

## **A History of 4-H in Decatur County**

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### **Foreword**

Although I was never a 4-H member, I am a native and life-long resident of Decatur County, having grown up on a farm in the Grand River area in the northwest part of the county. The history of this area and indeed the whole county represents a large part of my personal and family heritage. This includes the 4-H history of which I have been directly a part of since 1975, when I became County Extension Director. However, indirect connections to the program go back to my childhood when many friends and relatives were members or served as local club leaders and in other 4-H positions, the extent of which I was not fully aware until I was researching archives to compile this history.

I recall some personal experiences as well. I remember once, while still in grade school, visiting a cousin who lived near town and being invited to stay over night. It also happened that particular night was the local 4-H club meeting at the Lion's Club Hall in town. My cousin was a member and invited me to come along. I do not remember too much of the details of the meeting, except that another older cousin was the club leader (as had been his father of still another rural township club years before).

I also recall the topic of the presentation, which was given by the leader that evening--Civil Defense. He explained that if under a nuclear attack we may not be as far removed from danger as some might think, given that some military installations such as Offutt Air Force Base were actually not that far away when considering the far-ranging effects of nuclear fall-out. Realize that this was the early 1960's at the height of the Cold War era and these serious national issues with their perceived real and dire consequences were uppermost in many peoples' minds, and were the subject of broad discussion at the time, even at 4-H club meetings. This was also my first realization that 4-H was really more than just "Cows n' Cookin."

Sitting in that little town Lion's Hall that evening I little dreamed that I would some day have the job responsibility of administering the 4-H program for this county. For whatever reason I did not go on to join the local 4-H club, but still have always regarded 4-H as an important part of my rural community heritage.

My major regret in compiling this historical record is that I have not been able to find much information--written or otherwise--prior to 1940. From that time forward I do have the annual narrative reports filed by extension staff, that being almost 70 years of records, nearly half of which I have been directly involved. However, the true essence of 4-H I feel does not lie in a lot of facts and figures, but in the accounts of those who were involved and their perceptions about how 4-H has affected their lives. To that end, I have solicited personal stories from 4-H alumni (both former and current members and volunteers) about their most memorable 4-H experiences. I have included some of these as a supplement to this account in an attempt to give more and varied human perspective from some of those who actually were a part of 4-H history in Decatur County. I hope I have achieved at least some of this purpose.

### **County Extension Staff**

Although as previously noted no official staff records prior to 1940 exist at the Extension office, it is well recognized that Arvid Miller was County Agent and later County Director (as the title changed) from 1935 until 1965 with a brief period of interruption 1943-1945, presumably for military service or duties during World War II, as with many other County Extension staff across the state and nation at the time. During this time, substitute county agents served brief appointments. They were Dale Thorngren (Feb. 1, 1943-June 30, 1944) and Howard M. Smith (June 1, 1945- Dec. 31, 1945). In addition, several County Home Demonstration agents show up in the annual reports as taking full or major responsibilities for the girls' club program. In fact, we do not have any agricultural agent narrative reports, including boys' 4-H or ag club activities, until 1942. There is little evidence that the boys' clubs were even organized (or well organized) prior to this. Some of the home demonstration agents whose names appear from 1940 until the early 50's include: Bertha Mae Dimmitt, Terese Bodensteiner, Era C. Duncan (food preservation specialist and later home economist), Julia Kilpatrick, Helen Brotherton and Margaret Olmstead. As a general rule, the home ec agents were shared with one or more surrounding counties. For a period of time, through much of the 50's, however, there appeared to be no county based home ec agent on staff to take any program responsibility for the girls' 4-H clubs. However, there were district or regional and

state specialists to help with specific subject matter efforts or special activities from time to time. Generally the Farm Bureau Women's Committee took major responsibility for the girls' 4-H Club organizational needs, as Extension was sponsored by and administratively linked to Farm Bureau in these early days of Extension and 4-H, prior to the state law change in 1955 establishing township representative Extension Councils. A number of 4-H assistants served from time to time over the years. As a rule, these were part time staff but their contributions were significant and services were sorely missed when the state or county lacked the resources to hire someone to this position. They and subsequent county directors and home and family staff will be mentioned by name in the chronological portion of this history which follows.

### **1940-1949**

The decade started out with six girls clubs: Better Boosters, Merry Workers, True Blue, Work n' Win, Beauty Builders and Loyal Workers. Total membership was 57 girls. This grew to seven girls' clubs with the addition of Happy Hill in 1941 and total membership went to 77. The war effort saw the need for girls to devote more time to gardening and field work and the need to lower the requirement for completion of "home efficiency" project articles was seen.

The agricultural club program was started in 1942 with four clubs--Long Creek Pioneers, Long Creek Musketeers, Lamoni Jr. Dairymen and Fairview Victory Boosters. Twenty boys and six girls were not in organized clubs or members at large for a total of 63 youth, including 10 girls. Projects included beef, dairy, swine, sheep, draft colt and poultry.

The war seemed to take its toll on the program as only three girls' clubs completed in 1943 and enrollment dropped to 23. Only 11 boys participated and completed projects that year. Attempts to revive the program were described as "disheartening." According to the narrative, the reason for the breakdown in boys 4-H "seems to lie pretty much with the fact that an unauthorized announcement was made at the 1942 County 4-H Club Fair that no more fairs would be held for the duration." (I assume in reference to the war).

