



National 4-H History Preservation Program

March 2016 Newsletter
Volume VII Number III

On this Day in 4-H History

March 5, 1963: President John F. Kennedy welcomes the entire 4-H Report to the Nation team to the Oval Office.

March 8, 1930: During the decade of the 1930s the National Committee on Boys' and Girls' Club Work (now National 4-H Council) negotiated with the National Broadcasting Company to produce and air a monthly hour-long educational musical show on the NBC network, broadcast on the first Saturday of each month from 12:30 to 1:30 pm. Entitled the National 4-H Music Hour, the show was narrated by R. A. Turner, 4-H USDA.

March 30, 1978: Elizabeth Walton joins 4-H on an episode of "The Waltons," a popular television series of the period.

4-H Centenarian is Still Making News

By Sue Benedetti

You may have seen the Story in USA Today late last month about a 4-H alumna who participated with her students of 57 years ago to tell about the first day they were involved in the integration of the first white school in Virginia. We decided that Women's History Month was a perfect time to tell our readers a little more about this former 4-H'er and her experiences.



4-H Report to the Nation 1963



With President Kennedy on March 5, 1963 are the 4-H Report to the Nation Team, L to R: Alice Todd, Alabama; Tony Mellor, Arizona; Veronica Vamosy, New York; Faye Craig, Mississippi; Larry Pressler, South Dakota; and Don Weeks, Indiana. To see an interview with these 4-H Alums 50 years later, go to: http://4-historypreservation.com/Media_AV.asp and scroll down to the 1963 Report to the Nation 2013 Reunion.

Even though she has lived about 10 miles from the National 4-H Youth Conference Center, her busy life had kept her away. Her 4-H visit to Washington, DC, preceded the establishment of the National Center and even the first National 4-H Camp on the mall. However, she remembers her trip here as if it were yesterday. Her first trip to the National 4-H Center was a memorable one for all of us who met her.

Martha Ann Riggs went to Washington, DC, as one 12 "Corn Champions" from Indiana according to a 90-year-old newspaper clipping from the Evansville Courier that she showed me recently. And guess who was in the photo with her? Well, who else but President Coolidge and the other 11 Indiana 4-H Champions who had won their trips in many other fields besides Corn. Miss Riggs, now 104-year-old Martha Ann Miller of Arlington, Virginia, was the

State Baking Champion and the youngest member of the delegation (at 14) by several years. But the interesting story about this “young woman” doesn’t end there. Not only did she receive a trip to Washington DC, she also was awarded a four-year scholarship to Purdue University (the first home economics scholarship ever given to a 4-H’er in Indiana) as a result of baking the best loaf of bread from among thousands of young 4-H’ers in her state. She went on to tell me, “I had quite an impressive summer that year. Since we also had hired help on the farm for the season, I did a lot more baking than usual. I had made 1,200 biscuits, 600 loaves of bread, and more than 500 pies, in addition to cakes, cookies and other treats.” Luckily for her, Purdue held the scholarship for her for five years until she finished high school.

When asked what she regards as the most significant event in her life, she doesn’t hesitate to say that it was winning that 4-H scholarship for four years of college. Since she had two brothers, and was a Depression Era farmer’s daughter, she says that she would not have had a chance to go to college at all without that scholarship.



Martha Ann Miller, center, with Kittrina Thompson, National 4-H Council, and Sue Benedetti on her first visit to the National 4-H Youth Conference Center. She was surprised to see her photo beside President Coolidge hanging on the wall there.

Martha Ann said, “I was always disappointed that I didn’t ever get to be a 4-H Leader. But our paths just didn’t cross that way.”

This story may sound similar to many stories we’ve heard about 4-H’ers today or in years past, and like many other 4-H stories, Martha Ann’s continues to amaze. The reason I was alerted to find and meet this woman is that at age 101 she decided to write her first book. She says, “I never dreamed of writing a book until I found myself telling about events of the past that were exciting, full of history and unique.” When I last spoke to her she was talking about

writing a book about her husband next because he was a very interesting man and did a lot of good things for his community.

