

The History of 4-H in the Mission of the Land-Grant University

The Land-Grant College System

Abraham Lincoln signed the Morrill Act on July 2, 1862. This Act was also known as the Land Grant College Act and it provided a grant of 30,000 acres of land for each senator and representative that the state had in the national congress. The purpose of this grant of land was "To promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life."

Prior to this Act, education in the United States and other parts of the world had been primarily for those who came from families of wealth or prestige. The curriculums of the institutions of higher education up until that time had been principally those offering the dead languages, philosophy, theology and mathematics. In his chapter on the "Background of Education," in the period prior to the passage of the Land Grant College Act, Edward Danforth, Jr., the author of the book, *Colleges for Our Land and Time*, notes that at Harvard in the 1850s, the Curriculum was much the same as it had been for 200 years, narrow and tied to the concepts of the middle ages. He further states that "as late as 1850 not a single college had a laboratory or anything like a laboratory in its physical plant."

Rural families also wanted education for their children, but had no idea what it should include. A large number of manual labor schools were started during the 1830s. A school devoted to agriculture, which started in 1823 in Maine was known as the Gardener Lyceum. In 1837, Michigan passed an act chartering the University of Michigan, specifically for instruction in practical farming. A number of agriculture schools were actually started during the 1850s, but they did not survive.

"One of the major problems, following passage of the Land Grant College Act and establishment of schools or colleges which it authorized, was finding answers to the questions, what to teach? And who to teach? Original courses were the farm, the nursery, carpentry, cabinet making, turning, wagon making, painting, black-smithing, telegraphy, photography, printing, dressmaking, and general agricultural practices.

In 1887, federal legislation known as the Hatch Act was passed. It authorized the establishment of an agricultural experiment station in connection with each college that had established under the Morrill Act. This was the beginning of efforts to search for new information in agriculture, information that until 1914 accumulated on the campuses of colleges of agriculture except when taken to meetings and institutes held out-state members of the College of Agriculture Faculty."

Demand for Relevant Education

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, numerous educators began awakening to the fact that little attention was being paid to the problems of the teenager. It was at this time that G. Stanley Hall's two volumes on adolescence were being studied by educators. Earlier, much had been done for the kindergarten group, but now - in the early years of the new century - the attention of educators was directed to the teenager. This interest soon found expressions in such organizations as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and Campfire Girls. Rural club work, taking concrete form around 1900-1910, was the predecessor of young people's organizations.

Still another stimulus to the pioneers was the work of President Theodore Roosevelt's Country Life Commission, a notable group of educational leaders who made a thorough going study of the rural scene in 1908. The Commission studied the religion, education, health, recreation, and government of rural communities. It held statewide meetings over the country and listed to the testimony of rural leaders.

The report of the Country Life Commission was a prophetic declaration of the farmer's social rights. In the field of rural education, it was found that the country was not related closely enough to the boys' and girls' environment. It pointed out the need for practical education in farming and homemaking and called for increased Extension activity on the part of the colleges. The report of the Commission also gave high encouragement to those school superintendents and teachers who were already pioneering in the teaching of farming and homemaking skills.

Formation of the Cooperative Extension Service

We can now begin to note evolutionary trends reaching back to the 1830s when it was noted that rural people wanted a better education for their children. The Morrill Act of 1862, which promoted liberal and practical education; the Hatch Act of 1887, which established the agricultural experiment stations and generated research in farming and homemaking skills; the report of the County Life Commission of 1908, which revealed the clamor of the rural people for improved educational opportunities helped set the stage for the next significant step in the formation of a Cooperative Extension Service. Legislation passed the Smith-Lever Act in 1914, which established the Extension Service for the College of Agriculture. The objective was "To aid in defusing among the people of the United States, useful and practical information on subjects relating to agriculture and home economics and to encourage application of the same."

The Cooperative Extension Service was welcomed with enthusiasm by the College of Agriculture and many of the rural communities of America. It was supervised by the State College of Agriculture. The County Extension Agent was employed by the College and placed in a county subject to the approval of the board representing the local group. Later, Home Demonstration Agents were added as part of the staff Cooperative Extension Service. They were employed and placed in counties under the same policy.

