that this meant rural girls' organisations now focused solely on girls as homemakers and ignored the often quite substantial role they had in farm work. The ideal of the female homemaker was given preference over the reality that many farmers relied on farm labour from wives and daughters. Unfortunately there is no information as to the kind of instruction the majority of girls wanted to have.

By 1933 the HSES wanted to do more to help rural girls. The Service organised a 'Country Girls' Week' at the Home Science School in 1933 which was attended by around 40 representatives from the Girls' Bottling Clubs. The HSES reports say the girls enjoyed these courses. Rural girls were given even more attention after Professor Strong travelled to the United States in 1933 to investigate new avenues for home science extension work. She saw the American 4H Clubs for rural girls and decided to introduce a similar organisation in New Zealand.

As a result, the Girls Bottling Clubs were reorganised into the Junior Homemakers' Clubs (JHC). The JHC aimed to prepare rural girls for their "task of directing the farm home...

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72 'What is the Home Science Extension Service?' 4YA Radio Broadcast and Day, 88, points out that there was very little commercial fruit and vegetable production in New Zealand prior to the Second World War and New Zealand imported around 80% of its canned fruit at this time.
73 Day, 79.
75 'Report on the HSES 1929-34 and Home Science Tutorial Section of the ACE 1935-6', c1936, CAPS Files 87-159 Box 5.
76 The HSES was careful to maintain international connections, particularly with the United States, as a source of new ideas and methods. Home science tutors often went overseas for postgraduate study, and home economists from the United States travelled to New Zealand, in 1933 HSES tutor Miss Crowe studied at Denton in Texas, an area with conditions thought to be similar to New Zealand's. American Bonny Apple worked as a HSES tutor in 1936, and Miss Ruby Simpson from the Iowa Extension Service visited in 1938, Letter A. Strong to Mr Chapman, Registrar, 22/5/33, AG-180-31-192.
77 Day, 91.
The JHC were intended to instruct rural girls in home science principles and be a source of recreation and hobbies, allowing girls to mix with people their own age. The HSES wanted to use the JHC to instil “right living habits” in girls while they were still young enough to influence their development. The JHC, set up in 1935, instructed girls on using milk and vegetables, growing vegetables, gave clothing advice and tips for good health habits. The HSES considered the JHC an important part of its work, and allocated them a tutor. This tutor, Miss Crowe, was pleased with the clubs’ success and reported the girls were genuinely interested in learning about homemaking issues.

However the initial popularity of the clubs declined. Social changes affected membership, girls left the clubs when they married, and with the end of the depression, increasing numbers of young women left rural districts for work. Falling membership was not the only problem, as the remaining girls had generally lost enthusiasm by the late 1930s. The JHC also suffered from the HSES’s funding limitations. As funding became increasingly tight by the end of the 1930s, the Service could not afford to devote a tutor to JHC work, and representatives from the WDUI and WI became JHC supervisors.

The American 4H Club idea was therefore not successfully introduced into New Zealand. There is no information available as to why girls left the clubs, but a likely explanation is that as membership declined, they no longer provided a good social opportunity. Miss Crowe reported a genuine interest in homemaking topics, but this may have just been the appeal of something new. The failure of the JHC suggests that the sole focus on homemaking was not appropriate for rural girls.

78 ‘ACE Organisation and Activities’, 4YA Radio Broadcast 8/5/1935, CAPS Files 87-159 Box 5.
81 ‘ACE Summary of Proposed Organisation’ and Professor Strong in “ACE News”, July 1935
82 ‘Report of HSES and HS Section ACE’ c1936, CAPS Files 87-159 Box 5.
84 Day, 91.
The HSES also did work in Dunedin city. The tutors often lectured at OHEA meetings, they supervised meal preparation at the ‘Open Air School’ and helped plan meals at the Waikouaiti Health Camp. The Service also ran a refresher course for Plunket Nurses and helped produce the Government brochure ‘Hints on Diet’ to help people maintain a healthy diet on limited funds. 85

The HSES used the economic depression of the early 1930s to demonstrate the need for its advice, particularly in helping limited budgets stretch further. 86 Professor Strong had always wanted to create a nationwide service and argued that the depression was the ideal time to do it. 87 She thought advice to women in home management, budgeting and proper diet planning had never been more necessary to reduce the cost of food without sacrificing essential parts of the diet. 88 Strong particularly wanted to spread HSES work into Canterbury during 1931, but was restricted by lack of funds, and she could not get additional funding. 89

Nevertheless, the HSES did give Dunedin and Otago people practical advice for coping with the depression. It set up exhibits in conjunction with the OHEA on minimum cost diets, and sold printed menus and recipes. 90 Professor Strong explained the Service’s goals, and her own desire to help people, when she said during the depression that most of the HSES’s work was in poorer homes, where people would benefit most from the nutrition and budgeting advice. 91 She thought wealthier people had less need for the HSES’s help because they could afford to buy their own books and pursue cultural interests through private courses. 92

85 ‘Report on the HSES 1929-34 and Home Science Tutorial Section of the ACE 1935-6’, c1936, CAPS Files 87-159 Box 5.
86 Day, 89-90.
88 Letter A. G. Strong to Dr L.D. Coffman, 13/11/31, CAPS Files 87-159 Box 5.
89 Ibid.
90 The instructors felt this was successful, and the 1930 HSES report states that they had sold £13 worth of penny recipes during the year, ‘Report on the Work of the HSES to December 1930’, 5/12/1930, General Files AG-180-31-157, p.7.
92 Ibid.
As part of the HSES’s depression relief work, it ran training courses for unemployed girls in 1931 and 1932. The girls learnt cooking skills and provided meals for unemployed women. In conjunction with the Home Science School and the Committee for Unemployed Women, the HSES also ran classes in dressmaking, sewing, foods and cookery for unemployed women. The idea was to “keep them from idleness and ... improve their qualifications while waiting to secure positions.” This was especially beneficial because State support for unemployed women was virtually non-existent.

Otago University was not the only source of rural extension education in the 1930s, Victoria College had a home science extension instructor from 1933. The Carnegie grant to establish the HSES had also funded a box lecture scheme and a rural travelling library service organised by Professor James Shelley in Canterbury. Professor Shelley set up these services because he felt cars, roads, radios and the gramophone had given rural people more options for leisure, and they were increasingly looking outside, to the city for enjoyment. He felt this had led to a “weakening of cultural life” in rural areas. Thus Shelley wanted to provide a way of “enriching and broadening life in country communities generally”, through drama and library services.

The Carnegie Corporation was reportedly impressed with the HSES’s initial work and wanted to expand the New Zealand rural education experiment. Carnegie Trustee Professor Lotus D. Coffman reported, “The Strong-Shelley project is succeeding..."
admirably” after a 1931 visit. This recognition is certainly a sign that the HSES experiment was worthwhile. However the Carnegie Corporation only wanted to provide more funding for rural extension work if it was to set up a coordinated scheme between university colleges. In an effort to do this, representatives from the four New Zealand University Colleges met in May 1932. They could not agree on a unified programme unfortunately, and the attempt failed.

Dr Keppel, the Carnegie Corporation President, toured New Zealand in 1934. During his visit, Keppel met Professor Shelley and his travelling librarian, Geoff Alley, in Christchurch and discussed extending their work. Keppel promised Carnegie funds for another five years if the Canterbury and Otago extension work could be coordinated to create a more efficient system and prevent duplication. Canterbury and Otago created a joint plan, and in 1934 the Carnegie Corporation awarded them a grant of £3,000 for five years, lowering by £500 each year. This given on the basis that Canterbury would extend its cultural work into Otago, and Otago would conduct home science work in Canterbury. To achieve this, the two organisations formed the Association for Country Education (ACE) in 1935. Otago University Chancellor, W.J. Morrell, welcomed the ACE’s creation, saying coordinating Carnegie work was an “excellent” idea and promised the University’s full cooperation.

