



# National 4-H History Preservation Program

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Volume III Issue III

## Looking for an exciting idea for 4-H Youth? Engage them with interviewing former 4-H members

Cooperative Extension will celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Smith-Lever Act in 2014. The **Smith-Lever Act of 1914** is a United States federal law that established the nationwide system of cooperative extension services connected to land grant universities. The purpose of the extension services was to connect the land grant universities with the general public, allowing people to learn about current information in agriculture, farming, and other topics.

The National 4-H History Preservation Team hopes to launch a national 4-H Oral History Project in 2013 to capture the stories of former 4-H members, leaders, and staff to include in the celebration! We'd like to identify a few states/communities to pilot the project in the summer and fall of 2012. Pilot groups will receive guidance, including resources for recruiting and training current 4-H members to conduct interviews.

If you are looking for an exciting way to connect with 4-H youth in your community and want to contribute to the Cooperative Extension Centennial Celebration, why not consider getting involved in the 4-H Oral History Project? You can volunteer your state/community/club to be a pilot site and/or to volunteer to serve as a mentor for 4-H members in your local community who conduct the interviews.

The 4-H oral history interview is a substantial tool for collecting stories from 4-H alumni and others involved with the past and present history of your 4-H program. This process is not a science with only one way to do it; rather, it is

an art combining your own personality with your knowledge of what to collect.



Connecticut 4-H'ers practice their interview skills on each other, on camera, in preparation for the real thing.

Here are a few highlights of things you will need to think about as you consider getting youth involved in interviewing former 4-H members, leaders and supporters. For beginners, these tips may prepare you for collecting their stories:

- Before the interview, learn as much as you can about the interviewee. Search old 4-H records or ask acquaintances for personal 'set-up' questions to engage them with their stories.
- Prepare 4-H topic questions relevant to their 4-H era. Discover what 'drove' the 4-H program during their era and tailor questions tapping into their experiences. It validates their stories.
- Plan a one to two hour interview to proceed in three sections; first, ask questions to elicit experiences and factual data using the who, where, what and when questions; second, ask questions to evoke feelings and attitudes using the how and why questions; third, conduct a discussion to solicit assessment of their 4-H experiences. Respect their opinions. These responses,

regardless of interviewee's age, may also provide insights for future 4-H programming. It's said, "History repeats."

- The introductions and opening five minutes are key to create an atmosphere of trust, of genuine interest, of valuing their story. Maintain eye contact and listen actively, allowing silence at times for think time.
- Ask "open" questions allowing answers to expand on their memory; avoid questions needing yes and no answers.
- Don't jump from subject to subject. Clarify answers as you go. History needs to be as accurate as possible.
- Limit your remarks, don't be a star. Let the interviewee be more important in telling his/her own story.
- Audio tape the interview, or, if possible, video tape. Have the interviewee sign a release form for their information to become documented and used for historical purposes.
- Thank interviewee. Promise to later share results with history project.



4-H'ers can learn skills in audio- or videotaping and editing as well as interviewing as they help to collect local and state 4-H History for use in 2014.

For more details, please email us at [info@4-HHistoryPreservation.com](mailto:info@4-HHistoryPreservation.com). We'll work with interested volunteers to gather the resources necessary to make the pilot effort a success!

And visit our website at <http://4-HHistoryPreservation.com>. Click on the **Hands On** tab. There you will find additional details

about how to start up a youth history interviewing effort in your community.

