



4-H THROUGH the YEARS

A Look Back at 100 Years of 4-H



1900

1902

The 4-H club movement began when corn clubs were organized in the central and southern United States. These clubs gave farm boys and girls experiences in “learning by doing”. No one state is considered the official national home of the 4-H Club movement as several states started at about the same time.

T. A. Erickson starts the first school fair in Minnesota for students from Douglas County’s Nelson School. Boys bring products from crops and gardens while girls exhibit baking and sewing projects.



One of the first 4-H clubs was started in Ohio in 1902. A special commemorative stamp was issued by the United States Post Office in 1952 to honor the formation of this club as a typical 4-H pioneer.

1904

Minnesota’s first corn club is started when Erikson sends one pound of corn seed to any student who agrees to exhibit ten of their best ears at their local school fair.

1907

A clover (three leaved) is first used as a symbol for head, heart, and hands.



1910



1911

A fourth H, for health, is added to the clover to signify resistance to disease, enjoyment of life, and efficiency.

1913

The Minnesota State Fair Board provides exhibit space and \$200 in prizes for corn club exhibits.

1914

Passage of the Smith-Lever Act establishes the Cooperative Extension Service, of which 4-H is a part, to provide public financial support for Extension programs nationwide. Clay County’s 4-H clubs date back to 1914 when the

Ulen 4-H Club was organized. Margaret Lofgren of the Ulen Club was the state champion bread baker in 1914. Margaret was one of three 4-H’ers in Minnesota to win a trip to Washington, D. C. in 1918. R. E. Duddle, Superintendent of Schools at Ulen, was the 4-H club leader for seventeen years.

1916

In 1916 the nucleus of two present clubs was formed in Barnesville. Three men, George Whalen, Mr. Trovaten and J. H. Eldridge were very active and helped with club work.

1915

In 1915 a 4-H club was started in Glyndon. C. A. Robinson was the first active leader. This club was established with the cooperation of the Glyndon Public School and teachers were often the leaders.

1918

The phrase “4-H Club” is first used in a national publication written by Gertrude L. Warren. Prior to this time they were called “Boys and Girls Clubs”.

The first Minnesota 4-H Junior Livestock Show was held at the Stockyards in South St. Paul.

4-H club work in Clay county was active until 1922 when it lapsed for twelve years before the work was reinstated in 1934. Evelyn Bierbaum was hired as the first club agent and remained for two years. However, during the time that Clay County was without an agent, club work in the county continued under the direction of state leaders in extension.

1920



1922

The 4-H program at the Minnesota State Fair moves to the old Bee & Honey Building and stays there for 11 years.

1922

Joe Isakson, a 4-Her from Brown County, wins the health contest at the first National 4-H Club Congress in Chicago.

1924

The first national 4-H Camp (now called Conference) is held in Washington D. C.

1927

The national 4-H pledge and motto is approved by state leaders. The first pledge read "I pledge my head to reason, my heart to loyalty, my hands to service, and my health to efficiency for the good of my country, my community, and my home."

1930

A 4-Her from Douglas County is briefly hospitalized while at the State Fair. A nurse diagnoses his condition, "He drank too much pop."

1933-1934

In 1933-1934 Clay County had over 1000 4-H members, second only to St. Louis County. Today over 2000 youth annually participate in Clay County 4-H programs which include clubs, camps, after school and school enrichment program, service learning programs and other delivery methods.

1934

4-H Round Up was started in 1934. C. I. Evenson, a Moorhead businessman, was the first chairman and remained in that capacity for about 25 years. The Round Up was first held in downtown Moorhead. In 1959 a new 4-H building was built near the Red River. C. I. Evenson felt that the Round Up should have a building and he was instrumental in getting that project going. That building was sold and in 1972 a new facility was built in Centennial Park in Moorhead. That building was also sold and Round Up was held at the fairgrounds in Barnesville until the auction became part of the Clay County Fair in 1998.



1939

The brand new, gleaming white 4-H Building is dedicated at the Minnesota State Fair.

1940



1942

The first 4-H Radio Speaking Contest is heard on KSTP.

1945

The Minnesota State Fair is canceled because of World War II. To help the war effort, Minnesota 4-Hers gather 1,650,000 pounds of milkweed pod floss for floatation material in life jackets.

1948

The International Farm Youth Exchange (IFYE) begins by sending 17 American 4-Hers (including 1 from Minnesota) to Europe.

1950

1953

The first State Health Camp is held at Itasca State Park. Counties began crowning 4-H Health Kings and Queens.

Clay County 4-Her Janet Swanson was crowned Minnesota 4-H Health Queen.



1957

Minnesota 4-H Week is renamed Junior Leadership Conference.

