**OUTLINE OF 4-H CLUB HISTORY**

National

Special demonstration work for boys and girls was begun in 1900. In 1902, A.B. Graham, superintendent of schools in an Ohio township, organized a boys’ and girls’ club with corn as the basis of home project work. Mr. Graham’s organization took the form of a definite agricultural club and undoubtedly marked the beginning of demonstration club work by boys and girls in the United States.

In 1903, the invasion of the Texas cotton fields by the cotton boll-weevil afforded an opportunity for Seaman A. Knapp of the United States Department of Agriculture to use boys in clubs to demonstrate ways and means of growing cotton, or other crops, in the devastated areas, in spite of the boll-weevil. His efforts were so successful that agriculture clubs soon were found in most of the southern states and in

some of the northern states.

Previous to 1906 or 1907, the club work was largely for boys, and the projects were mostly corn and potatoes. But after 1910, some pig clubs and other livestock clubs were organized in cooperation with the Bureau of Animal Husbandry. By the year 1913, enrollment of boys in the United States totaled approximately 95,000 members. In the meantime, some girls’ club work had begun in a small way in South Carolina in 1910 with tomato growing and canning projects. By the year 1913, girls’ club work had reached enrollment figures of approximately 33,000.

Then in 1914, Congress enacted the Smith-Lever law providing for Cooperative Agricultural Extension Work in the United States. This act made all extension work, including club work, an official function of the United States Department of Agriculture. It provided funds for the conduct of the work in those states which would add to these funds as required by this law. From that time on, club work has thrived. Many foreign countries are modeling their junior agricultural extension work after the plan of the 4-H Club in America.

California

In California, the history of boys’ and girls’ club work may be said to have had its inception at a meeting of the State Association of City and County Superintendents at Santa Catalina Island, August 1912. This conference was devoted to a discussion of the possibilities for boys’ and girls’ club work in California elementary schools.

On September1, 19913, B.H. Crocheron joined the staff of the University of California to become the state leader of farm advisors and to organize boys’ and girls’ club work. Professor Crocheron, in these early years, called the work with young people “Agriculture Clubs.” Some 40 students at the University, who were members of the Agriculture Club of the College of Agriculture, were utilized on a volunteer basis to organize clubs in the high schools of the state. These early clubs were set up on a contest basis with crops or animals. Yield was not so important as net return. Winners attended a convention at Davis. Further impetus in 1914, 1915, and 1916 was provided by a 30-day transcontinental trip with all expenses paid for the boy from each county who had shown the largest net return.

Supervision of the clubs was provided by the Extension Service. Two state club leaders were employed on a regional basis. County farm advisors and crop specialists served the clubs in an advisory capacity.

As the program grew, it became evident that more supervision from agriculturally trained persons would be required. Therefore, high school teachers of agriculture were employed by the University on a part-time basis to supervise the local clubs. Under their direction, the program was extended to boys and girls of elementary as well as high school age.

Cannin clubs for girls was first organized in 1920, followed by clothing clubs in 1921. These did not attract any large number of girls until the local volunteer leader plan was introduced.

This occurred in 1925 after many other states had demonstrated the success of the method. With the introduction of the local leader, the pattern of 4-H Club work changed. Clubs were organized on a community, rather than a project basis. Year-round programs of work, rather than seasonal ones, developed. The four phases of club worked based upon Head, Heart, Hands, and Health received equal attention rather than emphasis upon project attainment only. Membership increased rapidly until 1930 when it leveled off at about 11,000 – equally divided between boys and girls.

Enrollment in California 4-H Clubs remained at the 10,000 t 12,000 level until the end of World War II. From 1946 forward, there has been a continuous increase in enrollment.

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