

Lowe, Dazelle Foster ^[1]

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By Mary von der Heide and Emily Pronovost, NCSU Libraries, 2007

Originally published in [Green 'N' Growing](#) ^[2], The History of Home Demonstration and 4-H Youth Development in North Carolina, NCSU Libraries. Reprinted with permission.



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^[3]**23 Dec. 1894-18 Nov. 1984**

Dazelle Foster Lowe served as a leader in Home Demonstration for African Americans in North Carolina. She began her work in Davidson County in 1919 as an emergency agent, hired to meet the needs of homemakers during World War I. The funding for the emergency agents came from federal emergency appropriations given out during [World War I](#) ^[4] for programs supporting the war effort. Emergency agents were employed during the summer to teach African Americans to can and preserve their fruits and vegetables in order to contribute to the war effort. In addition to teaching canning, many African American emergency agents included lessons on sanitation, health, and home improvement.

As an emergency agent Lowe started several clubs, some for women and girls, and some including both men and women. When the emergency funding was discontinued in 1920, white agents argued for funding to employ African American agents permanently. Primarily through the efforts of [Jane Simpson McKimmon](#) ^[5], a very limited number of [African American Home Demonstration](#) ^[6] agents were hired full time.

Lowe did not work for Home Demonstration full time until 1923 when she left a teaching job in Raleigh to become a Wake County agent. During her first week of work she traveled 50 miles and organized eight meetings with a total 265 African Americans in attendance. Lowe, and other African American Home Demonstration agents, would often speak at Sunday church services to garner support for their work and start new clubs. Lowe impressed African American and white homemakers with her work, putting her in line to become a Negro district home agent in October 1925. The position effectively put her in charge of African American Home Demonstration for all of North Carolina.

As district agent, Lowe was responsible for the six counties in the state that had established Home Demonstration organizations for African Americans: Alamance, Columbus, Guilford, Robeson, Wake, and Wayne; she assumed responsibility for a seventh county, Mecklenburg, in 1929. Her duties included visiting each county several times a year, organizing county and state-wide meetings of African American Home Demonstration agents and clubs, and visiting unorganized counties to foster small Home Demonstration clubs. Lowe also produced an annual report on African American Home Demonstration activities. The annual reports included information on the activities of clubs, statistics on clubs and memberships, and requests for more labor and equipment. Many African American farm agents were grateful for her work, as women had been requesting programs similar to those offered to male African American farmers in Beaufort and Columbus Counties.

During the [Great Depression](#) [7] the Division of Home Demonstration Work sent volunteer white agents to serve as emergency agents in African American communities. Lowe used the experiences of these white agents to illustrate the necessity of having more full-time African American agents, which Lowe then received. In 1936 the number of African American agents increased from six to twelve, and the number continued to grow in following years. By 1944 the number of African American Home Demonstration districts grew from one to three, with Lowe serving as head of the newly established Western district. In addition to her regular work Lowe and eight other African American home agents started a college loan fund for African American Home Demonstration club members beginning in 1937.

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