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103 Minutes of meeting of University Colleges, May 1932, General Files, AG-180-31-178.
104 Ian Carter, “Most Important Industry”, 165.
106 James Allen, “ACE News”, 16 July 1935, Otago University General Files, AG 180-31-233. The grants were for £3 000 per year, reducing each year by £500, the first instalment was £17 500, £1 800 to Otago and £1 200 to Canterbury, which included money for two cars.
107 This formed what Ian Carter has described as an “umbrella organisation” to conduct rural extension work, he also described the ACE as a “marriage of convenience engineered by the need to meet the Carnegie Trust’s funding criteria.” Carter, “Most Important Industry”, 32.
The Carnegie Corporation did not plan to fully fund the ACE. The grant was made on a diminishing scale to encourage the organisers to investigate other funding sources.\textsuperscript{109} It was hoped the ACE could eventually be self-supporting, or at least be funded from within New Zealand.\textsuperscript{110} In line with this goal, the HSES, began to charge fees for their work. An expanded New Zealand Carnegie Advisory Committee directed the ACE’s funding and policy.\textsuperscript{111}

Violet Macmillan ran the ACE, which had four home science tutors, a drama tutor and a travelling librarian, plus office staff in Dunedin and Christchurch.\textsuperscript{112} Professors Strong and Shelley hoped the ACE could cooperate with other adult education services, particularly the WEA. However they did not want to overlap with WEA work.\textsuperscript{113} This, plus the fact that the Carnegie grant had been made for \textit{rural} education led to the decision that the ACE would only operate in rural areas and towns with less than 4000 people.\textsuperscript{114}

The ACE had noble ideals. It wanted to increase rural people’s quality of life by improving their health and broadening their interests. It aimed to compensate for rural educational disadvantages by being a permanent educational service providing instruction of a high academic standard.\textsuperscript{115} In line with the goal of “enriching and broadening community life”, the ACE operated a travelling library and drama instruction.\textsuperscript{116} The ACE also wanted to assist in “solving the problems of the home, in relation to the health,
ideals and standards of the community". This was the HSES's field, as it offered classes in dressmaking, nutrition, cookery, house planning and furniture, and lectured on domestic problems. These aims show the ACE had a real desire to uplift the community, which reflects Professors Strong and Shelley's concern to improve rural lives. This goal is probably also a reflection of the Carnegie Corporation's philanthropic influence. The goal of building the strength of the race to maintain racial purity seemed to have faded somewhat by this stage.

The HSES continued to work in much the same way, although it now ran classes under the ACE label, rather than working through other women's organisations. Becoming an ACE member allowed women from all over New Zealand to borrow HSES study packets and information bulletins. They could also borrow magazines, such as Parents, Vogue, and House Beautiful, which were expensive and often limited in supply during the 1930s. The fee for membership was set at £1 per year. In 1938, the ACE circulated 312 loan packets and 800 magazines.

The ACE library service sent boxes of books to groups in rural areas. These books were intended to be of intellectual value to their readers, rather than just providing entertainment. The boxes contained quality books not generally available in rural libraries. Professor Shelley expressed some frustration at most rural people's ambivalence to further education. He realized that the library service could attract more members if its books were 'lighter', but felt this would discourage the intelligent readers who generally showed the most interest anyway. This demonstrates the ACE's desire to uplift rural people. They wanted to provide something beneficial, not just give people what they wanted. The book service was generally successful. Figures indicate

117 'Report of HSES and HS Section ACE' c1936, CAPS Files 87-159 Box 5.
118 Although it still cooperated with women's groups such as the WDFU and the WI.
119 Carpenter and Andrews, 69.
120 'Report for 1938', 22/12/38, AG-180-31-282.
121 Professors Shelley and Strong made it clear this was not intended to be a book club or a "cheap circulating library", instead, they wanted to educate and to encourage people to consider social issues 'Report of HSES and HS Section ACE' c1936, CAPS Files 87-159 Box 5 and "ACE News", July 1935, p.9, AG-180-31-233.
reasonably high demand, with 655 members in 1936, and the library service’s success is also shown by the fact that the Government incorporated the ACE library scheme into a national service for country libraries in 1937.124

The travelling librarian, Mr Alley, also gave lectures to groups on music, current affairs, literature and art. These were popular and Alley said groups particularly enjoyed discussions of world affairs, including subjects such as “the Italian Abyssinian dispute”, “Japan and the Pacific”, “America and the New Deal”, and “the New Russia”.125 The ACE also trailed a ‘Library Loan Service’ in 1937 to improve the quality of books at the small country libraries.126 This met with a good response and the Rangiora Library’s clerk wrote to Alley: “The books you sent us are going out like hot cakes, and our income for waiting list and extra books has greatly increased...it is a great success.”127

The ACE organised rural drama groups. Tutor George Worthington held blocks of nine-week classes in rural districts, and the groups performed a play at the end of the course. As well as being educationally valuable, the drama course was intended to provide a source of enjoyment and social contact. Worthington considered this was especially important in isolated rural districts where people had fewer opportunities to socialise.128 Worthington felt he was adding to the lives of rural people, he described a group in a poor area as being especially worthwhile because he could give group members a valuable interest in “an artistic social occupation”.129

Again, demand for classes is the best available measure of success, although this does not reveal how useful the participants found classes. Interest in classes was strong initially,

124 Violet Macmillan welcomed this as a sign of the success of the travelling library experiment, and donated the ACE’s library books to the new organisation ‘Summary of Work of ACE Staff’, 8, 7/6/38, AG-180-31-266 and ‘Final Report for 1937’, 4/12/37, AG-180-31-266.
127 Ibid.
128 “ACE News”, July 1935, 10, AG-180-31-233. Mr Worthington expressed some concern that in the larger towns group members had plenty of opportunities to socialise and saw the drama groups as simply a place to practice plays. He was concerned that instead, the introduction of drama classes should be a “socializing influence”, as it was in the country districts.
peaking at 463 drama members in 1936, but dropped significantly by 1938.\textsuperscript{130} This could be explained by the fact that rural people may have joined the groups as a social activity primarily, and lost interest as the novelty of drama itself wore off. This attitude is shown when the tutor expressed frustration that valuable time was lost because drama groups often insisted on stopping for an “indispensable” 45 minute afternoon tea.\textsuperscript{131} There were also probably only a limited number of people in a rural district who would be interested in drama instruction anyway, and once they lost interest, there may have been few people to replace them. The classes did bring enjoyment to rural communities, and Canterbury University regarded the service as sufficiently important to continue employing the drama tutor after ACE funding ended.

The ACE appointed Doreen Dolton as a ‘Child Study Specialist’ in 1938.\textsuperscript{132} This was in line with the idea that child rearing was such an important task that mothers required instruction to do it properly. Dolton gave lectures and wrote articles on issues relating to raising and training children and helped parents with “disturbed” and problem children.\textsuperscript{133} Lectures covered topics such as ‘Children’s Questions – when and how to answer them’, ‘Imagination and Lying’ and ‘Methods of Obtaining Obedience’.\textsuperscript{134} She also encouraged parents to subscribe to parenting magazines such as \textit{Home and School} or \textit{Child Study}. Dolton emphasised that children could be disciplined without being “dominated by fear” and was determined to permanently alter parental attitudes, rather than simply providing information of superficial interest.\textsuperscript{135} The ACE considered Miss Dalton’s work very successful and her success is shown by in the fact that she generated a great deal of

\textsuperscript{130} ‘Summary of Work of ACE Staff’, p.8, 7/6/38, AG-180-31-266.
\textsuperscript{132} The funding for this work became available when in 1938 the Government took over the ACE’s travelling library and the librarian, to make it part of the National Library Service.
\textsuperscript{133} Minutes of Meeting of the Consultative Committee, Rangiora, 1/4/38, General Files AG-180-31-266.
\textsuperscript{134} Dolton was careful to hold classes in the evenings so that fathers as well as mothers could attend, otherwise she felt parents could have different attitudes on childcare, leading to tension and inconsistencies, ‘Report to the Chairman and Members of the Consultative Committee of the ACE on Work in Child Care and Management’, 11/8/38, 87-159 Box 5.
\textsuperscript{135} ‘Report to the Chairman and Members of the Consultative Committee of the ACE on Work in Child Care and Management’, 11/8/38, 87-159 Box 5.
community support. However whether she was actually able to change parental attitudes unfortunately cannot be ascertained.