Based on our earlier conversations, I wasn’t at all surprised to see Martha Ann written up as a part of a panel discussion on school integration in *USA Today* just last week. Here is the link to that article: <http://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/voices/2016/02/17/voices-ordinary-persons-extraordinary-life/80376908/>

Miller was involved in education all of her adult life. Her first job out of college was working for the gas and light company as a home economist. She says, “I worked with about eight other women and we would go to every home when they bought a new stove. We would show them how to adjust the flame and gave them a cookbook. I was using my training from college; that’s why I was hired.” Once she was married and had a family, she and her husband became involved in working for better schools where they lived in Arlington County, Virginia, through organizing and volunteering with the Citizens’ Committee for School Improvement. Their work paid off in that schools in that county are still some of the best in the nation today. Sounds a lot like the new theme: “4-H Grows True Leaders.”

After her children were all in a good public school environment, Martha Ann pursued her professional calling as a junior high home economics teacher. She says her Purdue University home economics qualifications led to a 21 year teaching career in that school. However, after one year, the state made science a mandatory subject for 8th graders, which meant that one subject had to go: home economics. Luckily, Martha Ann had taken night classes to be certified as a math Teacher since she had found difficulty earlier in finding openings for home economics teachers. So, she was able to move into that position where she stayed for the next 20 years.

How can one put such a fully-lived and productive life into a few short sentences? Since it’s not possible, here’s the information about her book so that you can read it for yourself. [The First Century, And Not Ready for the Rocking Chair Yet](#), Amazon, by Martha Ann Miller.

Locate a 4-H Alumna in your community or state about whom you would like to learn more. Introduce her to 4-H’ers who can interview and produce a “Voices of 4-H History” Video for this year’s 4-H FilmFest in Kansas City Missouri, July 31 – August 3. <http://4h.missouri.edu/go/events/filmfest/>

Folks Who Helped Make 4-H Great

This is the eighth in the series of 10 articles, reprinted from 1962 National 4-H News, which featured people identified by Extension Service professional staff members as “folks who helped make 4-H great.”

Gertrude Warren



Portrait commissioned by the State 4-H Leaders on the retirement of Gertrude Warren and presented to the National 4-H Center where it is displayed on the first floor of the J. C. Penney Building.

“Guardian Angel of 4-H.” That’s what one Extension veteran has called Miss Gertrude L. Warren, one of the earliest 4-H workers still active in the service of club work.

A review of the contributions this fine lady of 4-H has made to present-day club work quickly justifies the title.

Among her contributions, the greatest in subject matter is undoubtedly the broadening of girls’ 4-H work. Canning was the only national home economics project when Miss Warren came to 4-H in 1917. Today’s program includes clothing, room improvement and many others. These projects help more fully to meet the needs of 4-H members and their homes and communities.

Not only did Miss Warren introduce the new projects into the 4-H picture; she also had to prepare much of the written material for them. That was necessary then in order to get material to 4-H girls which was written at their own level. Since then, Extension home economics specialists in each state have produced 4-H literature. Miss Warren’s influence and insistence helped effect this change.

Only part of the picture of this early 4-H worker’s service is portrayed, though, by her work in home economics. She led major advances in many phases of 4-H. The following are only a few:

- Wrote the first bulletin on training local volunteer 4-H Club leaders.
- Led in the development of the team demonstration as a means of showing what had been learned in 4-H Club work.
- Authorized a basic bulletin on “Organization of 4-H Club Work for Use of Local Leaders,” later translated into several other languages for use in foreign youth programs. She also devoted much time to training local leaders in early years.
- Worked with T. A. Erickson to create National 4-H Sunday and wrote a bulletin on the Heart H.
- Led in the establishment of the National 4-H Club Foundation and in selecting a site for the National 4-H Center in Washington, D. C. (One of the main buildings at the Center is named Warren Hall in her honor.)
- Persisted in urging the use of the term “4-H” to replace the earlier title “Boys and Girls Club Work” by which the program was known until the early 1920’s. She also took leadership in having the 4-H emblem copyrighted.
- Helped plan and initiate the National 4-H Club Camps which included housing in tents in the shadow of the Washington Monument in 1927 and following years. Now, as the National 4-H Conference, this annual event takes place at the 4-H Center.
- Conceived the plan in the early 1930’s for the 4-H fellowships which provide a year’s study grant for promising 4-H workers to train at the U. S. Department of Agriculture and at nearby universities.
- Contributed articles on 4-H Club work to various publications, including the Encyclopedia Britannica and others.
- Not only led in the initiation of National 4-H Club Week but wrote material on the observance of this annual event.

- Participated in many conferences and on many committees in Extension, youth and farm home activities.