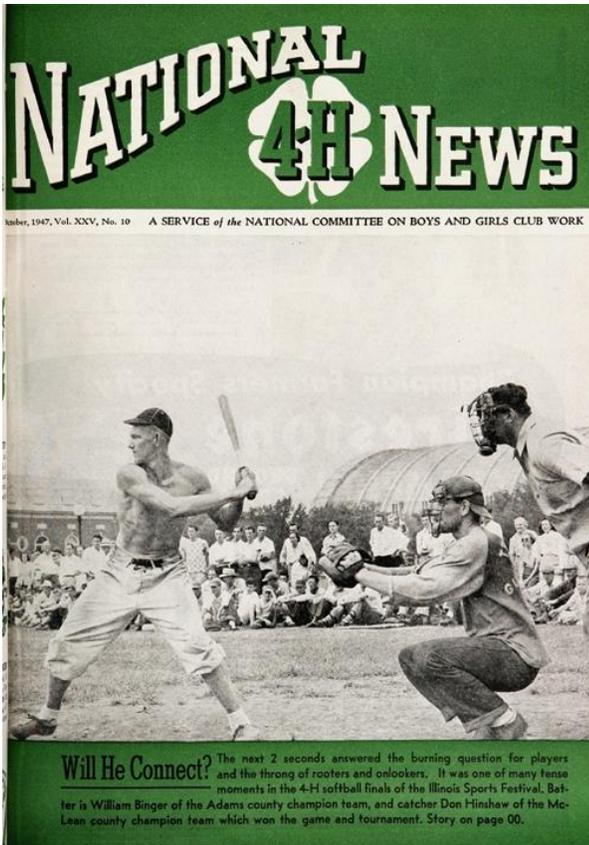
## ISO (In Search Of) 4-H and Sports/Recreation/Fitness

Like many other areas of 4-H, sports, recreation and fitness have transitioned over the decades, leaving behind an interesting history. That illustrious history shows that sport was a part of 4-H activities going back to the first clubs in some states, yet never became part of 4-H in others. Wrestling matches, bowling leagues, basketball teams were all popular. Competitive sports were particularly big in 4-H during the decades of the 1930s, '40s and '50s with many local clubs having both basketball teams and baseball teams. It was a good way to retain older teens, particularly boys, in the program. During the 1960s, sports transitioned into "recreation" programs of all types, and by the 1980s the popular term was "fitness."



There must be a lot of pressure when you're returning Pam Shriver's volley while President George H.W. Bush and Arnold Schwarzenegger are your tennis partners. Maryland 4-H member John DiBenio showed skill under pressure as he demonstrated his tennis ability with the rest of the Maryland 4-H'ers looking on during the 1991 Great American Workout on the South Lawn of the White House. (from the Fifth Leaf, National 4-H Council)

Regardless of whether we are talking about sports, recreation or fitness, it was a popular segment of 4-H in many states both at the club level and in the camping programs. The leader magazine, National 4-H News, carried a number of stories relating to these areas, however beyond these records very little history has been documented.



The rooters and onlookers were tense for the 1947 4-H softball finals of the Illinois Sports Festival. Batter is William Binger of the Adams County champion team, and catcher Don Hinshaw of the McLean County champion team which won the tournament. (from the October 1947 National 4-H News)

The National 4-H History Preservation team welcomes your comments, stories and photos about 4-H sports to supplement what has already been gathered. If you have anything to share, please contact us at: [info@4-HHistoryPreservation.com](mailto:info@4-HHistoryPreservation.com).

## 4-H Songs and Music

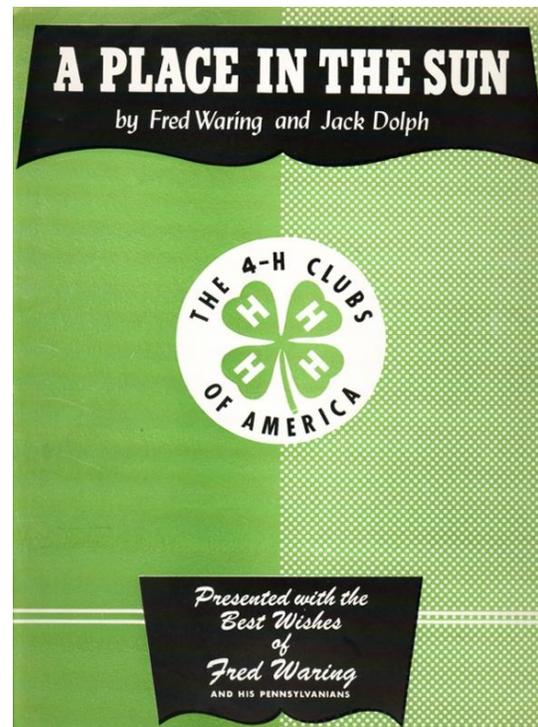
The 4-H Songs and Music section, although not totally completed, is now live on the 4-H History Preservation website at <http://4-HHistoryPreservation.com/Music/>. Read all about the role that music has played in 4-H over the years.

