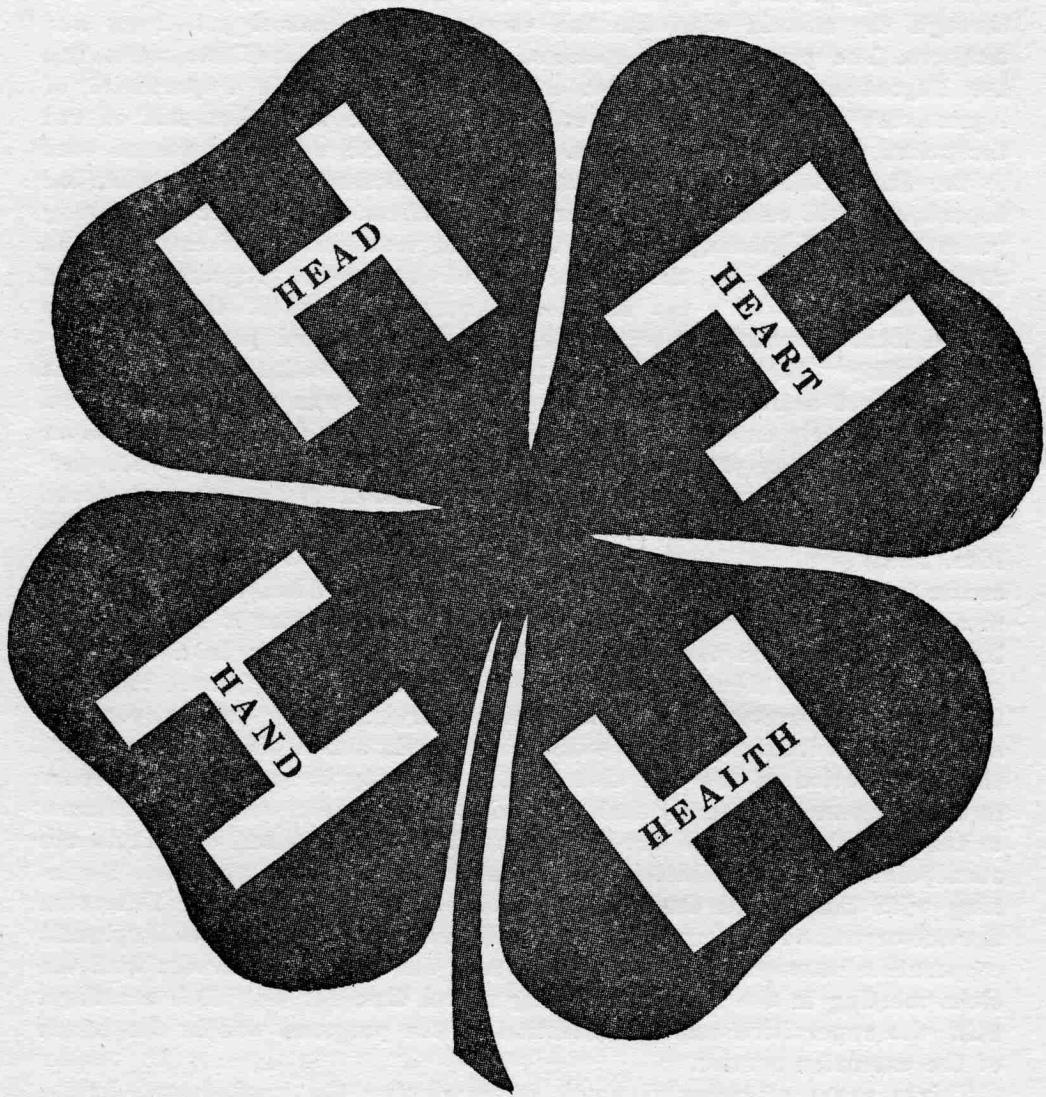


**HISTORY AND SUMMARY OF THIRTY  
YEARS OF 4-H CLUB WORK IN  
NORTH CAROLINA  
1909-1939**



**NORTH CAROLINA STATE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND ENGINEERING  
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# A BRIEF HISTORY AND SUMMARY OF THIRTY YEARS OF 4-H CLUB WORK IN NORTH CAROLINA

By L. R. HARRILL, *State 4-H Club Leader*

In the early stages of the development of the 4-H Club program, about 1907, the North Carolina Department of Agriculture offered prizes to boys and girls doing agricultural work. At this time it was handled through the schools with the full cooperation of school principals and teachers. The program was sponsored by the Farm Institute work and the Department of Agriculture. About 1909, the State Department of Agriculture withdrew from the supervision of the work, but still offered the prizes for corn club members. About 1910, the work was turned over to the State College of Agriculture and the Extension Service, with the department still offering prizes for club members. During the intervening years from its beginning up until the World War period, prizes were used rather extensively in the promotion of the 4-H program in very close relationship with the school system, with much of the leadership in the local communities being delegated to the school people.

