



# National 4-H History Preservation Program

## January 2018 Newsletter

Volume IX Number I

### How Long Have Pigs and Chickens Been in 4-H?

Otis Samuel O'Neal made a mission of improving nutrition and income for black farm families in rural Georgia. O'Neal was hired as the Peach and Houston County Extension Agent for the county's black farmers in November 1914. He was based at Fort Valley School (now Fort Valley State University). Noticing the dependence of farmers on raising cotton, he felt that raising some food products would improve their income and nutrition. He began teaching them about growing and canning fruits and vegetables, raising poultry and hogs and curing meats. [Taking the University to the People: Seventy-Five Years of Cooperative Extension.]

O'Neal had the idea for having a meat show at Fort Valley in 1916, and new Houston Home Demonstration Agent Mary Searcy planned an egg show to promote better poultry production. They combined these to establish the "Ham and Egg Show" in early March to encourage farmers to produce more food and by showcasing high quality examples of meat and eggs produced by county farmers. ["A study of the negro home demonstration program in Georgia, 1923-1955," Lillian Camilla, Weems Atlanta University.]



Live interviews were conducted at CBS's county radio show to gain attention on these programs.

The show had a small beginning with only 21 "poorly-trimmed, half-cured hams and shoulders and 17 dozen dirty, mixed eggs" and less than 100 visitors. The prize-winning pork and eggs were auctioned, providing some extra income that could help the farmers to buy supplies for the coming growing season. Within a few years, 4-H members were also participating in 4-H entry categories.

The show grew over the years, and was replicated in a number of Georgia counties and in some other Southern states. According to the March 1945 issue of the Fort Valley College "Peachite," 175 Peach and Houston County farmers displayed 1,813 hams, shoulders and sides weighing about 15,000 pounds, accompanied by exhibits of canned fruits and vegetables. An estimated 2,000 visitors attended. Also, a live interview was conducted on CBS's "Country Journal" radio show. The shows gained national attention with articles printed in periodicals such as Readers Digest, Coronet, and LIFE magazine and on radio.

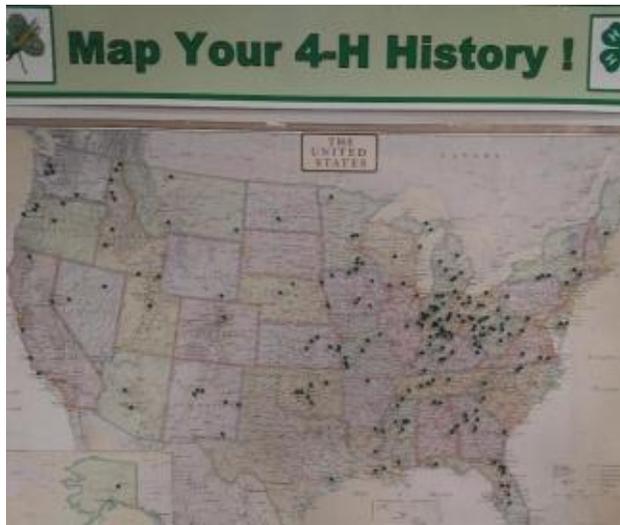
In recognition of the impact of O'Neal's work, including the Ham and Egg Shows, he was presented the USDA Superior Service Award in 1949 [November 4, 1949, The Gastonia Gazette, from Gastonia, North Carolina.]

O'Neal retired in 1951, but the show continued under the leadership of county agent Robert Church. Its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary was celebrated in 1966, but the following year was the last show at Fort Valley. Today, only Lowndes County (Valdosta, GA) continues to have a Ham and Egg Show. [<https://hamandeggslowndes.wordpress.com>] However, a number of WV counties still have 4-H and FFA "Ham, Bacon and Egg Show and Sale" events.

In his address before the Western States Extension Conference in Corvallis, Oregon in 1947, President **A. L. Strand** of Oregon State College states: "In 4-H Club effort lies our best assurance of worth-while and lasting results of all Extension work."

