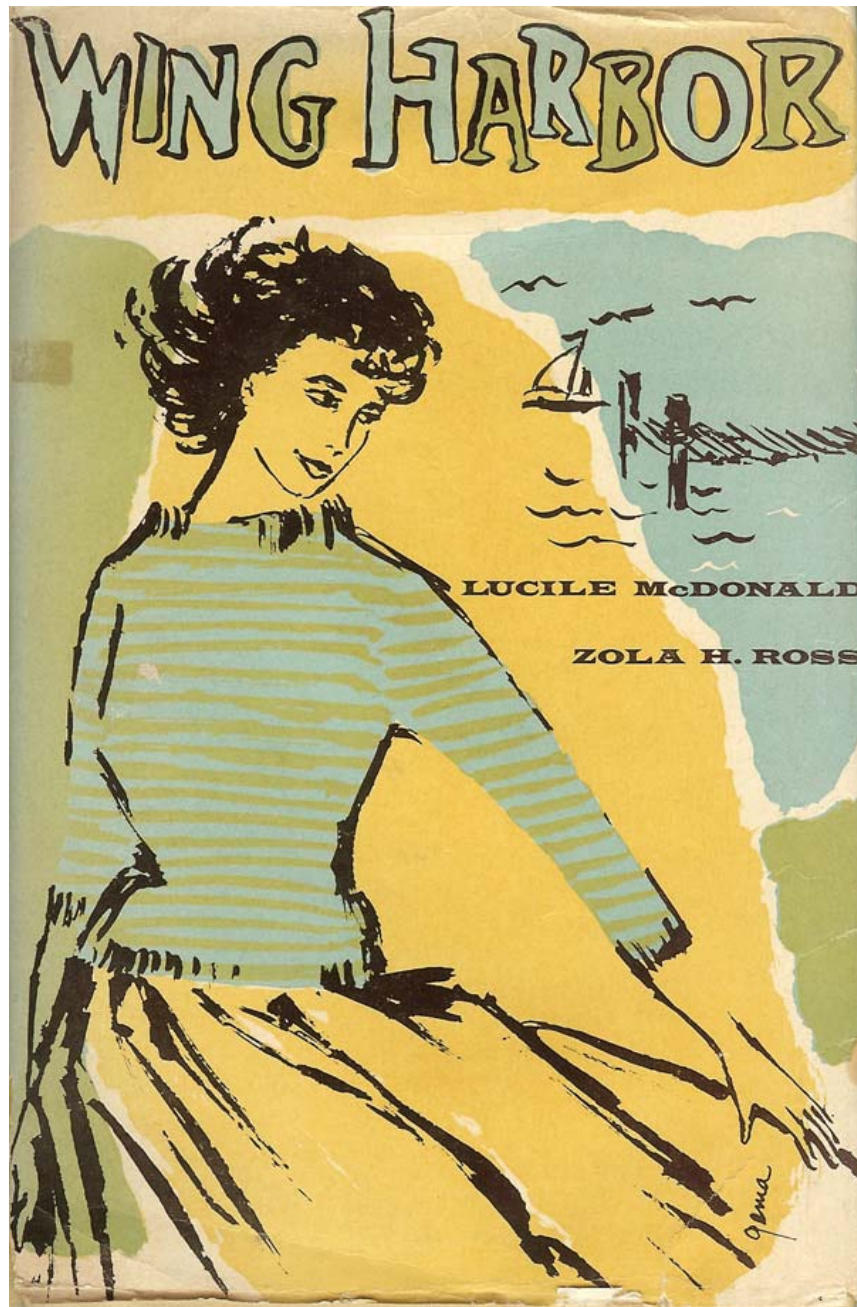


## Found: Another Extension Career Romance!

Jan Scholl (PA), Member and Cheryl Jones Syracuse (NC), Historian

Novels from the past show Extension careers as romantic and challenging. While written for teens to interest them in new and unusual careers for women, these books provide a historical look into Extension programming and the life of the single career woman.

Extension Family and Consumer Science Educators attending the 75th Anniversary session were interested in the early career books written by authors from the 1930s to the 1960s. Since then, a sixth book about Extension Home Economics/Family and Consumer Science careers has been found: McDonald, Lucile, & Ross, Zola H. *Wing Harbor*. New York, Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1957.



Set in the 1950's, as *Wing Harbor* begins, newly hired Extension agent, Jane Holder drives to her first meeting wondering what she can do about her lack of experience. She must present an air of capability and efficiency to people in the county. This is difficult as she is young and has jumped into this Extension job to get away from a love interest that jilted her. She also couldn't face her sympathetic friends and family in her hometown.