Brought up on a New York farm, Miss Warren went into home economics teaching while still a student at Columbia University. She went against the advice of many friends when she went into Extension work a year after her graduation in 1917. She was leaving a promising career in an established field to move into the unknown area of 4-H Club work.

After 35 years of service, she retired in December, 1952, and has continued active ever since in 4-H affairs. She is still the guardian angel of 4-H, always ready to combat those who would exploit this great youth movement for selfish gain.

Historical 4-H Art Postcards Available for Sale at 4-H Mall



Drum roll Please!

Announcing the ONLY National Historical 4-H Postcards now on sale at your friendly, neighborhood 4-H Mall! It's as near as your smart phone or computer. To go directly to these 4-H calendar art cards on the 4-H Mall, just click on <http://bit.ly/4HPostcards>

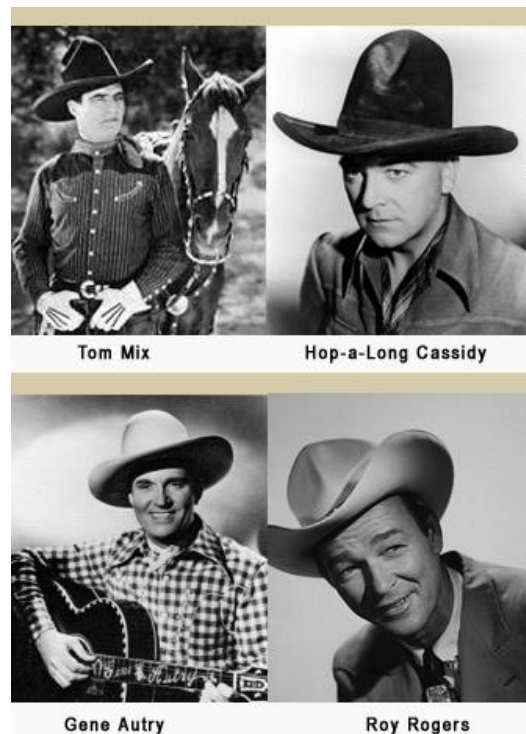
These images are reproduced from six of the collection of 39 original 4-H calendar paintings at the National 4-H Center. The overall collection of original calendar art has recently received three

previously undiscovered paintings from the late-1970s and mid-1980s. As we continue to collect information, original art, printed calendars and photographs of either, we are better able to piece together the complete story of this incredible program that helped publicize and document the history of 4-H from the early-1940s to the mid-1990s. When you purchase these cards (\$9.95 for set of six images), you not only have a visual of 4-H history but will be contributing to the future preservation of this unique slice of American life.

4-H'ers Love for Western Movie Stars and Vice Versa

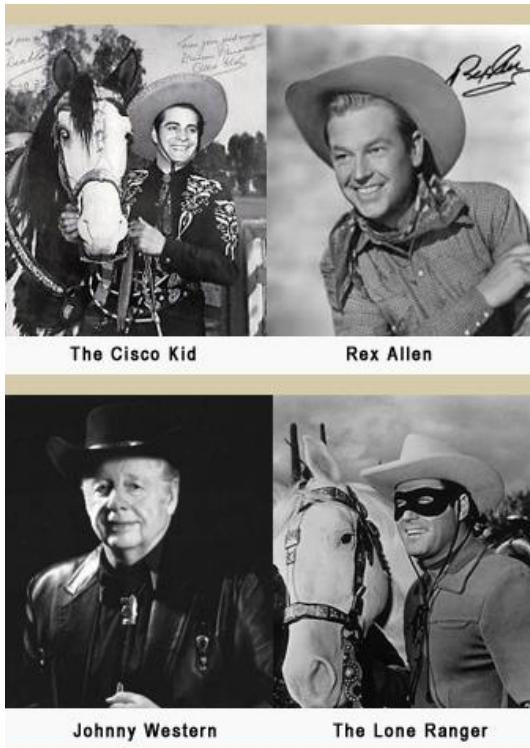
The following story is from the National Compendium of 4-H Promotion and Visibility on the National 4-H History website at http://4-HHistoryPreservation.com/History/4-H_Promotion/

While it perhaps wasn't as easy for rural youth to get into town to see the latest matinee performance of their favorite western idols at the local movie theater as it was for their big city cousins, they were true fans nonetheless. And the western movie stars of the 1940s and 1950s seemed to be well aware of this. For many – if not most – of the western stars, there was a direct connection with 4-H. Some grew up on farms or ranches. Some had been 4-H members. All of them made regular appearances at horse shows, state fairs and county 4-H fairs.