## Putting 4-H History on the Map in 2017-2018

4-H educators from 44 states nominated 214 new points of interest from their personal 4-H history during the 2017 NAE4-HA conference in Indianapolis last fall. Educators from Indiana lead the race of states to nominate 30 new points of interest. Ohio, with 20 new points of interest, came in second.



The photo shows the 214 new points of interest identified during the 4-H History exhibit at the 2017 NAE4HA meeting November 15.

Ohio is planning to get 4-H points of interest identified and loaded to the interactive national map, so that visitors to NAE4HA 2018 in Ohio can locate and visit sites significant to 4-H history in Ohio, on their way to and from Columbus for the meeting in October. Doug Fox ([Foxx.2@osu.edu](mailto:Foxx.2@osu.edu)) of Wayne County, Ohio, will help coordinate this effort in 2018.

To see points of interest already loaded to the map, go to the Web link at [http://4-hhistorypreservation.com/history\\_map](http://4-hhistorypreservation.com/history_map) or use the QR code



if you are trying to get people at meetings to take a quick trip to the site without needing to get them to type down the address.

To nominate a point of interest from your 4-H history, please contact Tom Tate by email at [tateace@aol.com](mailto:tateace@aol.com)



An Ohio 4-H staff member presses the pin into the location of her most memorable 4-H experience. She also completed the details of the point of interest she has nominated.

## 4-H History Author Dies

It is with sadness that we report the death of Marilyn Freeman Wessel, former Director of Information at the National 4-H Foundation (now Council) and co-author of *4-H: An American Idea 1900-1980, A History of 4-H*. Originally from Iowa and with journalism experience in California, Wessel came to the Foundation when her Historian husband Tom was offered a job at the Smithsonian Institution. She lost her battle with cancer December 4, 2017, in Bozeman, MT.

After moving to Bozeman, Wessel was a writer/editor for Montana State University Extension Service, and served in many other capacities with local and state institutions and causes. With an innate concern for other people cultivated on her family's soybean farm, Wessel had a strong sense of public service.

Those of us who knew and worked with Wessel remember fondly her creativity, energy, and deep commitment to telling the 4-H story.

She co-authored the second 4-H history book with husband Tom, dedicating it "...to all 4-H youth, past and present, parents, volunteer leaders, professional staff, and friends of 4-H from the public and private sectors, without whom 4-H history would not have been possible." The 4-H History Leadership Team credit the book as the "most often referred to" when helping people find factual information on history of the 4-H program.

## Saving State 4-H History

By Bill Svendsgaard

Saving our 4-H history is no longer just a passing thought. At the NAE4-HA Conference in November of 2017, while assisting the Leadership Team in the National 4-H History Preservation Program booth, I discussed with over 30 educators and state staff on saving their 4-H history. Thanks to the National 4-H Team, wide-spread interest in 4-H History is already alive and growing. Conferees came to the booth asking questions. We didn't need to circulate and drum up interest. The most frequent questions or comments were: (1) "What can I do back home?" (2) "Do you have guide sheets to help me?" (3) "Sounds very time-consuming to me" (4) "I don't know where to start" and (5) "Why are we doing this and what're the benefits?"



Bill Svendsgaard and Sue Benedetti communicate with county and state 4-H staff at NAE4-HA 2017 4-H History exhibit who are interested in saving 4-H History in their states.

The Minnesota 4-H History Team has a head start and has developed goals and some supportive materials. I handed out or e-mailed three guide sheets on "Starting tips on what to save – what to toss," "Suggestions for creating your own 4-H History Saving Team" and "Goals of the Minnesota 4-H History Team."