The HSES and ACE were restricted by a lack of funding throughout the 1930s. Professor Strong constantly said the HSES needed more funding to operate properly, and without it they would never keep up with demand. These funding limitations must have been very frustrating for Professor Strong who had come from the American system where extension programmes received state and federal funding. Funding limitations made the HSES tutors' work difficult, the Service could only employ a limited number of staff, which put tutors under pressure. They received a travelling allowance for the times they were away from Dunedin, however this was often barely enough to meet their costs. A car shortage also meant tutors often had to travel by train or service car, which made it difficult to transport the heavy equipment often required for lecture-demonstrations.

The Labour Government of 1935 was more supportive of adult education generally than the previous administration. Violet Macmillan considered the Education Minister, Peter Fraser, would be more receptive to a plea for funding than his predecessor, who had cut the education budget during the depression. Fraser indicated the Government intended to become more involved in adult education by organising a conference in 1936.

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136 As a branch of Miss Dalton’s work, the ACE set up New Zealand’s first Nursery School in Rangiora in 1938. This aimed to give high school girls practical instruction in caring for young children, and Dalton also found it was a very useful way of generating interest in children’s psychological care. ‘Report to the Chairman and Members of the Consultative Committee of the ACE on Work in Child Care and Management’.

137 The initial Carnegie grant to the HSES was made under the assumption that the Government would match it with a pound for pound subsidy in line with the 1929 Amendment to the University Act. The Carnegie Advisory Committee planned to capitalise this subsidy to provide an ongoing source of finance when funding expired in 1934. However, the subsidy was removed in April 1932 as a part of government budget cuts to education during the depression. Letter from A.G. Strong to Registrar, Otago University, 24/11/1930, AG-180-31-157. A. B. Thompson has argued that during the depression years, the Government regarded adult education as a “fair weather luxury”, in A.B. Thompson, Adult Education in New Zealand. A Critical and Historical Survey, New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 1945, 112.


139 There are even reports of instructors travelling by bicycle to reach remote areas for classes, V. Macmillan, ‘ACE Report’, June 1935, AG-180-31-233.

140 Thompson, 142, some members of the Labour Cabinet had been WEA students.

141 ‘Report of HSES and HS Section ACE’ c1936, CAPS Files 87-159 Box 5 and V. Macmillan in a letter to the Registrar, Otago University, 31/1/36, AG-180-31-233, Violet Macmillan met with Peter Fraser in January 1936 and he conveyed to her his appreciation of the ACE’s work.
which commissioned a report into the future of adult education.\textsuperscript{142} This led to the Education Amendment Act 1938, which set up a Council of Adult Education to allocate funding between the university colleges.\textsuperscript{143}

The new structure meant that Otago and Canterbury extension work was largely separately funded. The impending end of the Carnegie grant removed the need for Canterbury and Otago to cooperate, and the ACE effectively disappeared in 1939.\textsuperscript{144} The HSES continued, but the library section had been taken over, the Canterbury WEA employed the Drama tutor and the child psychologist was employed by Canterbury University.

By 1939 therefore, the HSES and ACE had not formed the basis of a permanent national scheme for adult education. They had gained the attention of the rural community, however, an important first step in achieving their goals. In 1939 the HSES reported that the “majority” of country women had been to a HSES lecture-demonstration.\textsuperscript{145} The HSES had also successfully investigated possibilities for educating rural people, particularly women by 1939, had shown that a scheme for rural adult education was certainly possible.\textsuperscript{146}

This study of the HSES and the ACE during the Carnegie period has been limited by a lack of information as to how the HSES and ACE customers felt. This makes it difficult to assess how well they achieved their aims. Demand for services may be used to judge success, as can the Service’s own reports. In terms of these measures, the ACE was a qualified success. The results certainly show that rural people received some benefits, even if it was just providing a new interest and a chance to socialize. The drama classes


\textsuperscript{143}Hall, 71.

\textsuperscript{144}Carter, “Most Important Industry”, 34.

\textsuperscript{145}‘Minutes of Combined Final Meeting for 1939 of ACE Advisory Committee and Delegates Conference’, 7/12/39, AG-180-31-282.

\textsuperscript{146}This conclusion is supported by A.B. Thompson who said that the HSES had done good work, and had thoroughly investigated the best ways to educate rural women, Thompson, 138-139.
were initially popular. Although they had lost much support by the late 1930s, the fact that the Canterbury WEA employed the drama tutor demonstrates there must have been a certain amount of success. The success of the travelling library is demonstrated by the fact that it was absorbed into a national State funded organisation. The HSES’s box lecture system had been effectively abandoned and the once popular JHCs had almost disappeared by 1939. However dressmaking classes were very popular, and the tutors felt that rural people were becoming more receptive to their most important work, improving health through better diet and nutrition.

There is very little information available on how much of the HSES’s advice women took on board. An important guide is that the tutors considered women were putting the information into practice. In particular advice on meal planning, drinking milk and preventing goitre was gradually becoming accepted. 147 Professor Strong and Violet Macmillan concluded the HSES had improved the homes of the rural people by the end of the Carnegie period. They thought their success was shown by the demand for the HSES’s services and the popularity of the radio talks. 148 Tutor Edith Reid said that one could conclude from:

... letters and reports received from country groups, that the extension service was justifying its existence by being of real practical help to many homes with which they came in close contact. 149

However the rural women did not take on the home science message wholeheartedly. Rural women only selectively accepted Professor Strong and the HSES’s instruction. They were keen to take advantage of the practical aspects of home science, but were less interested in the theory. They wanted to have the benefits of the HSES but did not necessarily want to change their habits and practices in line with home science instruction. This is demonstrated by the popularity of dressmaking classes in contrast to a general lack of interest in dietary advice.

147 Minutes of Combined Final Meeting for 1939 of ACE Advisory Committee and Delegates Conference’, 7/12/39, AG-180-31-282.
149 HSES report in the Evening Star, 22/2/33, CAPS Files 87-159 Box 5.
The HSES had been set up primarily to improve rural people's lives. It is impossible to assess whether they did this. However the results do show that both the ACE and the HSES gave rural people a source of enjoyment and stimulation. Their operation was constantly limited by a lack of funding, but an important sign for the future was that at the end of the Carnegie period, the New Zealand government was finally beginning to finance rural adult education.
Chapter Three - the ‘War Years’ and the ‘Adult Education Phase’, 1940 – 1954

The Home Science Extension Service (HSES) by 1939 was a different organisation from the one its founders envisaged. The Service was to go through far more changes during its next fourteen years. This chapter focuses on the HSES during the Second World War and the post war period until 1954. During these years, the HSES developed through two distinct phases. These may be described as the ‘war years’ and the ‘adult education’ period. Although they are separate phases in the Service’s operation, the HSES’s adult education period developed partly in response to wartime experience. Therefore, it is appropriate to study both within one chapter.

The HSES’s activities were greatly curtailed by the Second World War. Petrol shortages and the fact that many women and girls were doing more farm work made it difficult for some women to attend HSES classes. The HSES’s ability to work in rural areas was limited during wartime by petrol and staffing shortages. Thus the HSES went into its war phase. It concentrated less on teaching rural women home science ideas and instead attempted to help the national war effort, in particular by promoting ways for women to deal with wartime shortages.