Beginning with the World War period, and the inclusion of numerous other project activities for both boys and girls, was another transition period. Strangely enough, with a new administration or with a new leader in club work, there was still further expansion in the program with perhaps a bit of a tendency to emphasize activities rather than projects. During the World War period, the enrollment increased in various activities. Then, as might be expected, following the World War there was a decrease in interest in club work in North Carolina. Whether this was due to a change in the leadership in the program, or whether it was due to a lack of emphasis on the part of the Extension Director, is a debatable question, but it is significant that with the return of I. O. Schaub to North Carolina as Director of the Extension Service, there was a renewed and increased interest in club work. Significant, also is the fact that with the organization of the 4-H club on a community basis and the increase in the personnel of the Extension Service, there was a very definite trend to take the club program out of the school system and certainly from the standpoint of the administration and supervision of the program. Beginning with this period there is no record other than that the Extension Service organized and supervised the 4-H program. There was still splendid cooperation between the school system and the Extension Service with the clubs meeting in the school and using school time for 4-H Club meetings. Still, the supervision and the selection of the program was in the hands of the extension service.

Thirty years of going forward, of developing the head, heart, hands, and health of rural boys and girls, teaching its members the art of self government, the joy of work and accomplishment, pointing the way to beauty, and understanding, and culture in rural life, providing for the recreational and social side of life, helps to make rural life the attractive, accomplishing, satisfying life of the nation. Phenomenal has been the growth and the development of 4-H Club work in all of its phases, since its beginning in this state, May 1909. "Better conditions in agriculture

will be brought about as you boys study and apply yourselves to present day problems. The yield of corn in North Carolina is approximately fifteen bushels per acre. If you boys would like to do something about it, the Extension Service will help you organize a corn club and attempt to teach you how to increase the yield of corn," said I. O. Schaub, State Club Agent in May 1909 in his organization speech to a group of Hertford County boys.

It's a long way from that club of some fifteen members growing corn as a project to our present day 4-H organization with a membership of approximately 36,000 white boys and girls and 14,000 Negro boys and girls, and some 1,156 organized clubs. With project activities embracing projects in all phases of homemaking and agriculture, in which they plant, cultivate, harvest, and sell corn and cotton, tobacco, and dozens of other products, grow gardens, keep records, market available products, and can or preserve the remaining—they grow pigs, dairy cows, beef cattle, poultry, make exhibits, judge at Achievement Days and at county, state and national fairs and expositions. They beautify home grounds, remodel and furnish kitchens and other rooms in the home; they prepare balanced menus, make and remodel the family abode. They participate in camp and community activities.

Progress was naturally slow, but just as that seed of corn germinated and grew into a plant with leaves, tassels, silks, and corn, and eventually multiplied hundreds of times, so did the 4-H Club. The first addition was a Tomato Club in 1911, and with it was added to the first Extension Service in North Carolina, the services of Mrs. Jane S. McKimmon, who was later to become State Home Demonstration Agent, and Assistant Director, and one of North Carolina's most loved and respected women. With her appointment things began to move forward. A Food Short Course for tomato club girls was conducted at Peace Institute in Raleigh, and one for corn club boys at North Carolina A. & M. College.

1914 and the World War brought a shortage of food supply; again youth was called upon to lead the way in food production. Poultry work and gardening was added to the curriculum of club work. With this demonstration successfully completed, the leaders added other activities, such as sewing club work, canning clubs, and at about this same time the first dairy calf club in the South was organized in Catawba County. 4-H Camps were started, all separate groups to be sure.