The 4-H Movement

The 4-H club movement was spawned by the same need that created the Cooperative Extension Service. Early pioneers such as Jessie Field and O.H. Benson, who were County Superintendents of schools in Iowa, seem to be the most direct connection of the past with early 4-H work. These superintendents trained their teachers, who in turn developed judging teams and established exhibits of work conducted by young people. The results of home-project work resulted in sponsored contests in corn, oats, potato and garden growing, cooking, sewing and home management.

All of these contests were conducted through local superintendents of schools culminating in state awards at the state short course. At the same time that Mr. Benson introduced practical arts into the curriculum, he conducted unique eighth grade commencements. Instead of the conventional commencement address, he had professors and others give agricultural demonstrations. At these picnic commencements, boys and girls exhibited their collections of bugs and weeds, their sewing and baking products, and other handicrafts. Corn judging contests were also a feature. It was in Wright and Page counties, where Mr. Benson and Miss Fields worked, that the cloverleaf emblem was used both as a pin and a pennant, and was given science out to boys and girls, whether for school attendance or for excellence in agricultural and domestic science work.

While the language of the Smith-Lever Act does not specifically mention boys and girls, there are discussions leading up to the passage of the bill which included boys and girls clubs. Mr. Lever expressly called his bill a means for providing "itinerant teaching" and made certain that club work came within the scope of the measure by stating:

"One of the main features of this bill is that it is so flexible as to provide for the inauguration of a system of itinerant teaching for boys and girls. My efforts to secure the passage of the Smith-Lever Act had the most encouragement from the achievements of the members of the corn and tomato clubs, and I hope sincerely that a large share of this money will be devoted to an expansion of the work with young folks."

Reck in his book entitled *The 4-H Story* says that "A.S. Lever was a true friend and patron saint of the oncoming 4-H club movement." By 1915 there were boys and girls clubs in 47 states.

During World War I, the fourfold program (head, heart, hands and health) of the 4-H clubs was set aside temporarily and the energy of the members was devoted to raising food to support the war effort. Additional funds were provided, and a large staff of temporary agents was employed. The result was a rapid increase in the number of clubs and members. More than one million club members were enrolled. Following the period of readjustment after each World War, 4-H club work has shown continual growth. Sound, longtime aims and objectives emerged. The function of the clubs as an educational tool has come to be better understood. Some states have developed a close working relationship with the local school

system while other states have clubs established as a community program without school connections. Year-round programs, carefully outlined projects, county, state and national contests, use of volunteer local leaders, and recognition programs are some of the characteristics of this work which is now known and copied in more than 85 countries around the world.

Sponsoring Extension Work

A provision of the Smith-Lever Act was that no payment out of the appropriations provided, should be made to any state until an equal sum had been appropriated by the legislature of such state, or provided by local funds. In Missouri, formation of farmers into county groups known as Farm Bureaus took the responsibility for sponsoring County Extension Agents and seeing that local funds were raised to help with their salaries, providing them offices, and paying other local expenses. In the early 1930's passage of the Agricultural Adjustment Act in the Roosevelt administration gave additional emphasis to the Cooperative Extension Service. This legislation provided a County Agent, even for those counties that did not have more than token support. Those counties that did not have a Farm Bureau organized County Extension Associations.

In 1953, the state law pertaining to sponsoring organizations for Extension work in Missouri counties was amended. The revised statute required county courts to appropriate sums for support of the Cooperative Extension Programs. At that time, the word "Farm Bureau" was dropped from the state legislation and it was written in such a manner that units of the Missouri Farmer's Association could also sponsor or be responsible for a Cooperative Extension program at the county level. In instances where more than one group was interested in being a sponsor, the farmers in the county cooperating with the Cooperative Extension Service were allowed to recommend the organization they wanted to serve as the sponsor.

State legislation formalizing county sponsoring groups for Cooperative Extension Programs in counties was again amended in 1955. At that time, the sponsorship for Extension work was completely dissociated from farm organizations in Missouri. The result was a county committee known as a County Extension Council, composed of a man and woman elected from each political township to serve as a board of supervising the Cooperative Extension Program.

