

Alabama 2004



Bertha M. Jones State 4-H Staff

Born: Huntsville, Alabama
Nominated by: Alabama 4-H
Inducted: 2004

4-H Statistics: Graduated from Alabama A&M in 1945 and started her 4-H career in Crenshaw County, Luverne, Alabama. Jones left Crenshaw County after 10 years to attend graduate school at Penn State University. In 1956, Jones came to the Tuskegee University campus as the State Leader for Negro 4-H Girls. Jones was responsible for 4-H publications and 4-H administration for 37 county agents. When the segregated Extension services were merged in 1965, Jones moved to Auburn University to serve as a 4-H Specialist. Ms. Jones continues to promote 4-H in the county and state, giving of her time and financial resources.

Bertha began her 38 year 4-H career in Crenshaw Co., Luverne, Alabama in 1945 with the responsibility of adults and 4-H youth work. She came to believe that "4-H is Life" and that every young person should be exposed to 4-H for their total life skills development. She served in many roles and on many committees, including National 4-H Congress Committee, State 4-H Congress Committee, first State Leader Urban 4-H in Mobile and Huntsville, Committee to develop an urban 4-H agents and leaders training program, Job Analysis of 4-H Program Assistants Committee, Job Performance of 4-H and EFNEP Assistants Committee, Committee to develop EFNEP 4-H Program Assistant Award, Public Speaking Judging Committee, 4-H Food Preservation Committee, 4-H Advisory Committee, 4-H DOT Committee.

Bertha wrote many publications, including a 4-H Officer Training Handbook and "The Clean Look and Your Health" series of member and leader guides. She is featured in the book "They too call Alabama home: African American profiles, 1800-1999" by Dr. Richard Bailey. She wrote, with Dr. Bailey, the "History of Negroes in Cooperative Extension." Jones still promotes 4-H, giving of her time and financial resources. She volunteered to train local 4-H members and leaders in parliamentary procedures and gave demonstrations at schools and 4-H programs. Bertha gave financial support for local 4-H activities that help to develop 4-H youth. She encouraged youth to further their education through trade school or college, and donated time and monetary resources so deserving youth might attend 4-H activities and college.

Quote: "Ms. Jones always went out of her way to make sure we took advantage of every opportunity that had formerly only been available for city children. Ms. Jones not only gave of herself but she also shared her resources with those of us who were less fortunate than she. She taught me how to cook. I will never forget the time she taught us how to bake yeast rolls and entered us in the competition at Tuskegee Institute. My parents had no money to buy the material for my dress, but Ms. Jones, not wanting me to miss this opportunity, took care of that too, and my friend and I won first prize for her as much as for us. Ms. Jones was an inspiration to us, and she gave us hope we had never had before. She taught us to believe in ourselves, and she showed us we could do anything we set our minds to." - Ella Mae Stringer Cunningham



Bertha teaches youth about plants.



School students learn about farming and agriculture from Bertha.