1922 marked a new era in the development of the club program in North Carolina. The first baby beef club in the state was organized in Buncombe County. Daddy Millsaps and Doug Weeford's corn show, started in the early days of the corn club work, has grown into an Achievement Day with 500 Buncombe County club members in attendance, with exhibits of dairy calves, baby beef, corn, poultry, Irish potatoes, etc., with exhibits from something like 250 members. This era marks the beginning of 4-H camps with both boys and girls in attendance at the same time. A typical example of the first camp is given in a write up of the Assistant County Agent in Buncombe County in the Annual report covering his activities.

"Asheville 1922 fifty-one boys and girls accompanied by County Agent, Chas. E. Miller; District Agent, C. C. Proffit; County Club Home Demonstration Agent, Annie Lee Rankin; and Assistant County Agent, L. R. Har-rill, left Asheville early this morning for a four-day encampment at



Chimney Rock. Miss Bertha Proffit, Home Demonstration Agent from Mecklenburg County joined our group at Chimney Rock. Arriving at the location, we found an old open shed for a roof, with no equipment whatsoever to run the camp, not even a stove or a bed. The water supply was more than mile down the side of the mountain. One of the problems was solved by renting the upstairs of a tourist house as a place for the girls to sleep. The boys were bedded on the ground under the open shed up on the mountain side. During the night, a terrific thunderstorm suddenly broke upon the camp, giving this first camp, running water and electric lights, and this was furnished by nature in the form of a thunder-shower, and with it came the flood which completely washed clean the bedding and practically all of the equipment from the boys who were attempting to sleep under the open shed. It was almost twelve o'clock midnight. With poor experience and resources, the group began to gather wood and build a fire in the center of the pavilion, and as soon as there was enough dry space around the fire, the 4-H Club members were put to bed. Daylight found the camp quiet again.

"Following a breakfast prepared over an open fire and served in camp style, the group set out on a three mile hike to the top of Chimney Rock. Fortunately, the entire day was spent on this mountain hike—leaving the group hungry and tired. After another typical camp meal, the group without ceremony or without programs turned in for a night of rest as might be expected for one sleeping under the open sky in the mountain climate with the temperature hanging around 34 degrees.

"On the third day we packed our equipment, and started our homeward trip."

This story is given not for its historical value but rather that it does give a clear picture and a true picture of what our early camps were like. Later in this history will be given another story of a 4-H Camp which will show the trends and the progress in 4-H Camps.

One significant feature of this era was the numerous corn shows which were conducted in practically every county in the state. It is interesting to note and to follow the growth and the development of these shows—the one previously mentioned is but one example of what some of these early corn shows developed into. More significant is the fact that they did have a most important bearing on the development and growth of 4-H Club work in the state. It is especially interesting to note the effect that the corn show has had in the development of a better type of seed and its influence on the production of corn in North Carolina. As with other activities there were pig club shows, and as we follow the programs in all of this development, it is clearly indicated that the exhibit feature has been an important element in the development of the 4-H program—the community show and the county show, the exhibits at the State Fair, including 4-H demonstration teams and judging teams, and demonstrations of various types.

From 1909 to 1925, I. O. Schaub, Mrs. Jane S. McKimmon, T. E. Browne, Maude Wallace, and S. G. Kirby served as leaders of the club movement in North Carolina. During this time much of the foundation work was laid for the building of the present day 4-H Club work. Much stress was placed upon project activities, and today we still consider the project activities a foundation upon which we build our 4-H program. So well was this fact stressed that Charles Parker, one of the charter

members of that first club in 1909, produced a yield of corn on one acre of land that has not yet been equalled by a 4-H Club boy in North Carolina.

In 1926, L. R. Harrill was appointed State Club Leader and has served in that capacity since, assisted by Miss Elizabeth Cornelious from 1929 to 1932, and Miss Ruth Current from 1932 until her appointment as State Home Demonstration Agent in 1937, and Miss Frances MacGregor since 1937. R. E. Jones has served as specialist in Negro work since 1937. In 1926 the name was changed from Boys' Agricultural Club and Girls' Home Demonstration Clubs to the 4-H Club, and organized on a community basis with boys and girls making up the community club. The scope of project activities was broadened to include forestry, home beautification, room improvement, nutrition, and food conservation. The first 4-H Short Course for both boys and girls was conducted at the North Carolina State College of Agriculture and Engineering with an attendance of 400 boys and girls. Twenty-five counties held a camp with an attendance of 2,500 boys and girls. Fifty-four counties reported 4-H Club work. In 1927, the first National 4-H Club Camp was conducted in Washington, D. C. North Carolina sent its quota of delegates, and has continued to send its full representation each year since then. In 1928, organized recreation was added as a definite part of 4-H activities, and has played a most important part in the development of the program since that time. In 1929, health work was added as a definite part of the 4-H activities, and Boyce Brooks of Duplin County and Ruth Coleman of Alamance County were selected as North Carolina's first King and Queen of Health.

