



National 4-H History Preservation Program

February, 2011 Newsletter
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4-H Alumni Clubs: A Way to Grow Local History

Clubs, communities, counties and states are finding creative ways to preserve their own 4-H History. There are 4-H museums, artifacts in County Historical Societies, documents in Land Grant University archives; there are 4-H History Clubs, family and club historical quilts, 4-H collecting clubs. And there are 4-H Alumni Clubs.

Pike County, Ohio, formed the Pike County 4H Alumni Club in 2010 to promote local 4-H, tap into the past members' life experiences to provide assistance to current clubs, and bring past members together. The club has about 80 members ranging in age from 19 to 80; that three-generation span must stimulate robust discussions about "4-H back in the day!" and give younger members a chance to describe today's new programs to emeritus members. Recruited through a county fair booth, the County 4-H Newsletter and Facebook, former members and professional staff meet at the fairgrounds about every two months.

The Club is fairly new so it is currently developing goals and activities. They don't yet have a budget, but plan on fundraisers in the future and perhaps to charge dues. For outreach, the Club has an email list, a booth at the County Fair and promotes the Alumni Club idea through the Newsletter and conversations with neighboring Agents and leaders. "We are still in the building process," says Linda Adams, one of the key organizers.

Linda comes from a strong 4-H family. Her mother was an Advisor when Linda was a baby, and later a temporary 4-H Agent when the county lost theirs. Linda was an Advisor when

her daughters were in 4-H, and now her Grandchildren are 4-H members.

When asked how the Alumni Club is a resource to ongoing 4-H programs, Linda says "We are currently creating a list of alumni that will be willing to assist local clubs with projects, and providing speaking opportunities."

Any problems so far? "It is taking some time to build a base and group of willing workers. At this time, we haven't been in existence long enough to experience problems or successes."

We'd like to learn more about other active 4-H Alumni Clubs; send your ideas and thoughts to info@4-HHistoryPreservation.com. As we build our database of Alumni Clubs, we hope to publish guidelines gleaned from successful clubs for use by counties and communities that want to start their own alumni groups. Drawing on the experience of former 4-H members and staff is a valuable way to stimulate preservation of 4-H History.

4-H Quote

"4-H is about building better citizens, teaching values and developing the skills necessary to leading a good and profitable life. And it doesn't matter if you're from a farm environment or from a big city. 4-H worked for me and I've continued to work for it."
- **Orville Redenbacher**, California. 1983 4-H Alumni Winner

When and why did National 4-H week begin?



This 1946 National 4-H Poster is the earliest one we have with 4-H week noted on it. National 4-H week began in 1945 as a way to keep membership up after World War II.

National 4-H Service Committee History on the History Website

Recently, <http://4-HHistoryPreservation.com> added the history of the National 4-H Service Committee (originally National Committee on Boys' and Girls' Club Work), one of the predecessors of National 4-H Council.

In the early 1900s, as a new concept of education (first 3-H, then 4-H from 1911) grew in rural areas, two groups of people played important roles. First, progressive rural educators took the lead in three-fold, then four-fold developmental training for farm boys and girls, leading to government support of Boys' and Girls' Club work, administered by the Extension Services of the Land Grant University system and U.S. Department of Agriculture. The second group included generous business firms and individuals who aided the educators by furnishing incentives to youth for outstanding accomplishments. This effort evolved into the National Committee on Boy' and Girls' Club Work, established in Chicago in 1921.

For 56 years, until its merger with the National 4-H Foundation to become National 4-H Council in 1977, the role of the National 4-H Service Committee was that of service.

There was no comparable entity for the Committee to emulate in the 1920s; it survived and thrived in unchartered waters due to strong leadership and committed staff. Working closely with Federal and State Extension Services, with little money and a small staff, the Committee was determined to fill the role of providing support in those areas 4-H most desperately needed. Many of those areas remained central to the Committee's offerings at the time of the merger: awards programs, National 4-H Congress, National 4-H News, National 4-H Supply Service and a strong media service.

There probably was no stronger example of public/private partnership than that of the national 4-H awards programs. Dozens of donor corporations provided county medals, state trips and national scholarships as recognition to hundreds of thousands of 4-H members each year. State winners lucky enough to receive a trip to National 4-H Congress in Chicago experienced a celebratory week they would never forget, and national winners appreciated their scholarships as an assist in going to college and launching a career.



National 4-H Congress Delegates fill the arena as they parade during the 1935 International Livestock Exposition in Chicago.

The National 4-H Supply Service started out offering just a couple of items, eventually becoming a million dollar a year service featuring over 1,000 different items annually.

During the depression years of the 1920s and 1930s, the Committee did its part to uplift the spirits of young people and farm families served by 4-H. They solicited writers and composers for plays, skits, songs and recreational activities, offering many through the Supply Service and National 4-H News.