After the end of the Second World War the adult education movement developed rapidly. People were increasingly interested in expanding their horizons and learning new things after their wartime experiences. In the optimistic post war environment, the government was prepared to fund more adult education, which was organised through the universities. In this period, the HSES entered the ‘adult education’ phase. The goals of the Service altered. The missionary zeal of the HSES to introduce rural women to scientific homemaking faded. Instead there was a much greater emphasis on giving women the instruction they wanted, on introducing hobbies to broaden their interests, and on making their lives easier.
After 1939, the ACE effectively disappeared, although the HSES continued to operate under the ACE name. At this point, the HSES’s future was extremely uncertain, as it did not have a guaranteed ongoing source of finance. The Carnegie funding had ended, because it tended to fund new educational ventures, rather than providing ongoing support for existing ones. Organiser Violet Macmillan thoroughly investigated possible sources of finance to ensure the HSES’s survival. She also looked for ways the HSES’s work could be taken over by other groups if funding dried up. The HSES did continue into the 1940s however, supported by government grants made through the Council of Adult Education between 1939 and 1947.

The HSES’s organisers did not consider this enough, and felt the Service’s work was limited by funding constraints throughout the war years. Staffing levels were reduced to one or two tutors and an office assistant, primarily because of funding limitations. The Service requested more funding in 1945 so they could expand, arguing the HSES was “just carrying on” and that “more worthwhile work could be done, especially in the country, with another tutor”. They argued that there was demand for HSES classes and lectures “…but we dare not advertise or we should not be able to meet this demand.”

Staffing and funding shortages, plus wartime conditions, necessitated the move into the HSES’ war phase. The Service had to adopt a somewhat pragmatic approach and do the
best work it could in the circumstances. The HSES continued to organise lecture-demonstrations and study groups where possible, but on a smaller scale. During the war, the HSES engaged in some propaganda of its own, using the conditions to highlight the need for its help. In 1940 Violet Macmillan argued that the war made women’s role in the home even more important as they now had a much greater responsibility to care for those at home.8 She also claimed that: “Everything which any woman does which will help those on the home front to live more healthy lives and work more efficiently is now a piece of national service.”9 Thus, the woman who kept her family healthy and saved time through efficiency was helping the country win the war. The HSES still wanted to educate women about home science principles to improve health, however health was seen as a benefit to the individual, rather than as a sign of a strong race which would ensure survival of the country. By the war years, one of the HSES’s original themes had disappeared. The idea that people needed to be healthy to ensure racial survival, already under threat by the end of the 1930s, was abandoned during the war era. This change may have been linked to the fact that association with Nazi Germany had discredited the once popular belief in concepts of racial strength and eugenics.

People also seemed to be becoming more receptive to home science instruction during the war years. Violet Macmillan said that she hoped they could take advantage of this and the “the impetus which war has given to the demand for improving diets and using man and women power more efficiently even in the home.”10 Macmillan thought people were now aware of the need to be healthy and the necessity of reorganising their homes and lives to meet the wartime situation.11 In spite of these arguments, the HSES did not receive a funding boost during the war so it could expand its work.

The HSES considered the best way they could aid the war effort was to promote nutrition and thus help women “build up and maintain health and endurance”.12 They ran a lecture

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8 “Services offered by the Home Science Tutorial Section in 1940”, CAPS Files 87-159 Box 5.
9 Ibid.
12 “Services offered by the Home Science Tutorial Section in 1940”, CAPS Files 87-159 Box 5.
series entitled “Bringing the New Zealand diet up to the ideal standard” in line with this aim.\textsuperscript{13} The HSES lectured on ways to maintain health and treat sickness through home nursing and first aid.\textsuperscript{14} The demand for the first aid classes, held in conjunction with the Red Cross, indicates they were very popular.\textsuperscript{15} Unfortunately, this had the side effect of reducing the HSES tutor's time for other courses.

Authorities ran a major campaign during the war years to conserve food and fabrics. The HSES responded to this by encouraging women to can and preserve fruits and vegetables, and to can peas and poultry, which could be sent to men overseas.\textsuperscript{16} Violet Macmillan gave talks on ‘Waste Reclamation from the Home’ and ‘Dyeing with Natural Dyes’ to help women adjust to wartime limitations.\textsuperscript{17} The HSES advised women to spin waste wool to turn it into something worthwhile, organised spinning demonstrations and loaned spinning wheels.\textsuperscript{18} Lectures to women’s organisations frequently covered subjects such as “Wartime Substitutes” which gave advice relating to alternative clothing materials and foods and “Conservation of Fabrics” which advised women on ways to wash fabrics to make them last longer.\textsuperscript{19} The Service also supported the nationwide “grow your own” campaign by making special radio programmes in 1942 encouraging women to produce their own eggs and vegetables.\textsuperscript{20} Other radio talks, made in conjunction with the Famine Emergency Committee reminded women of the importance of strictly observing rationing regulations, and encouraged them to conserve meat and butter coupons.\textsuperscript{21}

In light of wartime staffing and budget limits, Violet Macmillan decided the HSES should concentrate on its Dunedin work during war. This way they could do valuable work, for little cost to help the war effort.\textsuperscript{22} The HSES helped with meals at the Air

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{15} ACE Report for August-September 1939, 2/10/39, 4, AG-180-31-282.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{18} “Home Science Extension is Still Pioneering” (undated) Press Releases Folder, CAPS Files 87-159 Box 5.
\textsuperscript{20} “Brief Report on the Year’s Work Until November 1942”.
Force Cadets Camp. Tutors spoke to women factory workers, hoping to improve their diets and efficiency levels. The HSES also lectured members of the Women’s War Service Auxiliary (WWSA) on diet and health, and the two organisations cooperated to run canteen cooking lessons. In conjunction with the Home Science Alumnae, the HSES ran an Information Bureau in the Dunedin city centre, attempting to reach a wide range of people. This Bureau provided advice on nutrition, kitchen thrift and managing supplies. The HSES also did occupational therapy with patients at the public hospital, the tuberculosis sanatorium and mental hospitals in the area, which was welcomed by patients and hospital staff.

The HSES expected a big drop in demand for its lectures and classes during the war, especially in springtime when women would be very busy with farm work. In response class fees were reduced from 10 shillings to 5 shillings. This proved to be unnecessary. Attendance did not drop as much as the HSES anticipated, and the Service’s reports show reasonably strong demand for classes during the war years. This is somewhat puzzling. A possible explanation could be that demand did drop but this was less noticeable to the HSES because its ability to conduct classes was also reduced by funding, staffing and petrol shortages. Therefore, there was probably enough demand to meet that work the HSES could do. Women may also have considered the HSES’s practical advice on coping with wartime shortages worthwhile, enough to give some of their limited time to the HSES. Attending classes probably also gave women a sense of normality, and a break from the new and often difficult work, which allowed them to focus on their own interests.

24 Ibid.
31 “ACE-Brief Report on Year’s Work Until November 1942.”
Work was limited during the war, but the HSES tutors still helped some rural communities. Ray Robbins acted as Resident tutor on the West Coast during 1942. She described her work as popular and “filling a great need” because it was an isolated area and only a small percentage of the residents had a secondary education. She was concerned about low vitamin and calcium intake so encouraged people to consume more milk and vegetables. Robbins reported that 99 percent of the women knew nothing about nutrition, but many were interested when she introduced the subject. She described the work as a tutor on the West Coast as tiring but fulfilling: “the members were for the most part eager to learn and were almost pathetically grateful for the opportunity of doing so.” Her attitude shows a determination to teach women home science concepts, such as nutrition, for their own good. She also seems to have a sense of personal fulfilment that she had put up with difficult conditions in order to help people.