After five years of organized club work (1930), the enrollment had reached 26,638 with 981 clubs in 83 counties. It was during this period that community projects were featured by the club. Some of the earlier projects consisted of beautification of school grounds, beautification of church grounds, highway beautification, and similar activities. In 1931, the enrollment jumped to 29,921 with 52 Achievement Days with an attendance of 18,209. Sixty-two camps were held with 5,544 members attending.

Interest has grown in camp attendance to the extent that it was necessary to make a provision for a permanent 4-H camp. Prior to this time, groups were using all types of camp facilities, and going to places that were not suited or adequate in many instances, for conducting the 4-H camp on the plan that it should be conducted to provide the greatest amount of interest and enthusiasm for 4-H Club members. As a result two permanent camps were established; one at Swannanoa with a capacity for 100 4-H members, and one at White Lake with similar accommodations. The one at White Lake was built by the 4-H Club members in Bladen County. In order to maintain the camps and keep them in the proper state of repair, there was a small rental charge for each member attending, usually 50c per person for the duration of the camp, and in addition to this, the club members were required to bring their bedding, all of their food supplies, supply their own cooks, plan and conduct their camp program with the help of the farm and home agents of course. In other words, there was no assistance given to these early camps by the 4-H Club staff other than such as might be provided in the way of specialist help from the college. Naturally the program at such a camp consisted largely of the camp routine, outdoor recreation, and a systematic study of bulletins

pertaining to project activities, and strange as it may seem, there was much interest in these.

Much can be said of 1932 and 1933. Enrollment slumped to a new low—there was another war at hand, but this time a war of depression and of readjustments. A few counties weathered this storm of adjustment, and came through with results. In all cases these were the counties with community plans of organization. It is clearly demonstrated that the community plan was the most successful. Aside from this demonstration within our own set-up was the fact that in numbers of communities throughout the state, there were local people interested in the 4-H program to the extent that they gave of their time to carry on the program during the time when our Extension forces were so completely wrapped up in the A.A.A. program, further demonstrating the fact that there is a demand on the part of the people for the 4-H program and if properly organized, it will continue to function.

1935 brought new interests and a rapid expansion. Enrollment reached 31,500 with 1,030 organized clubs in 97 counties. Home beautification was conducted as a state-wide project; handicraft, rural electrification, and practically all phases of agriculture and homemaking activity were added to the program. An older youth organization designed to give training to older boys and girls and young men and young women was organized, and the first Older Youth Conference was conducted at the North Carolina State College with an attendance of over 100 young people representing thirty counties.

The state report for 1938 showed an enrollment of 46,040 members and 1,119 organized clubs in 99 of the 100 counties in the state. 163 Achievement Days were held with an attendance of 20,370, 5,900 members attended camps. 1,000 members and leaders represented 95 counties at the State Short Course held at North Carolina State College. 1,687 volunteer leaders devoted 4,802 days of time to the promotion of the program started a quarter of a century ago.

The most significant thing in the change in the 4-H set-up in 1938 was the method of handling 4-H camps. On the basis of experience gained in our first Wildlife Conservation Conference, a new plan for conducting 4-H Club camps was inaugurated. A camp director was placed in each of the 4-H camps in the state with the result that there was a unified program and a program of real value at each of the three camps in the state—the Hoffman Camp, the White Lake Camp, and the Swannanoa Camp.

1939 might well be classed as the most significant year since the organization of the 4-H Club in 1909, because in 1939 an all-time record for enrollment for completion of project activities, and interest, and enthusiasm in 4-H Club work was established. Naming them not in the order of importance but rather in their chronological order, the outstanding activities in 1939, and they are given as a matter of comparison, shows the growth and development over the thirty year period.

1. By the North Carolina 4-H judging contest, especially in connection with the North Carolina Crop Improvement Association, in which twenty-five teams and seventy-five members participated—making a higher average score in the crops contest than had ever been obtained by a group of 4-H Club members in any previous contest.