As we indicated earlier, the development of the Cooperative Extension Service has been an evolutionary process. Changes have been made after careful consideration and testing directed toward educational programs that are more effective in disseminating useful and practical information to people.

Subject-matter specialists were included in the Cooperative Extension staff early in the development of the Service. Each specialist is a member of the staff of a subject-matter department. They serve primarily as a teacher of County Extension workers. Specialists also disseminate information to the clientele by direct discussion, radio, television, published materials, visual aids, demonstrations, and other methods of communication.

Merger of Extension Services

As early as 1908, a statement in regard to University Outreach and Extension was regularly included in the annual catalog of the University and in January 1910, the Board of Curators authorized the establishment of an Extension Division, even though no appropriation had been made for it. It was authorized as the tenth division of the University. Finally, an appropriation of \$25,000 was provided in 1913 and Mr. Samuel D. Gromer became the first director of the Division, even though he carried the title of secretary. He resigned after one year and was replaced by Charles H. Williams, who gave special attention to the development of correspondence courses. In April 1946, the Extension Division was reorganized as the Adult Education and Extension Service. The work under its administration included both credit and non-credit courses.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, administrators at the University of Missouri recognized that they had essentially two Extension Services. The Cooperative Extension Service provided off-campus teaching in agriculture and home economic subjects to both adult and youth audiences. The Adult Education and Extension Service, which later became the Division of Continuing Education, was popularly referred to as the General Extension Service of the University, and provided credit and non-credit courses in most

subjects other than Agriculture and Home Economics.

Discussions concerning the merger of these two Extension Services continued until the Board of Curators in a meeting on May 13, 1960:

“Resolved that there be and is hereby established a Division of the University to be disintegrated as a University Outreach and Extension Division and located in Columbia and that the administrative officer responsible for the operation of the University Outreach and Extension Division shall be a Dean responsible to the president as other Deans; that the University Outreach and Extension Division shall consist of the present Agricultural Extension Service and the Division of Continuing Education and such activities of this nature conducted at present by any division of the University of Missouri at Columbia and Rolla and such as may be established in the future in any division of the University.”

“Hereafter all departments and divisions of the University shall channel all activities of an extension nature, both teaching and service activities, through this division and all teaching and research departments as funds are made available, shall appoint staff members through proper channels to furnish professional knowledge and advice for programs directed by or to be established and directed by the University Outreach and Extension Division.”

Decade of The 60s

Dynamic forces such as rural to urban migration and the philosophy that "4-H is for all," coupled with the demand from urban clientele for support from Extension, resulted in the development of 4-H clubs in the cities. As state and county staff vacancies were filled with personnel with degrees from other than the College of Agriculture, new approaches to delivery of youth educational programs developed. Some newer staff felt that 4-H had a rural image and would not attract city youth. As a consequence, three approaches to deliver programs to youth evolved. For in-house use and to clarify program efforts, the 4-H program was named the **organizational approach** since Extension and the 4-H volunteer leaders developed the goals, objectives and content of the program. A second approach known as **inter-organizational** sought to deliver educational programs through other youth-serving organizations. In this method, Extension would provide training to volunteers, sell them literature and help the professionals identify sources of assistance at the University. A third delivery mode known as **extra-organizational** would deliver programs to youth that had no organizational affiliation. Many short-term special interest groups or units grew out of this method. While methods of organizing these groups were less complex, the units lacked continuity, and had to be reorganized each year by the professional or paraprofessional. Educational contact hours were limited to those necessary to complete the "special interest" which had elicited their participation.

In 1967, educational television programs were beamed at 4-H and non 4-H youth. The first series had ten 30-minute programs embracing the subject of living with emergencies. Approximately 40,000 youth were reached. In 1968, the 4-H TV Science series was carried on eleven stations and reached 102,000. Since this time, there have been additional series on "Photography" and "Living in the Nuclear Age." The most popular of all TV series was "Mulligan Stew" in 1974, which reached 171,000. This series of six 30-minute programs is on nutrition.

