



National 4-H History Preservation Program

October 2015, Newsletter

Volume VI Number IX

On This Day in 4-H History

October 3, 1856:

First widely promoted corn contest for rural farm youth is held at Watertown Fair in Watertown, New York. Horace Greeley, editor of the New York Tribune, the major newspaper in America at the time, gives a cash prize of \$50 won by Franklyn Spalding of New Otto, New York.

October 4, 1972:

The hugely popular 4-H television series, "Mulligan Stew," premieres during National 4-H Week at the National 4-H Center.

October 6, 1968:

National 4-H Week begins being observed during October rather than in the spring.

October 7, 1955:

First annual 4-H Dairy Conference and Tour is held in Chicago October 7-11, then moves to Madison, Wisconsin, in 1970.

October 7, 1960:

First tree ceremony at National 4-H Center when Maine 4-H'ers donate and plant 500 pine trees.

October 8, 1972:

"Challenge for Tomorrow," a 4-H film honoring the 50th anniversary of the National 4-H Service Committee, predecessor to National 4-H Council, premieres at National 4-H Donors' Conference.

October 9, 1948:

First National 4-H Donors' Conference, Chicago. Ill.

October 11, 2002:

National 4-H Hall of Fame is established as part of the 4-H Centennial Project of the National Association of Extension 4-H Agents (NAE4-HA) with new laureates honored annually.

October 15, 1905:

Will Otwell's national round-up of corn growing rural youth held in Carlinville, Illinois, the most significant event for farm boys and girls to date, with a four-mile long horseback brigade of youth from eight states.



First tree planting ceremony to be held at the National 4-H Center was a gift of 500 pine trees from the state of Maine on October 7, 1960. (L to R) K. C. Lovejoy, State 4-H Leader, Maine; Grant A. Shrum, Executive Director, National 4-H Foundation; Laona Schibles, County 4-H Agent, Maine; 4-H girl; 4-H boy; W. W. Eure, Associate Director, National 4-H Foundation; 4-H boy; Stanley R. Meinen, Assistant to Executive Director, National 4-H Foundation.

Otwell's Farmer Boys Roundup

The following story is taken from the "National Compendium of 4-H Promotion and Visibility" on the National 4-H History Website at http://4-HHistory.com/?h=4-H_Promotion



Otwell's Farmer Boys national roundup of corn growing contestants in 1905 in Carlinville, Illinois may not have been the first organized national event for farm boys and girls, but it perhaps was the most significant one to date.

After several years of setbacks starting in 1898, Will B. Otwell, a local nurseryman, finally realized his dream. Always "raising the bar," in 1905 Otwell invited farm youth anywhere in the country to Carlinville, Illinois, for a national roundup of corn growing contestants in his home town. Before this, he had held county roundups, but this one would include farm youngsters from anywhere in the United States.

Otwell broadcast his invitation, instructing his followers that they were to parade on horseback, the boys to wear a blue sash of crepe paper hanging from the shoulder, the girls to wear a sash of gold.

The results were astonishing; families migrated to Carlinville from 40 counties in eight states, their saddle horses hitched to their buggies. When the parade was formed, Otwell recalls in a 1927 interview with E. I. Pilchard, Illinois Extension, that it measured four miles in length, four horsemen abreast.

Mounted on a black charger, Otwell led the Horseback Brigade past the reviewing stand. There proudly stood Illinois Governor Richard Yates. Along-side Yates was former Vice President of the United States, Adlai Stevenson, watching as young men and women from near and far paraded past. Vice President Stevenson, with tears in his eyes, said it was the most inspiring sight he had ever seen.

Otwell's contests were not club work. He formed no local groups and required no regular meetings. He did, however, help create wide interest in better seed corn. Most important of all, from the standpoint of the future 4-H movement, he proved how wholeheartedly the hitherto neglected farm boys and girls would respond to public recognition and encouragement.

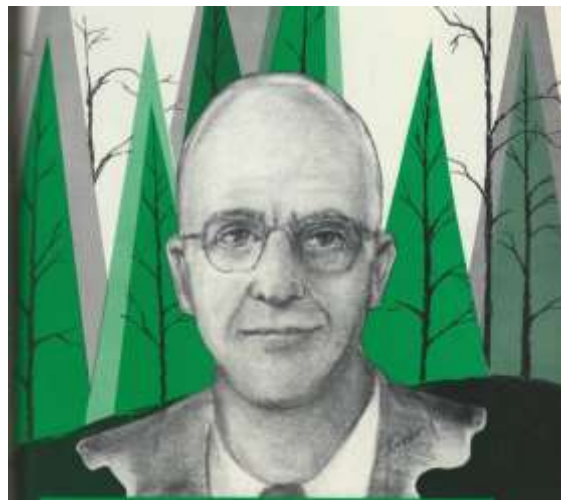
The complete Will Otwell Farmer Boys story is on the 4-H history website at: http://4-HHistoryPreservation.com/History/Events/Earliest_Event.asp