Music has traditionally been a key ingredient in 4-H from its earliest days. Some have even

described 4-H as a singing organization. Singing was often a part of the club meeting, as well as a major ingredient of the 4-H camping program, and county and state fairs.

During the decade of the 1920s, the National Committee on Boys and Girls Club Work (now National 4-H Council) actively promoted National Music Week which was held each year in early May. The National Music Week Committee in New York City offered 4-H club leaders free copies of a series of booklets about singing and music. Dozens of organized 4-H bands and orchestras were popular during the 1920s and 1930s. The National 4-H Supply Service began offering a National 4-H Club Songbook.

Many of these early songs can still be heard at 4-H events today - A Plowing Song, Dreaming, the 4-H Friendship Song and Music of the Soil. Another favorite 4-H song of significance was "A Place in the Sun," written by the famous orchestra leader, Fred Waring. Not only was the song available as sheet music but it was offered in a record format on the Decca Record label.



## THE REST OF THE STORY

### A Place in the Sun - Its First Performance!

When the girls attending the 1948 National 4-H Club Congress in Chicago boarded buses to travel up to the famous Edgewater Beach Hotel on Chicago's Lake Shore for the luncheon sponsored by Montgomery Ward they really thought that was a special treat. But the treat was yet to come in a thrill of a lifetime.

There to entertain them was Fred Waring and his Pennsylvanians, in person. Every one had heard - or heard of - this master radio showman, but to actually see him lead his 69 musicians was one of the top-flight experiences of the crowded Congress week.



Fred Waring enjoys being surrounded by 4-H delegates trying out his new song, "A Place in the Sun." The girls, from left to right: Barbara Long, Maryland; Katy Adkins, Georgia; Margaret Walker, Oregon; Dorothea McCue, Missouri; Verna Owens, Minnesota; and Mae Murray, Oklahoma. (from January 1949 National 4-H Club News)

But, Mr. Waring had a special purpose for entertaining these Congress delegates as part of the program was the first performance of a very special new 4-H song written by Fred Waring himself - "A Place in the Sun." The whole of the 4-H world would soon hear this music in days to come, but these privileged girls can always say "we heard its first performance!"

### Notice:

If you know someone who would be interested in getting the National 4-H History Preservation Newsletter, it's now very easy to sign up on: <http://4-HHistoryPreservation.com> by clicking on Home & News in the left hand menu bar, then on Newsletter, where you can sign up online.

### Recognizing Firsts and Lasts in Club and County 4-H History

With World War II depleting foods for the average American family due to rations, shortages, and missing farm labor, a first in Hennepin County was the Victory Gardens made possible by many collaborators, including 4-H. Marie Olson, a 4-H member of the Brooklyn Center 4-H Club started it all in 1942 with help from Extension Home Demonstration Agent (HDA) and the Operating Superintendent from Sears and Roebuck, who donated seeds and tools, along with support and publicity.



First 4-H member in Hennepin County Minnesota, Marie Olson, who made a Victory Garden in her county; shows off her vegetables to Miss Cina, Home Demonstration Agent, Miss Cina and Mr. Donavic of Sears and Roebuck.

Her 4-H garden became the leading demonstration plot which evolved into 1,972 other gardens in the county by 1945. They all were known as "Peace Gardens" or "Victory Gardens" (it was considered patriotic to grow your own food because produce from large farms was needed by the military). Many gardens were also sponsored by a local PTA, but participants had to join 4-H before they could become involved and compete.