The tractor maintenance program was one of the most elaborate 4-H training programs combining the expertise of professionals from Land Grant Universities and private business. Doris Clifford, center, was Kentucky's contest winner in 1949.

Educational Aids - member manuals, leader guides, slide sets, films and videos - became a large support service for the Committee in the 1960s and 1970s. Produced with the direction and support of Extension Developmental Committees and supported by donor funding, nearly 1,000 educational aids were produced at the national level, accounting for millions of copies sold annually.

The National 4-H News magazine served the 4-H Extension System for 65 years; bringing continuous news and features to the local club level in supporting volunteer leaders.

Through its entire history, the National 4-H Service Committee placed a heavy priority on

promotion, visibility and media support. The National 4-H Poster Program, National 4-H Calendar Program, Report to the Nation, weekly national network radio programs, and public service announcements for National 4-H Week were all a part of this effort. The public exposure during National 4-H Congress, where between 300 and 600 media representatives covered the event in person, where Chicago newspaper writers worked nights prior to the event writing hundreds of releases, and where Extension Information staffs helped cover the event with even more press, radio and television, made National 4-H Congress one of the top four media-exposed conventions in the entire country year after year.

Although the National 4-H Service Committee traditionally did not have a large staff, they knew how to get the job done. Their impact on 4-H was felt from the national level to the grassroots in every area - medals and awards, support for new pilot programs, supply items, leaders' magazine, educational aids, leader training, and publicity support - for all of the 56 years of its existence.

Take time to read this new website section on the National Committee's history. We think you will find it not only enjoyable and inspirational, but will learn more about a piece of 4-H history that makes the program what it is today.

To make a contribution to the National 4-H History Preservation Program, please mail a check payable to *National 4-H Council* at:

National 4-H Council
c/o Wachovia Bank
PO Box 75375
Baltimore, MD 21275-5375

Please include **4-H History Preservation Program** on the memo line of your check.

**"Study the past if you would define the future."
CONFUCIUS**

Historical 4-H Trivia

Largest 4-H Girl's Club Convention

Not to be out done by the recent large 1928 political conventions, the 4-H club girls of Iowa under leadership of Miss Josephine Arnquist, State Agent for Girls' Club Work, staged what is said to be the largest 4-H girls' club convention ever held. Two thousand five hundred girls and 100 leaders from 97 of the 99 Iowa counties attended. The comprehensive and inspiring program will give added interest to 4-H club work in Iowa. (Iowa 4-H Girls Annual Meets were held for a number of years.) National Boys' and Girls' Club News, July 1928.

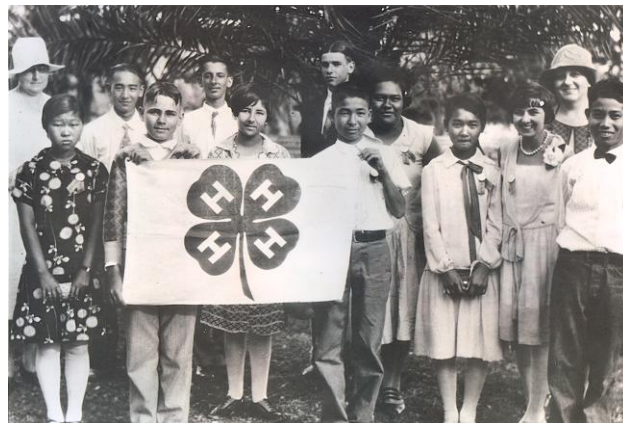
4-H in Space

We've said in the past that "Contemporary 4-H History" could be a tie-in of something old and new. Such is the case recently when the nation honored on January 28, 2011, the 25th anniversary of the NASA *Challenger* explosion on January 28, 1986. We lost a decorated 4-H alumnus that day, the first astronaut to carry the 4-H flag into space, Ellison Onizuko of Hawaii.

Onizuka was selected as an astronaut candidate by NASA in January, 1978. He first flew as a mission specialist on the first Space Shuttle Department of Defense mission, launched from Kennedy Space Center on January 24, 1985. That flight of the *Discovery* completed 48 orbits of the earth and landed January 27, 1985. With the completion of that flight he logged a total of 74 hours in space.

Colonel Onizuka was a mission specialist on board the Orbiter *Challenger* which launched from the Kennedy Space Center on January 28, 1986. He and all the crew died when *Challenger* exploded one minute and 13 seconds after launch.

The science project of another 4-H'er was part of the payload aboard that ill-fated *Challenger* flight: John C. Vellinger's eighth-grade science project, "Chix in Space." Following the devastating loss of the orbiter and its crew, the experiment went on to successfully re-fly on the space shuttle *Discovery*. When *Discovery* lifted off in March, 1989, carrying his chick embryo experiment, Purdue University senior and Indiana 4-H alumnus John Vellinger got his second chance at finishing a project which began when he was a 4-H member. He reconstructed the experiment to carry chick embryos at two different stages of development into the weightlessness of space. Vellinger then studied chicks hatched from the returned embryos against a control group of earth-hatched chicks to explore the effects of zero gravity on the development of bone, muscle and organ tissue in animal embryos. The experiment started the discussion of whether or not gravity is required for reproduction of some species, important for consideration of long-term space travel by human pioneers.