Folks Who Helped Make 4-H Great

This is the third in the 1962 series published in the National 4-H News highlighting the work of 4-H professionals who, in the judgement of surveyed Extension workers, contributed significantly to the growth and development of the 4-H program nationwide. We reprint each article as it was written in 1962.

T. A. Erickson



Drawing from the April, 1962, National 4-H Club News.

Looking back on the early days of rural youth work from our present vantage point of well-developed programs and clear lines of operation, it's hard to realize the bewildering array of choices that faced the pioneers of this great 4-H program. But in the days of T. A. "Dad" Erickson's first work with youth clubs in Minnesota – just after the turn of the 20th century – the direction this movement would take wasn't clear at all.

That's why today's 4-H members owe such a debt of gratitude to Erickson and his contemporaries. In spite of their lack of a pattern for the future, those men and women had the foresight to set up a youth organization with a level of standards so high that today the name 4-H is synonymous with quality the country over.

His early childhood prepared Erickson for a life of service to youth. Theodore August Erickson was born in 1871 near Alexandria, Minn., the second son of a farm couple from Sweden. His parents, while calling on the help of the children with the hard farm labor, saw that the youngsters had time to enjoy the fields and woods for their natural beauty.

Erickson's influences on today's 4-H and general agriculture are so many that to list them all is nearly impossible. Here are a few:

- Pioneered crop-raising contests for Minnesota youth, the first being corn-growing competition in 1904 for which he bought \$20 worth of seed with his own money.
- Helped organize what may have been the first cooperative bull association in the country.
- Promoted the first school fair in Minnesota in 1902, with crop exhibits by students.
- Pioneered a school hot lunch program in 1907.
- Helped operate what is recognized as the first National 4-H Club Congress in Chicago in 1919.
- Launched the first state 4-H conservation project in the country in 1934 as Minnesota state 4-H Club leader.
- Helped do the spadework which resulted in the Extension Subcommittee on 4-H Club Work, today's national policymaking group.
- Established the first observance of 4-H Sunday, tying it in with the already existing Rural Life Sunday.
- Helped get National 4-H Camp – now National Conference – started in Washington, D. C., in 1927.

Perhaps Erickson's greatest contribution to 4-H, friends reflect, has been his continual emphasis on the character-building value of the youth program. In the early days of 4-H, much stress was laid on the project or subject matter side of the program. The Minnesota leader's vision kept 4-H sights raised higher than simply the production goal.

The years of Erickson's life are rich with lesson-bearing experiences for today's 4-H workers. They include 11 years as a country school teacher, 10 years as a superintendent of schools in his native Douglas county – where he instituted many club work firsts, two years as rural school specialist at the University of Minnesota before his title changed to state leader of boys' and girls' club work in the rest of his 28 years in the state 4-H office (until 1940), and 14 years at General Mills as rural services consultant – where he developed 4-H literature now in wide national usage.

Since his retirement in 1954, Erickson has served the cause of rural youth from his home in St. Paul.

In a letter to a long-time friend which Erickson wrote in 1956, he summarized his 4-H philosophy in these words: "Some folks still think 4-H is only the story of corn, pigs, bread-making, canning, prizes, awards and events.

"In this story (referring to his autobiography, 'My Sixty Years With Rural Youth') I have tried to tell how 4-H has helped rural youth and their parents see that they can really live happy lives in farm homes and that agriculture is a great calling presented by the Creator 'to dress and to keep' what He had given them."

Put Your County's 4-H History on the National 4-H History Map



In the remaining few days before the 2015 NAE4-HA Conference in Portland, Oregon, you are invited to submit advance nominations to recognize memorable locations of 4-H historical significance to the National 4-H History Map. This could be your land grant university, 4-H Camps, 4-H Fair buildings, and other meaningful sights such as where the first 4-H Club in your county was organized. Digital photos, web sites, and short notes may be included in your nomination to help it come alive. To nominate a site or see the online map, please visit http://4-HHistoryPreservation.com/History_Map

NAE4-HA Conference delegates will have a chance to see the National 4-H History online map demonstrated at the National 4-H History Preservation Exhibit in booth #300 on October 26th and 27th. They will also have a chance to nominate a site at either this booth or the Esri booth, #400, during exhibit hours Monday and Tuesday.