Marie took leadership in involving many other communities and became a spokesperson at many banquets and on magazine covers. Hennepin County is located in Minnesota, with Minneapolis as its county seat. Marie is now Marie Ylinen, living in a high-rise on the edge of downtown Minneapolis, which is the county seat of Hennepin County.



Marie proudly displays samples of her canning. Note the V (for Victory) on her cap. The table cloth design, pressure cooker and the old car help to date the photo.

### Looking for Firsts and Lasts in 4-H History

Why should we be so interested in Firsts and lasts? The first and the last of various 4-H program components create history. At 4-H fairs, camps, meetings and events, you often have an historic first or last. Be alert for these special moments and help to preserve them for your 4-H history.

Here are some to be looking for as local history is being collected:

- Identify the first 4-H office with designated staff working with 4-H
- Identify the first 4-H club organized with leader and member names
- Identify the first integrated 4-H club in gender, race, etc.
- Identify the first 4-H club in each township, community, suburb, etc.
- Identify the first 4-H club to reach 25 years, 50 years
- Identify the first 4-H club hosted by a school, business, agency, etc.
- Identify the first 'competition' event
- Identify the first 4-H members to participate in competition outside the local county
- Identify the first year with membership of a county-wide 4-H Federation or committee structure
- Identify the first local radio or TV program conducted by 4-H participants
- Identify the first observed 4-H Sunday and last
- Identify the first club tour and last
- Identify the first county 4-H community service project
- Identify the first club or county 4-H member to receive national recognition

Other examples of how to save, find or use 4-H History at the club, county or state level can be found at: <http://4-HHistoryPreservation.com> . Click on the Hands On tab on the left.

**To make a contribution to the National 4-H History Preservation Program;** please go to <http://4-HHistoryPreservation.com> to check your options, or mail a check payable to **National 4-H Council at:**

National 4-H History Preservation Program  
 National 4-H Council  
 c/o Wells Fargo Bank  
 PO Box 75375  
 Baltimore, MD 21275-5375

Please write **4-H History Preservation Program** on the Memo line of your check.

## Can You Help Us Find:

Copies of the following 4-H films for the purpose of making a digitized copy for the National 4-H History Preservation website.

- **4-H, Here and There**, 1956: Produced by the Venard Organization, funded by Funk's G Hybrids.
- **Bread Baking**, 1984: Funded by Eastman Kodak Company.
- **Bridge to the Future**, 1961: Narrated by Chet Huntley. Funded by International Harvester Company.
- **Driver in Command**, 1975: About Automotive program. Funded by Firestone Tire & Rubber Company.
- **e.g. India**, 1966: About IFYE. Funded by International Minerals and Chemical Corporation.
- **Get the Message?**: Supports 4-H Health program. Funded by Kraft, Inc.
- **Getting Involved**, 1979: Supports Citizenship program. Funded by The Coca-Cola Company.
- **Hope for Tomorrow**, 1953: Filmed at 4-H Club Camp. Funded by Ford Motor Company.
- **Joe M. Day - 4-H'er**, Report-to-the-Nation delegate: Funded by J. I. Case Company.
- **Make and Model Your Own the 4-H Way**, 1953: 4-H Dress Revue. Funded by Simplicity Pattern Co. Inc.
- **Safety, Our Number One Crop**, 1947: Featuring National 4-H safety winners. Funded by General Motors.
- **The National 4-H Club Congress**, 1956: Funded by the Firestone Tire & Rubber Company
- **The Safest Township Anywhere**, 1960: Premiered at National 4-H Safety Congress. Funded by General Motors.
- **Share the Fun Breakfast**: Films produced several years in the 1950s at National 4-H Congress. Funded by U. S. Rubber Company
- **Where the Road Turns Right**, 1946: A tribute to local 4-H volunteer leadership. Funded by Sears-Roebuck Foundation.

We can return the films (or tapes) once they have been digitized. Or, you may know where there already is a digitized copy. This is just the beginning of a long list of films the 4-H History Preservation team is seeking. Please write: [info@4-HHistoryPreservation.com](mailto:info@4-HHistoryPreservation.com)

## Contact the 4-H History Preservation Team

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