Decade of the 70's

Throughout the 60s and into the 70s, the 4-H enrollment in organized clubs remained between 32,000 and 39,000. However, 4-H special interest units (clubs) came into the scene in the 70s. These groups usually had one major interest. Examples might be a 4-H Horse Club, Photography Club, Aviation, Rocketry, Cake Decorating or Dog Care. Some of these youth participated in shows, judging contests, or events and 4-H camp. Special interest clubs usually do not plan a year-round program, nor do they include health, safety, community service, nor participate in some of the citizenship program aspects of the traditional year-round club. Yet the short-term involvement meets a definite need of members, their parents and leaders, and some of these special interest units do reorganize themselves year after year. The number enrolled in 4-H Special Interest Units in 1978 was 36,605.

The extra-organizational approach evolved into a category known as "non-4-H youth. They participated in educational experiences for limited periods of time. Volunteer adults worked with these groups on a ration of one adult to ten youth as contrasted with one adult to three youth in 4-H clubs. Number of youth in this approach ranged from 36,358 in 1969 to 50,482 in 1978.

Decade of the 80's

4-H in the 80s has been built upon solid traditions, while taking into account trends in population, youth development and current economic conditions. Through the work of a series of advisory groups, five 4-H delivery modes have been identified. The policy of the 60s and 70s was to call some young people involved in Extension programs "other youth" or "non-4-H" unless they were enrolled in organized 4-H clubs. Now, any young person involved in an Extension coordinated activity will be identified as a 4-H member through one of these five 4-H delivery or membership modes:

- Organized 4-H Clubs
- Short-term Programs
- School Enrichment Programs
- Individual Study
- Instructional Television

Prior to World War II, the main educational objectives of 4-H related to the teaching of practical skills. Subject matter, which had almost immediate use, was emphasized in leader training, and in turn was emphasized by leaders in project meetings.

Following World War II, there began a slow evolving change in philosophy and objectives which emphasized what happens inside the boy or girl as more important than the practical skills emphasized in the early days of 4-H. Developing confidence and a healthy self-concept and learning to relate to other people successfully was considered more important than exhibiting a blue ribbon animal or baking blue ribbon cookies. Volunteer leaders were encouraged to help youth with their developmental needs, decision-making and coping skills first and the five subject matters were of secondary importance. This programming emphasis which is still being incorporated into literature, staff and leaders training, comes under the umbrella term known as "life skills." This developmental approach does not place youth on the shelf until they reach adult age, but seeks to help them experience life and respond to it in a constructive manner at each stage they must pass through before actually entering adulthood.

In summary, Duncan in his book entitled *Fifty Years of 4-H - A Unique Experience in Youth Education*, estimated that half a million youth and profit from the 4-H educational experience between 1914 and 1964. Since 1964, Extension Youth Programs have averaged reaching more than 100,000 annually, exclusive of television programming. Even though many of these youth have re-enrolled several times, it is a constructive estimate that another half million youth have participated in the program annually in the last fifteen years, it is easy to envision the tremendous educational impact on 4-H youth programs.

Decade of the 90's

As in the past, 4-H in the 90's is focusing on building lifelong learning skills that develop youths' potential. Programs are designed to engage youth in healthy learning experiences incorporating not only the traditional 4-H programs but also including topics such as stress management, self-protection, parent-teen communication, personal development, careers and global understanding. This wide range of content offerings encourages youth to explore science, technology and citizens.

The 4-H program continues to look beyond early educational objectives in search of ways to provide all youth with a variety of learning experiences. In the decade of the 90's 4-H recognizes an increase in enrollment, both nationally and in Missouri, through School Enrichment Programs. Other less traditional 4-H methods such as School-Age Child Care Programs and Clover Kids have impacted youth.

Nationally, a new strategic plan identifies six strategies for creating supportive environments in which culturally diverse youth and adults can reach their fullest potential. These include:

- Reshaping the learning experience.
- Building a world leader image.
- Training professionals in youth development education.
- Involving youth and volunteers.