For more information contact tateace@aol.com or Jason.Rine@mail.wvu.edu

We are Looking for Information and Copies of:

Fletcher the 4-H'er comic strip appearing in the 1960s and 1970s and written by Joe Bursch, cartoonist initially with Walt Disney. We are seeking the history of this comic strip: how was it initiated? Who was behind it? When and how long did it run? We are also looking for any copies of the comic strip. Currently, we have none.

Chris Clover, the 4-H artwork mascot from several decades ago: What is the story behind Chris Clover? When did it start running? What types of items carried the Chris Clover theme? We'd also like to receive photos or artwork samples.

4-H: Something to Sing About was a professionally-produced slide set and audiotape promotional package produced in the 1970s by the National 4-H Service Committee in Chicago. We'd like to borrow the slide set and tape so we can have them digitized, and then we will return them.

If you can help us with any of the above items (information and or copies), please let us know at Info@4-HHistoryPreservation.com

Historical Stories of 4-H Promotion



First National Poster bearing the 4-H Clover in 1924.

The National Compendium of 4-H Promotion and Visibility is a history project started a year ago and placed on the National 4-H History Preservation Program website earlier this year. It is one of this year's priority activities for those National 4-H History Team members working on the website.

Rather than being a chronology of 4-H promotion history, the Compendium is a collection of short stories, so far gleaned mostly from historical issues of National 4-H News, covering a broad array of

national approaches to 4-H promotion, marketing, public relations and branding. Added to this are anecdotes, some from the local level but which received national visibility, that are simply special vignettes that should not be lost to history. These stories are often the ones which convey the true meaning of what 4-H is all about: chronicles of inspiration, of achievement, leadership, and goals; accounts of failures and having the strength, ability, and desire to pick oneself up and try again.

This Promotion Compendium is meant to document and preserve these stories of 4-H history before they get lost. It has immense value as a resource tool for new professional and volunteer staff development. Even more important, perhaps, it is also offered as a collection of short stories to be read for inspiration and enjoyment.

As of August, 2015, the National Compendium of Promotion and Visibility had over 160 stories posted, and over 150 photos or illustrations. The Compendium is an ongoing project with stories being researched and added regularly. While most of these stories illustrate national 4-H promotion history, if you have a story from the state or local level which received national publicity, please tell us about it. We will consider it for inclusion in the Compendium. Write to info@4-HHistoryPreservation.com



As one of the major sponsors of 4-H National Youth Science Day in 2009, DuPont provided some extra visibility extending to a massive audience; in the NASCAR circuit, the DuPont-sponsored car driven by Jeff Gordon prominently carried the 4-H emblem with the 4-H.org website on the back of the vehicle.

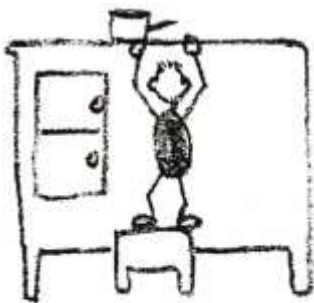
You can see the Promotion Compendium by going to http://4-HHistoryPreservation.com/History/4-H_Promotion/

Hands-On History Promoting the Health H

In the last issue we featured an article about O. H. Benson as one of the people selected by State and National 4-H Leaders as having “made 4-H great”. That article explained that he was instrumental in getting the clover adopted for our youth program. In 1911, O. H. Benson proposed four Hs that stood for Head, Heart, Hands, and Hustle. O. B. Martin suggested Health instead of Hustle. At a meeting in the spring of 1911, the 4-H leadership approved the 4-H emblem representing Head, Heart, Hands and Health.

An article by Gladys Scranage, a Girls’ Club Agent in WV, in the October 1938 issue of National 4-H Club News acclaimed that improving physical and mental health was vital to everyone. “[T]o create a desire for health, to aid in developing right attitudes, to encourage physical improvements, to help in establishing health consciousness in the community, to improve food habits, to aid in disease prevention, to study community health problems, and to continually set health standards are goals that seem to me to be entirely in the province of a 4-H club.”