Many of these 4-H connections are now documented in a new segment in the National Compendium of 4-H Promotion and Visibility. Roy Rogers, known as "King of the Cowboys," raised a pig as his 4-H project while growing up in Duck Run, Ohio. Along with his wife, Dale Evans, Roy Rogers attended National 4-H Congress in Chicago several times and appeared in a 1984 promotional film, "4-H is More." He was honored as a national 4-H alumni recipient in 1958.

Gene Autry was known as America's favorite singing cowboy. Autry's film and recording careers, along with wise investments, made him extremely wealthy. Gene Autry sponsored national 4-H scholarship awards at National 4-H Congress for several years during the 1950s. He entertained at National 4-H Congress in 1945.



The Cisco Kid

Rex Allen

Johnny Western

The Lone Ranger

William Boyd, who starred in western movies during the 1940s and 1950s, made 66 films as Hopalong Cassidy. Unlike Rogers and Autry, Boyd disliked Western music and did not sing in his movies but he could capture an audience in other ways. He attended the Thomas E. Wilson Day dinner at the 1955 National 4-H Club Congress where he entertained the delegates. Duncan Renando, an American actor best remembered as "The Cisco Kid" in films in the 1950's and TV, also attended the 1955

Wilson dinner at 4-H Congress at the height of his popularity.

Johnny Western, an American country singer, songwriter and actor from Two Harbors, Minnesota, began recording at his local 4-H Club singing Gene Autry's "Riding Down the Canyon." Later on, Western performed with Autry and was part of the Johnny Cash Road Show for decades. In 1958 Johnny Western wrote and performed the theme song, "The Ballad of Paladin" for the CBS television program "Have Gun - Will Travel" with Richard Boone. Western's last tour and performance was in 2013, the 4-H alum retiring from show business except for doing one or two planned projects a year.

Tom Mix and Clayton Moore ("The Lone Ranger") exemplify the western stars who appeared over the years at country events at state and county levels including many 4-H fairs and horse shows.

For an expanded version of this story visit the Promotion Compendium at http://4-hhistorypreservation.com/History/4-H_Promotion/Single_Story.asp?ps=170

4-H Promotion and Visibility Compendium Becomes a Popular "Read"

One of the most recent segments added to the National 4-H History Preservation website is the 4-H Promotion and Visibility Compendium. This is a collection of short stories - currently numbering over 170 - highlighting 4-H promotion and visibility over the last century. It includes many truly interesting and inspiring stories with new ones continually being researched and written.



In the 50s through 80s during many National 4-H Weeks, Lawrence Welk paid tribute to 4-H and to the special week being celebrated. Often Myron Floren, the popular accordion player in the orchestra, and a former 4-H'er, would give the tribute and play a special song, or it could just as well be another member of the Welk musical family.

Some of the stories highlight 4-H members, clubs or leaders while many others recount the connections 4-H has been fortunate to have with hundreds of VIPs through the years. These stories involving U.S. Presidents, NASA astronauts, Hollywood stars, corporate CEO's, TV personalities, sports stars and top educators and scientists show that 4-H has been held in very high esteem decade after decade.

These stories are scattered throughout the Compendium, showing a broad segment of VIPs with special relationships to 4-H. Here's a short list of 25 - Dwight Eisenhower, Reba McEntire, Bob Hope, Dolly Parton, Jeff Gordon, Arthur Godfrey, James Cagney, Judy Garland, Natalie Wood, Amelia Earhart, Walter Brennan, Gene Autry, Hopalong Cassidy, Ted Williams, Ernie Banks, Ann Landers, Ronald Reagan, David Letterman, Lawrence Welk, Will Rogers, J. C. Penney, Eleanor Roosevelt, Orville Redenbacher, Ed Sullivan, and Sugar Ray Leonard. In this group alone, some were 4-H alumni, some made 4-H films or appeared in 4-H radio and TV promos, others spoke or entertained at 4-H events or helped raise funds for 4-H.