Ocean County was large, and when educational programs were at the end of the peninsula an overnight stay was often required. She made

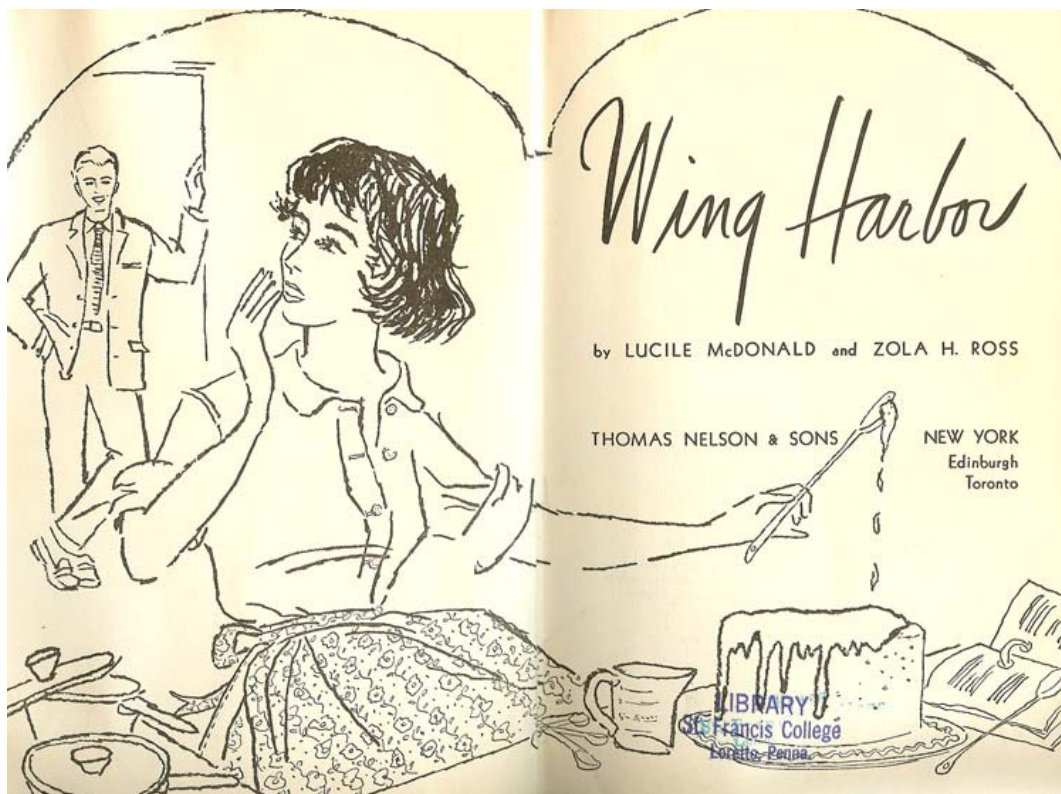
permanent arrangements to stay in a boarding house (conveniently owned by a 4-H family) when she was on the road. But it was a difficult county in which to conduct educational programs, and she had several strikes against her before she started. Her retired predecessor was an experienced worker. Worse, there was a volunteer leader who seemed to master mind programs to failure.

She had to finish programs that had been suggested by others, come up with solutions to errors, and teach a program when the specialist failed to show up. She had another problem, too — avoiding dates with Kenneth Wheaton, a music teacher, when he was "obviously" engaged to another girl.

She found she did well on radio and filled in for her agricultural co-worker on occasion. She helped the local women lose weight and she shed a few pounds, too. She started a local jug (bottle) band in a 4-H club to cheer a young girl who had "failed" bassoon. She also laid the groundwork for a 4-H camp.

When someone threatened to ruin her planning, she was determined to rescue it. "I'm not here as Jane Holden (she decided). I am here as a county agent. I represent all the other people in the service from Mr. Forbes (her co-worker) to the folks in Washington, D.C . . . what happens to me as an individual is really unimportant; what I do as a county agent is vital." She reflects on the demands placed on Extension staff. Her career is "first, last and always."

At the end of the book, Jane finds lost girls on a field trip and calms them when their boat runs aground. In a flash of self-understanding, she makes the first move toward reconciliation with a friend and ends up finding true love.



Though there is a disclaimer that the novel does not portray any actual person or places, it was dedicated to county Extension agents, Helen Steiner and Anne Bergholz. The book also mentions, "Pullman" many times. Pullman, Washington is the location of the land-grant university, Washington State University. (It was Washington State College at the time the book was written.)

The authors of the book met during a writing course at the University of Washington. They had collaborated on some books and were solo authors on others. Ms. McDonald was a prominent journalist and Ms. Ross, a creative writing teacher specializing in adult mystery and historical novels.

To learn about the other historic career novels, [read the article in the July 2009 NEAFCS eNEAFCS](#):

Scholl, J. (2009, July). Extension FCS Careers — Fiction and Non-Fiction, *eNEAFCS*

This and other extension-based career books may be found in on-line used book sites or used bookstores. Check periodically for copies.

**Historian Note:** Anne S. Bergholz served 19 years as executive director of the Oregon Dairy Council and 11 years as an Oregon State University, Extension Service home economist. She was head of the Oregon Nutrition Council, Oregon Public Health Association, Portland Home Economists in Business, and the Oregon Home Economist Association.

Helen M. Steiner (BS, University of Washington. In 1958 she was listed as Retired Faculty, Washington State University having served as County Extension Agent, King County (Seattle).

*Does anyone know Helen Steiner or Anne Bergholz? If so, please share any additional information about them with us.*

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