1928 Honolulu 4-H members

Territorial 4-H

A solid 41 years before *Hawai'i Territory* became a state (1959), 4-H started in Hawaii in 1918, under the auspices of the Federal Agricultural Experiment Station and leadership of Frederick G. Krauss, Harvey F. Wiley and Mabel Greene. It was launched with a 31-member pig club on Maui. During the First World War, the slogan "Food Will Win the War"

was used, and Hawaii's boys and girls joined in with adults to grow food.

In 1923, Miss Greene integrated 4-H club work into the public schools with teachers who were trained in agriculture and home economics. By 1926, there were also 4-H clubs on Oahu, Hawaii, and Kauai.

In 1926, when the Smith-Lever Act was amended to provide funds for the *Territory of Hawai'i*, the Cooperative Extension Service at the University of Hawaii was established. In 1927, both the 4-H motto and the four-leaf clover emblem were approved.

Over the years, 4-H clubs in Hawaii played important roles in major events of their times. During the 1930s Depression, groups of older boys and girls organized into junior farm and home demonstration clubs. During World War II, 4-H clubs developed horticultural practices such as grafting macadamia nut trees and coffee plants.

Hawaii's first 4-H Conference, called Territorial 4-H Club Week, was held in 1930 for 64 members; by 1939, Conference participation nearly doubled to 120.

In following decades, as with all state programs, content and focus evolved in line with youth needs in a changing society.

State Land Grant University Archives Offer 4-H History Assistance

The National 4-H History Preservation Team has had several contacts with State Land Grant University Archives over the past few weeks.

- Oregon State University Archivist asked to become the Oregon 4-H History contact for our work.
- Iowa State University Archives special collections offered us some national 4-H materials that they didn't need in their collection.
- The Team had a half-day tour and visit with the Archivist at the University of

Maryland who has recently been tasked with archiving Maryland 4-H History.

What do you know about the University Archives in your state? They are undoubtedly a prime resource for your many history related projects.



George Washington Birthplace 4-H members work in costume in the blacksmith workshop as a part of their interpretation program year around.

National Park Service Joins Forces with Virginia Cooperative Extension Service

George Washington Birthplace National Monument 4-H Club

Through the cooperation and ingenuity of two government agencies, Virginia 4-H'ers are helping to save and interpret U.S. history. This unique club (based in Colonial Beach, VA) was formed three years ago by National Park Service Ranger Dick Lahey, who has previous 4-H leader experience. When asked how he got the idea for the club he replied, "I had heard at a National Association for Interpretation workshop of such clubs in the west. Also, my wife, Wendy Herdman is the 4H Extension Agent for Westmoreland and Richmond Counties, and she suggested that I start the club." He applied for and received a Special National Park Service Youth Project Grant to create this club which now has about 50 members ranging from Cloverbud through the traditional member ages.

Dick told us, "Member projects include: [making] hand-forged goods like hooks and nails, dancing, and hearth cooking.... The members perform living history demonstrations in costume: cooking, spinning, dancing, and blacksmithing at least once a month, year around. We not only demonstrate at the (George Washington) Birthplace, we have helped with special events at Booker T. Washington National Monument and local events, most notably the Richmond County Fair." When asked whether members exhibit at the county fair he said, "Only recently, and mostly non-historic goods, although one member submitted a 'kick toaster (1800s iron toasting rack for fireplaces),' and a leader put in a bed gown."

You might wonder if the members weren't doing these demonstrations would anyone else do it. He said, "Very few people do this, and with little regularity, so they are definitely filling a niche and need. Most importantly, they advance the appreciation of the contributions that the Northern Neck (of Virginia) has made to American history."

If you'd like to learn more about this 4-H Heritage Club or have a similar club in your area, Dick says that he'd like to hear from you. [Richard Lahey@nps.gov](mailto:Richard_Lahey@nps.gov), 804-224-1732, ext: 235.

We are Searching For...

National 4-H Congress Programs

We are seeking National 4-H Congress Official Programs and Souvenir Booklets to digitize for our history website. We have a few, so please tell us what you might be able to give or loan to us before sending.

Information on Mu Beba Beta 4-H Fraternity

Mu Beba Beta - Any information on the national 4-H fraternity known as "Mu Beba Beta," the name being taken from the club motto, "Make the Best Better." Believed to have been started in colleges in the northwestern states, particularly Washington and Idaho, the purpose of the collegiate fraternity was "to promote and further club work among farm boys and girls, to promote fellowship among fraternity members and to interest club members in higher education." Mention of this national fraternity comes from a 1924 issue of *National Boys' and Girls' Club News*.

Contact the 4-H History Preservation Team

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