The HSES attempted to continue its Junior Homemaker’s Clubs (JHC) in the war years. The Service tried to maintain their relevance and popularity by expanding the range of subjects from standard homemaking to include physical fitness, posture and first aid. The JHC tutor also advised members on suitably thrifty wartime hobbies and handcrafts. They made toys for hospital ships and put together parcels for soldiers. In 1940 the HSES began recruiting school age girls to join the JHC. The Service argued this meant they could train girls while they were still young, however it was probably also motivated by a desire to boost flagging membership. The changes were largely unsuccessful. By 1942 all except five JHC had disbanded, and two of that five had discontinued meetings and decided to knit and make bandages at home for the war effort. This prompted the HSES to conclude that continuing JHC work was not

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33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
35 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
39 “Summary of Work of ACE February-September 1940”.
worthwhile, and it did not have the time, money or petrol to devote a tutor to them anyway.\textsuperscript{41}

The JHC failed because many rural girls were now working in town, while those still in the country were generally doing men’s work, and therefore had no time, or perhaps petrol, to attend meetings and rallies.\textsuperscript{42} This seems to conflict with the fact that demand for lectures and classes among rural women did not drop as significantly as the HSES expected. It can be explained by the fact that girls were already losing interest in the JHC by the beginning of the war years, whereas women were still interested in the HSES’s classes and lectures. Home science instruction continued to be relevant to women doing farm work, who also had to run their homes. Rural girls may not have had the same dual demands however, thus home science instruction such as decorating tips and cooking advice would have been less relevant for them than for their mothers.\textsuperscript{43}

During the war years, the HSES continued to stress the need to improve the community’s nutrition standards, because good nutrition would promote health.\textsuperscript{44} The HSES began giving school children nutrition instruction during the 1940s. Violet Macmillan used rat demonstrations in primary schools to show children the effects of good and bad diets.\textsuperscript{45} At high schools, tutors instructed the female pupils on choosing correct foods, kitchen equipment, cookery and ways to save time and energy.\textsuperscript{46} The HSES perceived a greater interest developing among women in food and nutrition during this period.\textsuperscript{47} This was demonstrated by interest shown at lectures, and the fact that the HSES received increasingly heavy correspondence on food topics, especially bottling enquiries.\textsuperscript{48} Women appreciated and seemed to benefit from the HSES’s efforts to help them make the best possible use of the foods that were available during the war.\textsuperscript{49} One woman wrote

\begin{small}
\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{} Ibid.
\bibitem{} Ibid.
\bibitem{} Although the JHC failed, they were a useful precedent for the Department of Agriculture’s Country Girls Association after the war.
\bibitem{} Because the HSES regarded nutrition education as the most important part of their work.
\end{thebibliography}
\end{small}
to the HSES following a cooking demonstration "Two hours of entertainment, something to eat, and a recipe sheet too; it is the best 2/- worth I've had for a long time." 50 The HSES also helped introduce new cooking methods and ideas, and demonstrated ways to use equipment, showing the same participant they were "worth trying and not just something to admire in the latest magazine and discuss as 'too fiddling'".51

Interest in nutrition did increase, but women were still mainly interested in dressmaking classes. There was particularly strong demand for the classes in more isolated districts, such as the Catlins.52 This put the HSES in a difficult position. The classes were very popular and provided a good financial return, but constantly running dressmaking classes gave the tutors very little opportunity to instruct in topics such as nutrition, hygiene and home management.53 To counter this, the HSES tried a new approach from 1945. It began a series of 12 weekly classes combining half an hour of nutrition with two hours of dressmaking.54 Thus the HSES was giving women the instruction it thought they needed as well as giving them the classes they wanted. The dressmaking classes seemed to be acting as the 'sugar coating' for the nutrition instruction the HSES really wanted to provide.

During the war era, the HSES increasingly attempted to respond to the needs and concerns of its audience. One example of this is that in 1942 Violet Macmillan questioned rural women to find which of their problems they regarded as being particularly urgent and requiring the most help.55 Women told her that they found growing vegetables difficult, a task they were forced into because of wartime farm labour shortages.56 They also wanted advice on how to get garden soil in top condition before

51 Although this was written much later than the war period, it is one of the few records of how participants found HSES nutrition instruction. Ibid.
53 Ibid.
55 Letter V. Macmillan to Registrar, Otago University, 22/5/1942, AG-180-31-327.
56 Ibid.
spring, when farm work would be especially busy.\textsuperscript{57} As a result, Macmillan recommended that the HSES provide gardening advice.\textsuperscript{58}

In response, and as part of the nationwide “Dig for Victory” campaign, the HSES appointed a gardening tutor. Mrs Stockdale was employed in the winter and early spring months of 1942.\textsuperscript{59} She advised women on planning and planting vegetable gardens and preparing the soil for spring vegetable sowing.\textsuperscript{60} Unfortunately, the HSES records do not give any information as to how successful this was. Mrs Stockdale was not reemployed in 1943, which suggests a lack of success, although it could also have been because of funding limits.

The HSES’s radio talks were an important part of the Service as wartime conditions limited its other work. They exposed a wide range of people to the HSES’s message because they were broadcast nationally through the National Broadcasting Service (NBS).\textsuperscript{61} During the war the broadcasts often promoted national campaigns. For example, in February 1944 the HSES began a special series of radio talks on meat rationing. The Director of Talks at the NBS requested this to help women cope with the wartime limitations.\textsuperscript{62} The HSES wrote nine special talks and twenty-three five minute sound bytes with recipes and tips for using less meat for daily broadcast.\textsuperscript{63} The HSES also prepared menu suggestions in 1946 for printing in newspapers to help housewives plan meals within the sugar and meat ration limits.

The radio talks emphasised the practical side of homemaking and gave purchasing advice. The tutors visited local firms and shops for information, and used their field work to give them an idea of the challenges and problems of the average housewife.\textsuperscript{64}

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{61} “A talk about the ACE”, 4YA Radio Broadcast, 14/2/1945, CAPS Files 87-159 Box 5.
\textsuperscript{62} “ACE Report of Work for the year 1944”, 29/11/44, CAPS Files 87-159 Box 5.
\textsuperscript{64} \textit{Adult Education Bulletin}, No.18, April 1955, 1.
The philosophy behind the talks was: “Good material and absolutely reliable recipes come first and style second”.65

There is no real evidence as to how useful the radio talks were, or how widely they were listened to. The HSES did an analysis of communications relating to radio broadcasts between 1953 and 1955, and found letters came from women all over New Zealand. The Service felt this showed that it had an influence “far beyond the area where the tutors are personally known”.66 The HSES sometimes received 600 letters in relation to one talk and estimated reaching 60,000 housewives each year through radio talks in 1954.67 Unfortunately for this study, none of these letters were preserved in the HSES’s records. One sign that the radio talks were a useful educational tool is the fact that the Adult Education Council gave the HSES a special £150 grant in 1942 for the nationwide educational work it did with the radio talks. A HSES report from 1945 also commented that occasional references to them in the Listener indicated that the wartime talks had a wide audience.68

During the Second World War, the HSES attempted to operate within wartime limits and help in the war effort. When war ended, the HSES was ready to expand its work, in line with the worldwide growth in adult education. People had a new sense of optimism as a difficult period, the depression of the 1930s followed by the Second World War, came to an end. Soldiers were returning home and being helped into farms and businesses. Wartime restrictions were gradually being lifted and more products becoming available. D.O.W. Hall has accurately described this as a time of both restlessness and openness, when people wanted to expand their horizons and add to their interests.69 In addition, the experience of wartime had shown the possibilities for adult education, as it forced many

65 A. Baker, “Suggestions for Running the ACE”, August 1948, CAPS Files 87-159 Box 5. Some concern with accuracy, and the pressure of producing twice weekly talks led to the HSES rearranging them in 1953. They became a series of three to five talks on a topic, broadcast weekly. The hope was that transmitting fewer talks would give the tutors more time to research them, and thus make them more useful. “Regional Council of Adult Education Annual Report 1953”, AG-180-31-587.


67 Ibid.


people into different occupations. They were required to learn a range of skills and realised their potential to absorb new information.

The adult education movement gained momentum after the war, and it also expanded to cover a far greater range of topics. As education at school and university became increasingly available, adult education was no longer needed to remedy educational disadvantages. Instead, people wanted new creative and cultural interests. The National Council of Adult Education (NCAE) noted this shift in 1951:

> In many countries there is growing recognition of the fact that the functions of adult education are not confined to the dissemination of knowledge and information, but should also include the provision of activities so that the individual may identify himself emotionally and creatively with the group in his community.