We are developing more guides and plans as we pursue our own goals. Based on conferees' questions and concerns, there is a need to identify local systems to help them, as many stated their plates are already rather full. They articulated several areas of need:

- to develop more specific guides in finding and saving 4-H History;
- to teach interviewing skills with teens and adults to discover local 4-H stories;

- to create a "pay-off" plan so results aren't just filed or boxed but give a deeper meaning and use of our 4-H history; and
- how to collaborate with local and state museums, archives, and with local, state and federal government records.

I was motivated and thrilled with their passion, questions and responses. The movement to save our 4-H history is alive. What fun it will be to celebrate with them in their finding their histories. Others who didn't find a chance to talk with me in Indianapolis, can contact me at bill.svendsgaard@gmail.com, chair of the Minnesota 4-H History Team.

## 4-H Happens Locally

By Ron Drum

What is 4-H?

The USDA website says 4-H is USDA's "premier youth development program." 4-H.org says it is a community that develops youth through learn-by-doing activities. Penn State University says 4-H is a community of young people learning citizenship and leadership. The University of Maine says it is a positive youth development program that empowers young people.

So, 4-H is youth development at its best! The point of it all is the improvement of youth, the young people; those individuals who make up the community.

We think of history in terms of the grand themes: IFYE, National 4-H Congress, 4-H Calendar Art, the social and societal forces that impact, shape and drive the program. Yet, it is the individuals, their stories, that, albeit cumulatively, result in what we call "history." There would be no grand theme history without all these individual stories to give it light.

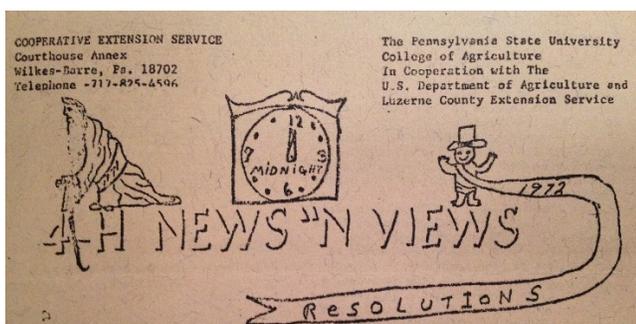
When Franklin Reck wrote The 4-H Story, he stated in his introduction (p viii) that to help tell the story, he focused on "...a boy, a girl, an agent, a single region. There are many stories and anecdotes, some of which may at first glance seem unimportant." However, he says they "...help the lay reader understand the significance of 4-H by seeing people in action in a specific setting."

And so, along with the grand themes, we too, upon occasion, will look at individual stories; stories that expose the significance of the thing we know as 4-H. We begin with a story from the year 1971.

That year, a group of teens in Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, began producing a county 4-H newsletter, 4-H News 'N Views. Volume II, #3 (October, 1971) notes, "After a year of trials and tribulations and a few pilot issues of News 'N Views, I believe we are ready to begin steady production of the newsletter designed to 'bridge the distance and communication gaps between 4-H'ers throughout the county.'" The letter calls for "ideas, comments, or contributions you might have" that would improve the newsletter.

Staff is listed as Nathan Drum – Editor; Sally Brown – Gossip Column and 4-H Calendar; Linda Young – Comics; Mary Beard – "Dear Clover" Advice Column; Ronald Drum – Letterhead. If memory serves me right, I was the "junior" member, my brother and the others being 3 years older than me. Actually, I probably was there because Mom didn't want to leave me home by myself.

So, they gave me a job: to provide drawings and a unique masthead each month. I took my job seriously. Here are just a few:



My collection probably includes only the eight months of issues my mastheads appeared but in those eight months I was empowered by 4-H to be a leader and to put my talents to work, which, in turn, improved my self-esteem and confidence – exactly what 4-H does for youth every day. What is YOUR 4-H history-making story?

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

National 4-H History Preservation Program  
National 4-H Council  
PO Box 37560  
Baltimore, MD 21297-3560

Please write **4-H History Preservation** on your check.