In Missouri, a strategic plan for 4-H Youth Development Programs was developed to provide direction to the efforts of youth workers, staff and volunteers of University Outreach and Extension. The plan was designed to serve as a framework for programmatic and curriculum development at all levels of the system.

The New Millennium – 2000 forward

As the new millennium arrived, so did the opportunity to celebrate the centennial of the founding of 4-H Youth Development. 4-H led the nation and our state on conversations on youth. Findings from these conversations shaped the national direction for 4-H Youth Development. The *National 4-H Strategic Directions* document captures the key strategies for the movement of positive youth development. The plan incorporates 4-H belief in the power of youth, the core value of access, equity and opportunity, our philosophy of learning and our commitment to organization systems that support the approaches and enables people.

The Power of Youth

Goal 1: 4-H will create a culture in which youth are equal partners in decision-making and governance

Goal 2: 4-H youth will be full partners, resources and contributors in developing, delivering and evaluating our educational experiences.

Goal 3: 4-H youth will develop an ethic of philanthropy and civic engagement

Goal 4: Youth will lead 4-H in new and creative technological directions

Access, Equity and Opportunity

Goal 1: Extension and 4-H will develop an ethic of access and opportunity for all youth

Goal 2: 4-H will invest in youth and their future by providing equitable access and opportunity to all communities

Goal 3: The 4-h volunteer and staff community, at all levels, will be skilled and knowledgeable in interacting with children and families from diverse groups.

Goal 4: 4-H will become technologically savvy so that 4-H youth and adults will thrive in a technology-based society.

An Extraordinary Place to Learn

Goal 1: 4-H youth development will strengthen the relationship between research and practice using the resources of the land-grant and other university systems.

Goal 2: 4-H will imagine and design new, unconventional models to capitalize on emerging opportunities and engage the hearts and minds of youth.

Goal 3: 4-H will use new technologies to shape learning opportunities that go beyond boundaries of geography, time, expertise, and leadership.

Goal 4: 4-H will promote scientific and technological literacy

Goal 5: 4-H will maximize the effectiveness of our delivery modes.

Goal 6: 4-H will collect national impact and accountability data that fully demonstrates the impact of 4-H on youth their families, and communities.

Exceptional People, Innovative Practices

Goal 1: Extension and 4-H will recruit, hire, and retain top-notch people who have a heart for working with youth and an enduring commitment to youth development.

Goal 2: 4-H will design volunteer management systems which attract, retain, and energize youth and adult volunteers with a progressive and enduring commitment to youth.

Goal 3: Extension and 4-H will invest in its people by providing exceptional learning opportunities.

Goal 4: Extension, 4-H and our land-grant institutions will advance the field of youth development education.

Effective Organizational Systems

Goal 1: The mission and strategic plan will be achieved through synergy and shared leadership

Goal 2: Strategic collaboration and partnerships will be an integral part of achieving the 4-H mission.

Goal 3: 4-H will create bold, innovative, resource-development initiatives.

Goal 4: The 4-H brand will be readily recognized, exciting and appealing to all 4-H audiences.

Goal 5: Extension and the Land Grant System will support the expanding role of 4-H professionals as community resources in youth development research and practice.

Besides the *National 4-H Strategic Plan*, the first decade of this millennium provides national 4-H program focus around three **mission mandates**. The mandates include:

- Healthy Living
- Science, Engineering and Technology
- Citizenship

Missouri 4-H Youth Development programs developed seven **program priorities** that coordinate and enhance the three mission mandates. Missouri 4-H Youth Development seven named programs include:

- Choosing Healthy Lifestyles
- Creating Economic Preparedness
- Building Character
- Volunteer Development
- Developing Leadership and Citizenship for Community Viability
- Developing Interpersonal Communications
- Applying Science and Technology

One monumental change that will shape Missouri 4-H in this century is the creation of the 4-H Center for Youth Development of the University of Missouri Extension in 2005. The designation by Chancellor Brady Deaton, a 4-H alumnus of Kentucky, recognizes that 4-H draws content from many different departments, divisions, schools and colleges. Not only will 4-H be continuing with extraordinary programming for youth, but faculty of the center will be providing leadership for teaching and scholarship in the field of positive youth development.

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