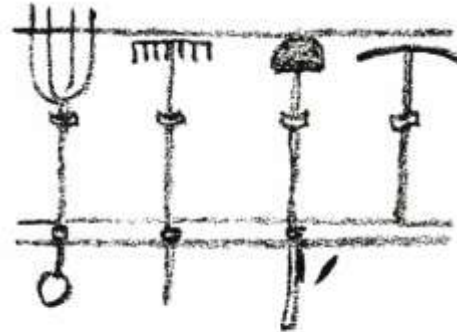
Good safety habits contribute to good health. In the October, 1945 issue, safety cartoons by Utah 4-H member Ruth Louise Noall were featured. “Each pictured a warning, done in colored crayon and with its whimsical rhyme, occupied a full page in her [safety] book.” For example, a sketch of a child reaching for a pot on the stove warns, “Turn those handles toward the stove, If you will; And baby is not the only one Who might spill.”



Turn those handles toward the stove,
If you will;
And Baby is not the only one
Who might spill.

Miss Scranage’s article lists some suggested activities for 4-H clubs that could be good hand-on projects for today’s 4-H clubs. She suggested that 4-H clubs should develop and promote a health program. This could include appointing a permanent

health committee to direct health activities of the club. They would study local health problems, present health information as part of each 4-H club meeting, help in promotion of health in the community and encourage members to have regular checkups and make a personal health plan.



Put away your garden tools,
Those who don't are only fools.

Hands-on History

How can your club benefit from Miss Scranage’s suggested activities? You could create a health officer or committee to suggest physical activities during your club meeting recreation time or recommend healthier refreshments. Your group can study local health issues and make plans to inform the community about what it can do to improve the situation.



4-H History Now on Facebook

Like us on Facebook at

<https://www.Facebook.com/4H.History>

History Team Seeks Volunteers; Help us Preserve 4-H History

The National 4-H History Preservation Leadership Team is seeking volunteers to help with a variety of tasks to get documents prepared for inclusion on the 4-H History Website. If you are interested in any of the tasks below or know someone who may be, please contact the history team at info@4-HHistoryPreservation.com. We would be happy to discuss the projects further and get your ideas on how we might be able to move them along. The National 4-H History Preservation Program is a purely volunteer activity with no paid staff, but with a strong commitment to research, write and make

available to the general public all aspects of national 4-H history, and to drive our grassroots programs at the state, county and community levels. If you are interested in 4-H History and would like to get involved, please let us know.

Subject areas where your interest could be put to good use include:

- **Boys' Corn Clubs & Girls' Canning Clubs:** The research and writing of this website section is complete; we simply need someone to review existing photos and prepare final copy for transfer to the history website;
- **Wartime 4-H Support - World War II:** The research and writing of this section is basically complete; we need someone to review existing photos and prepare final copy for transfer to the history website;
- **National 4-H Congress in Chicago:** The research and writing of this section is complete; we need someone to review existing photos and prepare final copy for transfer to the history website;
- **Digitized Print Materials:** We are seeking a PDF editor to break down the digitized printed materials that have already been placed on discs by an outside firm, and place them in a print Archive on the website;
- **Digitized Films and other A/V Materials:** We are seeking an editor to break down digitized materials and prepare them for inclusion in Film and A/V Archives on the history website.
- **Searching for 4-H Films, Videotapes and other A/V Materials:** We need volunteers to search for copies of known/unknown 4-H films, videotapes and other A/V materials that have

not yet been digitized, and prepare them to be sent to our digitization company, plus placing them in the Film Archives once digitized. This would include copying videos from various Internet sites, particularly contemporary presentations of a historic nature;

- **National 4-H News:** We are seeking a PDF editor to break down the already digitized bound volumes of National 4-H News by issue and place in Print Archives on the History Preservation website. The editor will also build an article index for complete 65 years of National 4-H News (Note: for many years this had been done annually and is printed in the first issue of the following year).

Contemporary 4-H History



Hundreds of thousands of youth across the United States and globally conducted the world's largest, youth-led science experiment as part of 4-H National Youth Science Day (4-H NYSD) which launched during National 4-H Week October 4-10.

Contact the 4-H History Preservation Team:

Sue Benedetti, Chair; *4-H National Headquarters, USDA, retired*
Larry L. Krug, Vice Chair; *National 4-H Council, retired*
Eleanor L. Wilson; *4-H National Headquarters, USDA, retired*
Jim Kahler; *4-H National Headquarters, NIFA, USDA*
Chad Proudfoot; *West Virginia University*
Kendra Wells; *University of Maryland 4-H, retired*
Tom Tate; *Extension Service, USDA, retired*
Melvin J. Thompson; *National 4-H Council, retired*
Ron Drum; *Maine 4-H Foundation*
David E. Benedetti, Secretary; *National 4-H Council, retired*
Rick Moses, Webmaster.

Email: info@4-HHistoryPreservation.com

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