

## **WISCONSIN 4-H HISTORY**

The years from 1902 to 1907 were the pioneer years in boys' and girls' club work. The work in Wisconsin started in 1904 when Professor R. A. Moore of the Agronomy Department of the College of Agriculture interested boys and girls in planting improved seed corn varieties. He took a supply of seed corn to Richland County and gave enough seed to plant a quarter of an acre to each boy and girl willing to cooperate. The corn was grown and displayed at county fairs and prizes were provided by the fair association. These early boys' and girls' agricultural clubs were the forerunners of the 4-H as it is known today.

The passage of the Smith-Lever Act by Congress on May 8, 1914, made a Cooperative Extension Program possible between the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Land-Grant Colleges. The College of Agriculture, University of Wisconsin, was one of the Land-Grant Colleges which started such a program. On October 1, 1914, T. L. Bewick was appointed Wisconsin's first State 4-H Club Leader.

A plan of organizing boys' and girls' agricultural clubs in Wisconsin was adopted. This plan called for a definite organization with the usual officers, an adult leader, regular meetings and a series of projects. Clubs were organized in schools and rural communities under the direction of the local teachers.

The Lynn Junior Farmers Club of Walworth County is generally recognized as the first club organized with closely related goals and objectives of present day 4-H. It was formalized by T. L. Bewick on October 30, 1914.

The boys' and girls' program grew by leaps and bounds. As the program grew, its image centered around the four-leaf clover emblem and the pledge and the organization became known as 4-H.

The 4-H Club Program also took on additional emphasis, such as what can work with a project for the boy or girl. We have seen that the "Learn By Doing" process is a process in a sense of developing better young people in terms of their competencies in leadership, citizenship, willingness and desire to work with others.

With this additional emphasis being placed on the young person himself, 4-H began to go where the youth are. Thus 4-H is on the move, gaining new acceptance and success in our rapidly growing urban society. 4-H has now opened doors for city and inner core project groups.

4-H is also increasing in scope and breath. Young people are interested in such a wide variety of topics that new 4-H projects are always being tested and added to the 4-H Program.

Even though the 4-H environment has grown from all rural to now include active urban and city programs, the theme of 4-H is ever present. This theme is to provide educational experiences as a means to gain the desired ends - self-reliant and responsible citizens of our society.