

4-H Centennial—1902-2002

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In the beginning . . .

In the late 1890's and into the early 1900's, 4-H programs began throughout the country in response to young people and their need for a better agricultural education.

Boys and girls clubs were established to meet this need. This community club model engaged youth through "learning by doing". Most states organized clubs outside of schools with parents serving as volunteer leaders and educators providing appropriate educational materials.

No one individual is credited with originating the 4-H program, but rather the program was founded through collective efforts of several individuals over the course of a few years.

In 1907 or 1908, the first emblem used nationally was designed by O.H. Benson as a three-leaf clover. It stood for head, heart, and hands. In 1911, Benson suggested that the fourth H should be hustle, and the 4-H design was adopted. Later O.B. Martin suggested that health replace hustle. The 4-H emblem has stood for head, heart, hands, and health ever since.

By 1912, 73,000 boys and 23,000 girls were enrolled in club work.

Passage of the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, established the Cooperative Extension Service of which 4-H is a part. The act provides public financial support for extension programs. In 1921, the National Committee on Boy's and Girl's Club Work was formed, which coordinated private support on behalf of 4-H type programs.

The decade of 1913-1922 included World War I and its impact on the lives of all Americans. Young people in club work contributed to the war effort through food production and conservation, canning demonstrations and other efforts. Wartime



(Left) Walton Pig Club, circa 1967.



Phyllis Vance was a national winner at the 1973 National 4-H Club Congress.



1977 State Style Revue winners from Lancaster County.



Natalie Miller, a present day 4-H parent (Natalie Leach), was a State trophy winner herself in the early 1970s.

incentives probably introduced club work to more youth and adults than did anything else up to that time.

In 1918, the first use of the term "4-H Club" in a federal document appeared in a document by Gertrude L. Warren. By 1920, in addition to the organization of clubs for boys and girls, the system of volunteer leadership evolved and became well established. The clover symbol of the club movement had become familiar by the 1920's. Volunteer leaders were considered to

be essential to the success of 4-H, and training of these leaders a top priority.

Following World War I, 4-H focused on organizing including requirements for a standard club, roles of local 4-H leaders, project experiences, growth of county farm bureaus, and other county extension organizations contributing to the management of club work.

Between 1923 and 1932, 4-H crossed

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4-H Centennial Quiz

1) In the 1890s, what county was home to the first boys' and girls' clubs in Nebraska?

- A. Red Willow
- B. York
- C. Sarpy
- D. Pierce

2) Even before 1910, young people competed in what activity at the Nebraska State Fair?

- A. Woodworking
- B. Small Engines
- C. Corn growing
- D. Photography

3) What state is credited with creating the 4-H emblem in 1908?

- A. Maryland
- B. Wisconsin
- C. Kansas
- D. Iowa

4) Where was the first organized Boys' and Girls' Camp held in Nebraska in 1912?

- A. Nebraska State 4-H Camp in Halsey
- B. Chadron State Park
- C. State Fair Grounds
- D. Eastern Nebraska 4-H Center

5) What year was Nebraska's first campsite, the State 4-H Camp at Halsey, dedicated?

- A. 1912
- B. 1930
- C. 1962
- D. 1988

** Bonus: Can you name the approximate locations of Nebraska's other two camps?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____

6) What was the result of the Smith-Lever Act of 1914?

- A. Establishment of the Cooperative Extension Service, of which 4-H is a part.
- B. Boys' and girls' clubs officially became known as "4-H Clubs."
- C. All school-age youth had to participate in a boys' or girls' club.
- D. The clover became the official symbol.

7) 4-H's school enrichment programs were established in the 1960s. What topics do they currently address? (There may be more than one correct answer.)

- A. Embryology
- B. Garbology
- C. Blue Sky Below My Feet (space travel)
- D. Nutrition, Fitness and Youth

8) How many youth were enrolled in Nebraska 4-H in the year 2000?

- A. 25,000
- B. 60,000
- C. 100,000
- D. 129,000

9) What year will National 4-H celebrate its 100th birthday?

- A. 2001
- B. 2002
- C. 2003
- D. 2004

10) Nebraska 4-H currently participates in exchange programs with the following countries: (There may be more than one correct answer.)

- A. Russia
- B. Armenia
- C. Japan
- D. Ukraine

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