1959

When President Dwight D. Eisenhower cuts the ribbon on the National 4-H Center in Chevy Chase, Maryland, he says, "I like 4-Hers because they strive for excellence."

Share the Fun began in Minnesota in the 1950's.

1960

1960

First National Forum for volunteer 4-H leaders is held at the National 4-H Center.

In 1960 a new 4-h exhibit building was constructed on the fairgrounds in Barnesville and in 1974 an addition was built on the west side of the original structure.

1962

A concerned citizen from Elmhurst, NY, writes a letter to President John F. Kennedy saying “Hundreds of thousands of boys in our cities are desperately in need of an urban 4-H club. The same can be said of the girls.”

1965

The age requirement for 4-H members drops from 10-21 to 9-19. (In the mid 1990’s Minnesota 4-H participation requirements changed from age to grade. Currently youth Kindergarten through one year post high school are eligible.

1969

Expanded Food and Nutritional Education Program (EFNEP) starts teaching people in urban areas about good food and nutrition.

1970



1970

The first 4-H “Arts-In” program is held at the Minnesota State Fair.

Conference judging became part of a 4-Hers experience.

1971

“Youth for Natural Beauty” is started by Lady Bird Johnson’s interest in community beautification. In 1973, this project became known as “Community Pride”.

1972

The Labo Foundation of Tokyo, Japan, begins an exchange program with 4-H families in the United States and Canada.

1973

The national 4-H pledge is revised to include the phrase “and my world”.

“ . . . And my world.”

1980

1981

The Minnesota 4-H Foundation is incorporated to raise private funds for 4-H programs and activities.

1984

The Minnesota 4-H Foundation begins its Small Grants Program to help youth work on projects in their community. Clay County has received thousands of dollars to support 4-H programs thanks to grants from the Minnesota 4-H Foundation.

1988

The current 4-H Round Up Show Arena was built between the sheep and cattle barns on the Clay County Fairgrounds in Barnesville.

1990

1992

Cluster Day Camps begin. Over 40 4-H camping experiences are offered to youth in Clay, Becker, Wilkin, and Otter Tail Counties. Over 800 Clay County youth participated in 1996.

1994

CYFERNet is created to link partnering institutions and merge technology resources into a “national network of child/youth/family expertise” to assist communities.

1995

The first Minnesota Summit begins as an effort to involve youth in public policy discussions and Clay County 4-Her Chris Ingebretsen was elected Minnesota 4-H Federation President.

1997

4-Hers from 45 Minnesota counties come to East Grand Forks to run day camps for children displaced by flooding of the Red River Valley.

1999

Clay County 4-Her Melissa Baird was chosen to serve on the National 4-H Strategic Design Team.



2000

2001

2,450 youth participated in Clay County 4-H youth development programs and over 280,000 youth on a state level. (That's nearly 1 out of every 4 youth). 6.8 million youth nationwide are enrolled in 4-H.

4-H members representing the Oakmound Club of Clay County spoke to over 1200 people about their "Happy Feet" charity during the National Extension 4-H Agents Conference in Bismarck, ND & the Congressional Dinner at the National Conversation on Youth Development in Washington D. C.



2002

In honor of its Centennial, 4-H hosts the National Conversation on Youth in the 21st Century. Clay County hosted the state's largest Conversation and representatives of Clay County 4-H account for 13 of Minnesota's 39 total delegates to the National Conversation in Washington, D. C.



The 4-H Creed

In the early days of 4-H, in keeping with the times, a creed was developed. Many states were developing creeds or statements of beliefs that guided work. A National Creed was developed for members and leaders.

The National 4-H Creed for Members:

I believe in 4-H Club work for the opportunity it will give me to become a useful citizen.

I believe in the training of my HEAD for the power it will give me to think, to plan and to reason.

I believe in the training of my HEART for the nobleness it will give me to become kind, sympathetic and true.

I believe in the training of my HANDS for the ability it will give me to be helpful, useful and skillful.

I believe in the training of my HEALTH for the strength it will give me to enjoy life, to resist disease, and to work efficiently.

I believe in my country, my State, and my community, and in my responsibility for their development.

The Nation 4-H Creed for Leaders:

I BELIEVE:

- The 4-H member is more important than the 4-H project.
- Learning how to do the project is more important than the project itself.
- 4-H'ers should be their own best exhibits.
- No award is worth sacrificing the reputation of a member or a leader.
- Competition should be given no more emphasis than other fundamentals of 4-H work.
- Enthusiasm is caught, not taught.
- To learn by doing is fundamental in any sound educational program and is characteristic of the 4-H program.
- Generally speaking, there is more than one good way to do most things.
- Every 4-H member needs to be noticed, to feel important, to win and be praised (leaders, too).
- Our job as leader is to teach 4-H members how to think, not what to think.