2. The rapid expansion of the Older Youth Program in the state with the successful completion of the third Older Youth Conference conducted at the North Carolina State College.

3. An expansion in the 4-H camp program and the acquisition of the new camp—Camp Millstone—complete in detail with accommodations for 125 4-H Club members, together with 1,000 acres of land. With the acquisition of this new camp, and with the further additions to our camp personnel to include a camp director, two cooks and at least one instructor for each of the three state camps, thus making it possible, for the first time, to plan and conduct the 4-H camp program in keeping with the principles and ideals of 4-H Club work.

4. North Carolina's participation in the Poultry Congress in Cleveland with the results that three white teams and two colored teams competed favorably with all other teams represented.

5. Five successful leadership training schools conducted at central locations in the State.

6. A 4-H Short Course surpassing all previous records from the standpoint of attendance, enthusiasm, and programs presented; the highlight was the presentation of the Pageant of Progress, showing the growth and development of 4-H Club work in North Carolina since its beginning in 1909.

7. By North Carolina's participation in the National Dairy Show at the World's Fair at San Francisco, winning National honors with its dairy demonstration team.

8. Representation and participation in the Country Life Association meeting conducted at Pennsylvania State College.

9. Represented at the National Club Congress by seven club members.

10. By its representation and participation in the World's Congress on Education for Democracy by Walton Thompson of Wilson County, who was selected to represent 4-H Club work at this conference.

11. The Club exhibit at the State Fair has grown from a small premium offered for the best ten ears of corn to a 4-H department with a premium list covering approximately \$3,000 for individual exhibitors; embracing livestock, poultry, dairy calves, baby beef, swine, and crop exhibits. In the corn show there were some 300 individual exhibits of corn. Six counties exhibited county groups of Guernsey calves; and six counties exhibited Jersey groups. The poultry exhibits reached a new high peak with a number of individual entries as did that of the 4-H swine show.

The educational exhibit consisted of five educational booths put on by individual counties, together with the individual exhibits of girls' work and the 4-H corn exhibits, and occupying the space of 300 feet in the main exhibit hall, carrying the theme: "The Enrichment of Rural Life Through 4-H Club Work."

300 members participated in the 4-H judging contests conducted as a part of the State Fair activities.

12. A new high peak in enrollment with 49,066 members; 1,529 clubs were organized in 100 counties in the state; 115 Achievement Days were held with an attendance of 12,315; 4,693 members and leaders attended camp; 1,000 members and leaders were represented at the Short Course at State College; and 11,970 volunteer leaders devoted a certain number

of days and time during 1939 to the promotion of the program started a quarter of a century ago.

13. The average yield of corn for 4-H club members in 1939 was 43.1 bushels per acre, or more than twice the average yield for adult farmers in the state.

It would be difficult to estimate the number of people who have been reached and directly helped by the 4-H program during this thirty-year period. Since 1926 there has been approximately 500,000 boys and girls enrolled in the 4-H program. Preceding this period, it would be safe to say that there was another quarter of a million who were reached by the program—a total number of over three-quarters of a million who have been directly benefited by the 4-H program since its beginning in North Carolina.

It is impossible to give a description of the growth and development of this program that would adequately tell just what it has meant in the development of a sane agricultural program in this state. Its growth in size is overshadowed by the growth in its objectives which are and will continue to be the development of a citizenship able to sensibly cope with the ever increasing standard of living in rural America.

The test of any educational program is the character and the type of men and women trained, together with their contributions to the welfare of the community and the state in general. If measured on this basis 4-H Club work will again measure up to its high objective. Outstanding examples of community leadership may be found in practically every community in the state, attributed largely to training in 4-H Club work. The present State Commissioner of Agriculture was one of North Carolina's former 4-H Club members; the State Leader and the Assistant State Leader received training in 4-H Club work, as did approximately 50 per cent of our farm and home demonstration agents. Especially is this outstanding among the younger agents in our state. Also we find former 4-H Club members taking prominent places in the fields of medicine, law, religion, industry, and the business life of our state, bringing to us anew the thought of Theodore Roosevelt, who said, "If you are going to do anything permanent for the average man, you must begin before he is a man, the chance of success lies in working with the boy and not with the man." 4-H Club work is justly proud of its contribution to the welfare of rural living and life in general in our state.