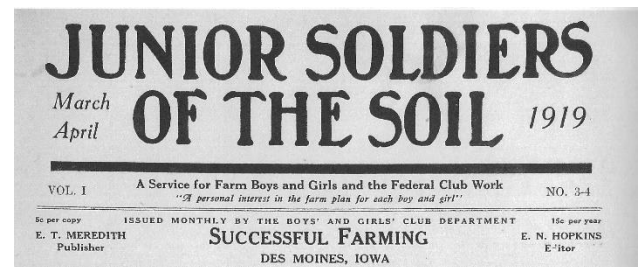
Peter Max Scarf designed by the famous pop artist exclusively for 4-H in 1975. The colorful design represents love, joy, and health through the symbols of head, heart and boats in peaceful motion capped off with the four-leaf clovers.

Reading through the stories of the 4-H Promotion and Visibility Compendium is a quick way to learn a lot about what makes 4-H so special. For those new to 4-H, these stories are a great way to capture some of the spirit and energy of the program through the decades. If you have been involved in 4-H your entire life, we can still guarantee you that there are

stories here which you have never heard about before. Visit the Compendium at http://4-HHistoryPreservation.Com/History/4-H_Promotion/

Please help us to complete the section about VIP alumni by visiting the draft on the 4-H History website: http://4-hhistorypreservation.com/History/VIP_Involvement/

Hands-on History



The Birds of Spring

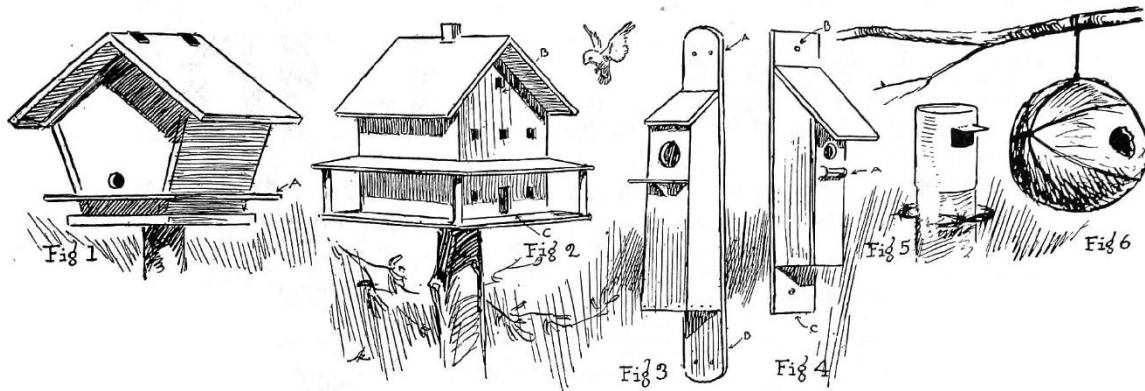
March is the month of spring, and with the coming of spring we notice the birds. The March-April, 1919, issue of Junior Soldiers of the Soil has an article by Judson Stuart entitled, "Half a Dozen Bird Bungalows – Make Friends with Birds." Stuart explains that birds eat insects that can be harmful to crops, as well as being "the most beautiful and tuneful of small living things." Shown in the article are six figures of different bird houses. It explains what kinds of birds would live in them and how to build them from various materials.

Two years later, the magazine that had been renamed Farm Boys and Girls Club Leader announced that it was going to conduct a boys' and girls' bird club that they hoped would enroll one thousand or more rural members. "The bird is one of the best friends of the farmer and gardener. Millions of bugs, insects and other enemies of the garden and farm are daily consumed by the bird family and were it not for the birds we would have no crops in a short time." To join the bird club, readers were asked to take the "bird club pledge" and send an entry coupon with a story about birds and a picture. Cash prizes of 50 cents for 5th place to \$2.50 for first place were to be awarded. Places 6th-10th would receive a one-year subscription to the magazine.

Hands-on History

If your club has a woodworking leader or member, you can learn to make your own bird houses for our feathered friends. Invite a speaker from a local Audubon Society or bird watchers' club to speak to your group about the birds in your area. Take a trip to a local park or wildlife refuge to observe the birds. Bring your mobile device and do citizens' science with an app to identify and catalog the birds that you

see. Although you can no longer win the Farm Boys' and Girls' Club Leader Bird Club Contest, members can write stories and take photos of the birds that you see to share at your club meeting. You might even have your own contest and award small prizes, just like they did for the 4-H boys and girls back in 1921.



Contact the 4-H History Preservation Team:

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