### National 4-H Congress – Chicago

*This is the third in a series on the history of National 4-H Congress, an event which began in 1921, though its inception dates to 1916. Over the next several issues of the National 4-H History Newsletter we will feature various aspects of the Chicago Congress, a very important event in national 4-H history. We welcome your comments at: [info@4-HHistoryPreservation.com](mailto:info@4-HHistoryPreservation.com)*

### Educational Programs, Discussions and Inspiration

Early Congress educational programs and assemblies tended to feature noteworthy speakers from various walks of life providing the young delegates with inspiration and pointers for future success. It might be said that the speakers "preached to" the assembled delegates. But slowly Congress programs changed, allowing delegates the opportunities to interact with the speakers and ask questions, to debate topics among themselves. Delegates would often be divided into smaller groups of 10 or 20 and they would frequently get into heated discussion.

A popular feature of some of these assembly programs was called "Fight for the Mike." Three or four floor mikes were positioned across the stage and the group spokespersons would actively compete with each other to state their group's position on a given topic. This resulted in lively debate between delegates and, if the topic related to something a previous speaker had just said, sometimes they were even drawn back into the discussion to prove their point. By this time, the assembly programs were run by delegate coordinators, young people who had returned from the previous Congress to help staff and coordinate the various educational programs. Delegates were very much a part of both the planning and conduct of the educational programs.

Somewhere around the 1970s the awards donors also got involved, often hosting a special delegate 'rap session' for their program's state and national winners where the corporate officials and the delegates could sit around informally and talk about any given issues of the day that they wanted to. This was tremendously popular with both the delegates and the company VIPs.

Numerous delegate surveys done through the years show that many felt the inspiration of the Sunday Evening Club and Sunday morning's Central Church Service were two of the Congress highlights they liked best.

Pageantry was always a big part of Congress assemblies, from the Color Guard from Great Lakes Naval Station to the presentation of state flags or special programs depicting the Congress theme.

Many delegates remember the U.S. flag unfurled in the corner of the huge International Ballroom of the Conrad Hilton. It was positioned in front of a wall vent which started to blow strong air, allowing the flag to unfurl and blow in the breeze in the strong bright spotlight of the otherwise dark room while the band played the national anthem. As those young delegates stood, singing the anthem with hand over heart, there couldn't be a more-proud group of Americans anywhere. This was particularly true

during the 1941 Congress where the delegates spent much of their free time, and at assemblies, discussing war and the potential for America's involvement during that first week of December. The large photo of the entire Congress delegation standing outside the International Harvester plant with smiles on their faces conveys the youthful optimism from the week's discussions. It is a rather haunting picture. Little did they know that three short days later, on December 7, before most of them had even returned home, the Empire of Japan would bomb Pearl Harbor, drawing the United States into the war and changing the plans and dreams of most of these young delegates; for many, completely turning their lives upside down.

The history segment on National 4-H Congress-Chicago is near completion and will be in the National 4-H History section (at the bottom under 4-H Program Events) on the History Preservation website: [http://4-HHistoryPreservation.com/History\\_National.asp](http://4-HHistoryPreservation.com/History_National.asp)

Over the next several issues of the 4-H History Newsletter we will be featuring additional aspects of this very important event in 4-H history.

We welcome your comments at: [info@4-HHistoryPreservation.com](mailto:info@4-HHistoryPreservation.com)

### 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;** *Maryland Volunteer 4-H Leader*  
**Kendra Wells;** *University of Maryland 4-H, retired*  
**Tom Tate;** *Extension Service, USDA, retired*  
**Chad Proudfoot;** *University of West Virginia 4-H*  
**Melvin J. Thompson;** *National 4-H Council, retired*  
**Ron Drum;** *University of Maine and National 4-H Council, former staff*  
**John Wells;** *USDA, Retired*  
**David E. Benedetti, Secretary;** *National 4-H Council, retired*  
**Rick Moses, Webmaster.**

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