This shift has been explained by the fact that worldwide social and political problems seemed overwhelming, so instead people focused on their own enjoyment. The NCAE suggested that the demands of the modern workday, which did not provide opportunities for self-expression, contributed to the growth of interest in recreational pursuits. Interest in leisure and creative activities also grew during this period because the 1950s were a time of full employment and relative prosperity.

The increased interest in adult education led to a Consultative Committee investigation into the subject. Its recommendations formed the basis of the Adult Education Act 1947. This created the National Council of Adult Education (NCAE) to direct adult

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71 Ibid.
76 Shuker, 132.
77 National Council of Adult Education, First Annual Report, 1949, 11. The 1947 Report *Further Education For Adults* stated there was considerable potential to expand adult education amongst rural people. The Committee considered that the correct provision of adult education services could be of great
education and allocate government funding. The changes also made universities the main adult education providers. At Otago University, a Department of Adult Education was formed from the HSES and the WEA.

The new structure allocated much more money to adult education than it had previously received. This allowed the HSES to expand. It employed an extra tutor and held more tours, classes and lecture-demonstrations. The HSES welcomed this as: "adequate proof of the fact that the New Zealand government has recognized the success of the original experiment."

In light of the changes to adult education, the HSES felt it needed to define its place in the new system. Violet Macmillan described 1947 as a "year of transition" for the Service while it assessed how best to operate. The organisers decided that as they were no longer funded by the Carnegie Corporation to investigate rural adult education, the HSES could drop its focus on rural women. Despite this, classes for country women remained a major part of the HSES’s work. The type of instruction altered in the adult education era, but the HSES’s tutors did much the same work. They continued to write

benefit to rural quality of life. In line with this, more organisations began to work in adult education in rural districts from the late 1940s. The Department of Agriculture employed Rural Sociologists to deal with rural women’s affairs, the Department of Internal Affairs proposed creating ‘Community Centres’ for adult education and the WEA also planned to employ tutors for arts and crafts and gardening.

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78 This replaced the existing Council of Adult Education formed under the 1938 Education Amendment Act.
79 As a part of this change, the ACE title was officially dropped and was renamed Home Science Extension, *Adult Education Bulletin*, No. 1, November 1948, 5.
80 Ibid., 2.
84 Ibid.
85 “Suggestions of Audrey J. Baker, Tutor-Organiser”, July 1947, CAPS Files 87-159 Box 5.
87 The tutors now spent time on both town and country class circuits however. While on a country circuit they would spend a week in a district, returning to Dunedin for weekends, with a week in the office at the end of the circuit schedule.
and perform radio talks and lectures, answered mail and telephone enquiries, sent magazines and study packets and prepared and ran classes for women.\(^{88}\)

The changes were the beginning of the HSES’s ‘adult education’ phase. From about 1947, the HSES increasingly tried to provide classes and instruction which women actually wanted. The old desire to teach women home science principles for the good it would do them faded. This change is shown by HSES Organiser Audrey Baker’s 1947 statement that because enrolment and attendance at HSES’s lectures was entirely voluntary, the HSES must give women the classes they wanted.\(^{89}\) Thus the missionary type approach of the founders faded, and market forces had become a factor. By the adult education period, the HSES had introduced many women to home science principles, however it had also altered its message to make it more acceptable. The changes were a sign that while the ‘missionaries’ were influencing the ‘natives’, the ‘natives’ were also influencing the ‘missionaries’.\(^{90}\)

HSES was still keen to bring information to rural areas, but that information had changed since the Service’s inception. This new approach is demonstrated by a HSES report from 1950. It noted the majority of its work was in rural areas, and said its major objective was “to bring to the more remote localities new skills or new ideas which would not otherwise reach them”.\(^{91}\) The HSES had abandoned its earlier goal of improving the health of the nation by strengthening the rural community. The HSES now primarily wanted to broaden women’s interests and help make their lives easier.

Staffing changes were a factor in the HSES’s new emphasis. By the late 1940s the HSES’s early staff members, who seemed to possess Professor Strong’s drive to improve


\(^{89}\) “The Future of the ACE”, Report Prepared for Meeting of Adult Education Committee, July 1947, CAPS Files 87-159 Box 5.

\(^{90}\) There are similarities between this situation and James Belich’s interpretation of Maori conversion to Christianity, where the missionaries relaxed their definition of conversion to allow more converts. James Belich, *Making Peoples*, A History of the New Zealanders From Polynesian Settlement to the End of the Nineteenth Century, (Auckland: Penguin Press), 1996, 167.

rural health, had gone.\(^{92}\) During the adult education years, women with different motivations staffed the HSES. Emily Carpenter became Organizing-Tutor in August 1948 and firmly shifted the HSES into the new era. She revitalised the Service and her influence was a major factor in its increased popularity.

The ‘adult education’ phase was arguably the HSES’s most successful era, shown by the overwhelming demand for its services. This came about because of greater interest in adult education, and because the HSES was increasingly designing courses to suit demand. The HSES offered instruction in a wide range of subjects by the late 1940s. Traditional lecture topics such as foods, nutrition, and clothing remained, however, the range increased to include home furnishing, interior decoration and arts and crafts such as embroidery, pottery, tapestry, weaving and painting.\(^{93}\) The HSES wanted to give women useful hobbies for their spare time.

In order to ensure women had some spare time to enjoy their hobbies, the Service encouraged them to adopt new techniques and appliances which would save time and labour. The HSES wanted to prevent housewives from wasting time by working in a badly planned kitchen, so advised on ways for them to improve efficiency.\(^{94}\) In a 1953 radio broadcast, Emily Carpenter recommended that housewives adopt new, more efficient practices and new technology, so they did not need to devote so much of their time to housework.\(^{95}\)

\[\text{the housewife must be freed from unnecessary tasks that tie her to sink and stove.}
\[\text{We need better-planned houses equipped with more labour-saving devices. More}
\[\text{use should be made of new products, materials and gadgets which speed}
\[\text{household tasks.}^{96}\]

\(^{92}\) Professor Strong retired from the Home Science School in 1940.


\(^{95}\) Emily Carpenter, “Is the New Zealand Housewife Inefficient?”, script of radio talk printed in *New Zealand Listener*, 10/7/1953.

\(^{96}\) Ibid.
She also encouraged women to take advantage of prepared and ‘quick frozen’ foods. “People who think it is lazy to send your clothes out to the wash, or to use tinned foods, forget that life today is more complex than for our grandparents.”

The HSES’s instruction during the adult education phase recognised the growing role of the housewife as a consumer and financial decision maker. The Service was also aware that advertisers were increasingly targeting women. Thus HSES staff gave lectures on understanding advertising and product labels. Tutors also advised women on how to assess the standard of products and instructed them on cash and credit purchasing.

In 1950, Emily Carpenter said housewives faced new difficulties in the modern era. Industry was now doing many of the jobs formerly belonging to women, for example baking, butter making and dressmaking. This had reduced the demands on the housewife to some extent, but had brought new difficulties. For example, women now had to choose the most suitable cleaning product, and Carpenter considered ads were not a very useful guide. She was very keen for women try new products and take advantage of their benefits, and thought the HSES could help them make educated purchasing decisions.

Women responded well to the HSES’s new approach. This is best demonstrated by the huge increase in demand. The 1951 report stated that the staff could not cope with demand, especially for courses in dressmaking, arts and crafts and flower arranging. This increase cannot just be put down to changes within the HSES. There were broader social movements at work. Women wanted an avenue to expand their horizons, they wanted to learn about the new products available and different ways of doing things. Attending HSES classes was one way of achieving this goal.

