

## Alaska

### Lydia Fohn-Hansen



Efforts: Formed the first 4-H Clubs in Alaska. 1911-21: Teacher in Iowa. 1922-25: Home Ec. Ed. at Iowa State Univ. 1925-29: Head of Home Ec., Univ. of Alaska-Fairbanks. 1930-36: Extension Home Ec. Leader, UA-F. 1941: Specialist Home Ec. & 4-H. 1941-54: Home Demonstration Leader UA-F. 1954-59: Assoc. Director For Home Ec., Univ. of Alaska, Assoc. Director CES Emeritus. Publications include "Wilderness Wives" to inform homemakers about how to store eggs without refrigeration, how to make soap and similar household necessities.

Honors: In 1959 she was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Humanities by Univ. of Alaska - The first woman so honored.

Hometown: Iowa

Nominated by: Alaska 4-H

Year Inducted: 2002

Lydia Fohn-Hansen formed the first two 4-H clubs in Alaska before her initial appointment as the state home economist (in the early years of Extension the Home Economists were charged with building the 4-H program). During her first years in Alaska she traveled the state by steamer, dory, train and dog sled to reach out across the state, and she helped start 12 new clubs in only her first year from as far south as Sitka to as far north as Fairbanks. At one time with what was a very small state population, Lydia had over 400 youth enrolled in 4-H club work.

As a volunteer, Lydia organized a staffed senior center, an organization that secured a nutrition program for older Fairbanks residents and a high-rise apartment house for lower income residents. She spearheaded an effort to transform an old log cabin into a museum for the centennial park in Fairbanks in 1967 to show how early families lived.



Lydia (center, with the state's first Homemakers group) wrote publications about various household subjects for Alaska homemakers and families.



L: Lydia Fohn-Hansen at work. R: Lydia was the first person to spin and weave wool from musk-ox, such as the scarf held by her husband Hans.



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