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97 Ibid.
100 Ibid.
101 Emily Carpenter in Adult Education Bulletin, No. 8, August 1950, 7.
102 Ibid., 8.
103 Ibid., 7.
The increased demand for home science teaching in Otago was part of a nationwide phenomenon as women became more interested in home science ideas. This is demonstrated by the fact that Canterbury, Victoria and Auckland Universities had all taken on home science tutors by the mid-1940s. The HSES claimed this spread of home science instruction was a sign of their success: “evidence of the success of the experiment is provided by the fact that all four university colleges now employ home science work.” Domestic science’s growing popularity can be partly explained by the fact that the 1950s were a very family-oriented decade. Popular belief held that a woman’s main role was a domestic one, to be a wife and mother, and it was perceived that homemaking instruction would help them fulfil this role.

This was not the only factor causing the increased interest in homemaking classes, particularly for rural women. In general they were less educated than urban women and they wanted to learn things, to add colour and interest to their lives. Home science instruction was a way to do this, which did not conflict with the popular conception of a woman’s role. Instead, it aimed to make life within the home more interesting. Classes related to homemaking, but attending HSES courses gave women a chance to have a break from their domestic lives, and gave them an interest of their own. Often such

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105 Hall, 109. The huge demand for HSES services during the adult education phase caused the staff some frustration. They were unable to meet more than about a quarter of requests for classes and lectures. In 1954, the HSES employed two temporary tutors to help meet demand and it also took on a part time millinery tutor. Emily Carpenter was concerned that because the tutors were constantly occupied with classes, there was no time for them to do experimental work, develop new courses or prepare publications. The Service also feared the big workload could lead to declining standards, and tutors leaving, particularly as their salaries were less attractive than comparable occupations. “Report on the Work of the Otago Home Science Extension and Staffing Requirements”, 23/7/1953, AG-180-31- 567 and “Regional Council of Adult Education Annual Report 1954”, AG-180-31- 607.

106 Dorothy E. Johnson, Tutor-Organiser Adult Education, Auckland, “Report on Women’s Education 1943” September 1943, CAPS Files 87-159 Box 5.


109 Ibid.
opportunities were reasonably limited for rural women in the 1950s. Women also found it easier to attend classes during the 1950s, as rural car ownership levels rose.

Attending HSES classes gave rural women a chance to socialise. Many lived in isolated conditions, and the classes helped reduce their sense of isolation. Emily Carpenter said in 1977: “The sanity of some country housewives on lonely outback farms was saved by the mere contact they had with an agency such as ours.” The chance to meet and associate with like-minded women was rare for many rural women, as it was often the husband who had the majority of social interaction in the relationship. Betty Anderson, a HSES tutor said: “I think on the whole classes for women stimulated social contact very much.” She said that the country classes were always oversubscribed and that although they were scheduled to last two and a half hours, classes always went longer. She said the women did not want to go home, for them the class was a social event, a night out.

This did not mean the classes were merely seen as a social opportunity. The majority of women had a real desire to learn practical skills. As well as the range of new courses offered, dressmaking classes remained a key part of the HSES’s work. The end of wartime shortages meant far more fabrics were available and women wanted to use them. Also, store-purchased clothes were still relatively expensive during the 1950s and many women regarded them as a luxury good. Therefore the ability to sew not only gave women a creative outlet, it also had practical advantages for the family’s finances. Audrey Baker recognized the benefits of dressmaking classes, noting that

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110 Ibid., 208.
111 Ibid., 212.
113 Ibid.
115 Ibid.
116 Ibid.
117 Ibid.
118 Parker, 218-219.
119 Ibid.

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women enjoyed them, and that an ability to sew "releases money for expenditure in other directions".  

In 1952 the HSES decided to remove the nutrition half hour from dressmaking classes. Emily Carpenter considered it would be more effective to run two-day nutrition schools rather than combining nutrition and dressmaking. With this change, the HSES completely abandoned the earlier goal of trying to teach women what it considered to be good for them, it was now trying to give them the classes they wanted. The change was probably a relief to the pupils, and the tutors. Betty Anderson said of the mandatory nutrition half hour: "It was a bit of a chore because women who really wanted to sew, wanted to sew, they didn’t want to talk about vitamin A or vitamin B or anything else..." The change may have also been because the HSES no longer considered it was necessary. Diets had generally improved in New Zealand by the 1950s, and agencies such as the Department of Health and Plunket were providing nutrition instruction.  

The HSES was concerned to be at the forefront of new ideas during its adult education years. For example it introduced the concept of artistic flower arranging into New Zealand homes in the early 1950s. These classes were very popular. The reason for this popularity is not clear. The appeal of doing something new must have been a factor. This enthusiasm for new craft activities amongst rural women may have been partly motivated by a sense that city women (whom rural women perceived to have far more free time to beautify their homes) expected them to be slightly behind the times. Something of this is shown in a letter to the HSES from a rural woman in 1954. She wrote that thanks to the HSES she had flower arrangements and was therefore able to

126 "Mona Gunther Reply" to Emily Carpenter’s radio talk “Is the New Zealand Housewife Inefficient?”, New Zealand Listener, 17 July 1953.
impress visitors who “expect things to be rather primitive, so far away from life generally.”

The popularity of craft activities amongst rural women provides an interesting insight into domestic life in the 1950s. Rural women’s organisations ran home-craft competitions. Therefore, craft making ability not only made homes more attractive, it was also an area in which women could measure success and gain recognition. Home life was important to many rural women, in fact Emily Carpenter criticised them for being too “home centred” in a 1954 radio broadcast. Craft activities were an element of this domestic focus and rural women gained genuine enjoyment and fulfilment from them. A fact which suggests that many rural women were not as dissatisfied with their homemaking role as some later social movements suggest.

In the 1950s, the HSES often held ‘schools’ for instruction rather than longer lecture courses. Twenty to forty rural women attended the schools, which were often residential and held over a long weekend. They taught subjects such as flower arranging, meal planning or household management. Betty Anderson described them as being “very social”. They were popular with women and were always oversubscribed. The women certainly seem to have enjoyed being away from home for a few days but it did require them to make arrangements for the family. The HSES recognised this was difficult for some women but said: “the impressive results obtained at these schools

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128 Parker, 216. Parker draws this conclusion in relation to exhibiting home crafts
129 Emily Carpenter, script of radio talk printed in New Zealand Listener, 10 July 1953, 8. Carter wanted to help homemakers by introducing new methods and labour saving devices to free up their time for other interests so that homemaking would not consume women’s entire life.
130 For example see Sandra Coney and Margie Thompson, “Housewife or Human Being?”, in Standing in the Sunshine, A History of New Zealand Women Since they Won the Vote, ed. Sandra Coney (Auckland: Penguin Books, 1993), 80. During the 1970s the HSES’s aims were somewhat frustrated by the feminist movement, which made their job more difficult by downplaying the importance of the woman’s role within the home and family. Notes written by Emily Carpenter, undated, in “Emily Carpenter File”, Faculty of Home Science Records, 163-90 Box 5.
133 Ibid.
helped the participants to make their friends and men folk feel it was worthwhile suffering some inconvenience to make it possible to attend." 134

Correspondence with the HSES's information service increased in the adult education years. Emily Carpenter said this showed it was becoming more widely known and appreciated. 135 Women wrote with questions on a huge range of topics, from problems with jam and butter making, to requests for stain removal tips, to house planning advice. 136 1000 letters in 1949 increased to an estimated 3,500 in 1953, with letters coming from all over New Zealand. 137 The Service also received "hundreds" of telephone enquiries. 138

The HSES staff wrote a number of publications as demand for home science advice increased. There were very few recipe books available for New Zealand housewives and so the HSES decided that printed recipes would be useful. 139 The tutors also noted particularly strong demand in country areas for printed material on nutrition, dressmaking, interior decoration and handicrafts. 140 The HSES produced bulletins on 'Preserving', 'Household Hints', 'Stain Removal' and 'Slip Cover Making' which all generated valuable income through good sales and were reprinted a number of times. 141 The HSES's tutors also gave homemaking advice through articles in the Adult Education Bulletin. 142

In 1954 the HSES and the Regional Council of Adult Education decided to build a demonstration kitchen to commemorate the first 25 years of the HSES. 143 This was a

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136 "A talk about the ACE", 4YA Radio Broadcast, 14/2/1945, CAPS Files 87-159 Box 5.
138 Ibid.
139 D.O.W. Hall, Director, "Report for Year 1948", AG-180-31- 458.
140 Ibid.
142 This was a magazine produced adult education services started in 1948.
143 Letter D.O.W. Hall to Mr J. Hayward, Registrar Otago University, 18/8/1954, AG-180-31- 587.
venue for HSES tutors to hold demonstrations and test recipes and products.\textsuperscript{144} It acted as a model for people who wanted to renovate their kitchens, and was a place for manufacturers to test new products.\textsuperscript{145} Women’s organisations raised money for the project, the HSES ran a nationwide radio appeal, and manufacturers donated money or goods for the kitchen, which opened in May 1956.

The HSES revived their loan packet system in the adult education period. By 1952 this was so popular that there was a waiting list to join the HSES membership scheme, which allowed women to borrow loan packets, magazines and books.\textsuperscript{146} This level of demand certainly shows women found the service beneficial. One woman, the wife of a ‘back country farmer’, demonstrated her appreciation by writing to the HSES in 1954: “The loan packets this year have been of great value. I have enjoyed them very much, and feel most grateful to you for suggesting it.” The woman wrote that she now had an improved recipe collection, living room and a new and properly planned kitchen.\textsuperscript{147} Women enjoyed borrowing magazines and loan packets. Not just for the content, but because the system gave them contact with women in other areas of the country.\textsuperscript{148} After they had finished, women posted their loan packet on to the next member on the list, which could develop into a ‘pen pal’ type relationship.\textsuperscript{149}

The HSES’s war years may be described as the Service attempting to do the best it could in difficult circumstances. The HSES’s work was limited by lack of finance, petrol rationing and staffing shortages. Instead the organisation concentrated on helping the war effort, and helping women adjust to the new conditions. The success of this is extremely difficult to measure. The radio campaigns seem to have reached a wide audience. The Service provided helpful advice to deal with shortages and wartime conservation, and assisted several wartime organisations. The war era also saw a shift in

\textsuperscript{144} School of Home Science History, 15.
\textsuperscript{145} Adult Education Bulletin, No. 20, May 1956, 4.
\textsuperscript{147} Adult Education Bulletin, No. 16, April 1954, p.4.
\textsuperscript{148} Personal Interview with Betty Anderson, 8/8/2003.
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid.
HSES ideology. Wartime conditions required it to be more flexible in its instruction and the Service demonstrated a greater willingness to respond to the needs of its audience.

These changes were heightened during the adult education phase. In this era, the HSES became quite a different organisation from that which its founders had started. The HSES increasingly targeted its instruction to give women what they wanted, new interests and ideas, rather than attempting to give them what the HSES thought was needed. The HSES had its most popular period during the adult education era in terms of demand for classes. It is difficult to measure, but judging from the information which is available, the Service was largely successful in meeting its now modified aims of adding to the interests and skills of the homemaker, and making her life easier by teaching her about new products and labour saving devices. The HSES also provided rural women with social opportunities and a way to add to their interests without challenging their role as wives and mothers. Women were happy to take advantage of this service.
Conclusion

The concept of an extension service to educate rural women in home science principles was a fusion of two international movements. It combined the British example of adult education with the home economics tradition from the United States. The Home Science Extension Service's origins lay in several popular movements in New Zealand in the early twentieth century. The cult of domesticity and the growing importance of motherhood led many people to argue that women should receive training for their domestic role so they could raise healthy families. This perception took on extra importance as perceived social ills appeared in New Zealand which seemed to threaten the future of the race. These eugenicist ideas were the same as those influencing the Plunket Society's founders, both movements had a common desire to improve the nation's health.

Prominent supporters of these theories were men such as Truby King, Dr F.C. Batchelor and Colonel Studholme, all of whom were important in creating the School of Home Science in Dunedin. Professor Strong also was motivated by similar ideas, and thought that as farmers were the 'backbone of the country', educating rural women to raise healthy, strong families would benefit the whole nation. These beliefs, plus Strong's experience of home economics extension work in the United States, and the philanthropic goals of the Carnegie Corporation were drawn together in the Home Science Extension Service. This combination produced an organisation with a missionary-like zeal to help rural people.

The HSES developed through three different phases between 1929 and 1954. In the 'Carnegie period' the HSES's work was greatly influenced by Professor Strong's principles. The focus was on getting women to adopt home science ideology, particularly nutrition instruction, because it would promote healthy families. This would in turn ensure the flourishing of the nation. In the HSES's second phase, the 'war years', the Service, greatly limited in finance and staff, gradually moved away from the original ideals. The HSES was still determined to spread nutrition and homemaking knowledge to improve health, but it seems to have lost some of the
earlier moral zeal. The HSES was prepared to be more flexible than previously and adjusted to the wartime situation by aiming to help women where it could. In its final phase, the ‘adult education era’, the HSES’s focus shifted further away from the earlier goals. It still wanted to help women, but this concept of help now involved giving women new interests and the kind of services they wanted.

This shift was partly motivated by the huge changes in New Zealand society between 1929 and 1954. The original concerns of the HSES were no longer so pressing. Health standards had generally lifted over the period, nutrition knowledge was much more widespread and diets had improved greatly since 1929. There were also other organisations providing health and nutrition education, and fears for the safety of the nation had declined as New Zealand came under the protective umbrella of the United States.

The focus of this study was primarily upon the institutional records of the HSES. Almost all the information on the HSES comes from the organisation itself, therefore it is not an impartial guide. This makes it very difficult to measure the HSES’s success. There are few records of how well women received the Service, and with the passage of time, it has become very difficult to find women who may be able to provide this information. Demand is a reasonable measure of success however, and the strong demand for some of the HSES’s classes and lectures over the twenty-five year period shows the HSES achieved a certain amount of success. A wider investigation could help overcome the absence of rural women’s ‘voices’ through detailed study of other sources, for example farming and women’s journals.

In terms of demand, the adult education era was the HSES’s most successful. In this period, the HSES’s services were constantly in huge demand. This was partly because the Service was now tailoring its classes to give women the instruction they wanted. This is not the only reason for the increase however, it was also caused by a nationwide growth of interest in home science instruction. This growth was part of the rapidly expanding adult education movement.

The HSES’s success is best measured in very broad terms. Its overall goal was to help rural women in their role as homemakers. In terms of this aim, the HSES
generally succeeded. The Service instructed women in necessary skills such as
dressmaking, it went some way towards interesting them in nutrition principles, and it
provided interests and social contacts. Women tended to selectively accept the home
science message however. They were enthusiastic participants in the aspects of the
HSES's instruction which gave them practical help, but tended to avoid the more
theoretical aspects. Therefore the HSES did not 'convert' rural women. Much like
the experience of New Zealand missionaries with Maori, the HSES and rural women
gradually adapted their position to suit and be acceptable to the other, and developed a
kind of middle ground.

Rural women emerge from this study as reasonably strong agents in their own destiny.
They were practical and selected the aspects of the home science message that would
give them tangible returns, and rejected the parts that would not. Enthusiastic
attendance at home science events suggests that although generally satisfied with
being homemakers, many rural women enjoyed a break from the home and an
opportunity to socialise. The popularity of craft and home-based instruction indicates
that women genuinely enjoyed these activities, and their home centred lives during
the 1950s. They were not simply subscribing to popular ideas about the proper role of
women. This may be one reason why the study of rural women in this period is
limited. It does not sit well with ideas and scholarship relating to the origins of the
second wave feminist movement.

The Adult Education Bulletin provides a good summation of the HSES's first twenty
five years in saying it: "brought to women in Otago and Southland a service which
has helped both to enrich their lives and to equip them to engage in all the thousand
and one daily tasks of homemaking with new confidence and skill."

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