In 1944, five girls clubs organized with only three clubs completing the year. Only three clubs remained active in 1945 with 29 girls enrolled. The girls' involvement in the "Food for Victory Program" was noted with the girls canning large amounts of fruit, juices, vegetables, meats and fish. One boys' club was organized in 1944 and a second attempted. Twenty-eight members completed projects. This grew, however, to three clubs in 1945 with 68 boys and 10 girls involved. The county fair at this time was held in late August with more than 40 members exhibiting livestock. Mention is also made of a few members fitting and/or exhibiting baby beeves at the St. Joseph Interstate Show and Kansas City American Royal Fat Stock Show in the fall.

1946 saw some major enrollment and organizational effort with 10 girls clubs (69 members; only four from town) and 10 new boys clubs (enrollment 127). The girls held a camp with three other counties at Lake Ahquabi. The boys club's special activity was a "campaign against cattle grubs" which earned them recognition at the state Livestock Conservation Meeting. The first ever county 4-H newsletter was printed with the joint boys and girls county officers doing most of the work. This would continue for several years. It was noted that a countywide club officer training was held for both boys and girls. The county fair was held in early August and it was noted that approximately 10,500 people were on hand to see the 57 boys' and girls' project work. The cattle sale averaged \$24/cwt. Girls Clubs were: LeRoy Merry Makers, High Point Hustlers, County Line High Flyers, Long Creek Pioneers, Evergreen Live Wires, Bloomington Rustlers, Teeners Delight, True Blue, Work N' Win and Teen Timers. Boys (Ag) Clubs were: County Line High Flyers, Long Creek Pioneers, Evergreen Live Wires, Bloomington Rustlers, Le Roy Merry Makers, High Point Hustlers, True Blue, Work N' Win, Decatur Achievers, Eager Beavers, Teeners Delight and Terre Haute Boosters, Franklin Progressors and Centers Cheerful Chums.

From the mid forties to the end of the decade girls club enrollment would rise to 136 in 11 clubs while boys would rise to 142 and drop back to 127 in 11 clubs.

Countywide items noted: Decatur County 4-H had a booth for the National Trail Ride in 1947. Also that same year, the County centennial committee had \$250 left over from county fair activities, which was divided equally among the clubs. There were 135 entries in the girls department at county fair, the largest

yet. The boys' Terre Haute club was disbanded but a new club, the Maple Grove Eager Beavers in Grand River Township, was organized with Sherman Baker as leader and Paul Crees as assistant leader. (Editor's note: Maple Grove was my township "neighborhood" as that was where our home farm was located. Sherman Baker was both my uncle and great uncle and the father of the leader and cousin I mentioned in my opening foreword comments to this account).

The first all-county banquet (joint boys and girls) was held in 1948 with 118 attending. Two county-wide box suppers were held netting \$58.76 and \$82.00 respectively. Seven clubs sent representatives to the State 4-H Girls Convention at Iowa State College. Six boys clubs sent delegates to the State 4-H Boys Short Course.

Demonstration meetings on Farm Electrification, the boys' special project in 1949, were conducted. Dallas McGinnis, Field Secretary, Iowa State dairy Association, held a special fitting and showing demonstration for dairy project members. Model, a lightweight Hereford owned and exhibited by Winona Jones, won grand champion baby beef at the Iowa State Fair. Arrangements were made by the county 4-H boys and girls organizations to purchase the Methodist Church dining facility at the county fair to be the permanent home of the 4-H Food stand.

Youth assistants serving during this period of time included Duane Sandage (1945), Donald Furrer (1946), and Robert Manchester (1947-49).

### **1950-1959**

The decade of the 50s seems to mark more joint boys' and girls' club activities. Joint monthly meetings were held throughout the year. A day-long officer training school in 1950 is another example, featuring an inspirational talk by Katheryn Metz of the Lamoni Chronicle, reviewing her recent assignment as a newspaper representative in Mexico. Bill Lindsey, Associate Editor of the Leon Journal Reporter, led a 45-minute news writing session with reporters and historians. Sixty-one club officers, 13 leaders and county committee were present. Also in 1950 a countywide sports festival was held and attended by 200 members, leaders and parents from all 20 clubs in the county participating in the eight main events. Centers Cheerful Chums joint boys and girls club team took first place honors; High Point Hustlers 2<sup>nd</sup> place; LeRoy Merry Makers 3<sup>rd</sup>, and Bloomington Rustlers 4<sup>th</sup>.

John E. Rydel served briefly as youth assistant from June 22- Sept. 30, 1950.

The county 4-H newsletter was named Clover Leaf Chatter and continued to be produced mainly by the county 4-H officers. New boys clubs added were the Eager Climbers and Hamilton Boosters and a new girls' club was the Fayette Peppettes.

In 1951 there were 219 boys and girls active in 20 local clubs. Another boys club, the Woodland Willing Workers, was organized. Receipts from the new 4-H Food Stand at county fair paid for the cost of the county newsletter and expenses of member and leader delegates to district and state events. An International Farm Youth Exchange delegate (IFYE) gave a talk about his visit to Austria at the countywide party and the county 4-H was active in the IFYE contribution program.

Local clubs held a fund drive to help a member stricken with polio and confined several months to an iron lung. They raised \$48.50 to apply to the purchase of a TV set for the girl.

In 1952, there were nine ag clubs with 83 boys and 15 girls enrolled and 10 home ec clubs with 117 girls enrolled. The Jolly Janes girls club appears in the reports. The Decatur County 4-H club organization won the KSIB Radio Station district award for outstanding work in 4-H records and top recognition in the state from WHO Central Broadcasting in Des Moines for work in the special activity--Farm and Home Safety.

In 1953 the county club organization used some of its funds to purchase a new Califone electric record player. This was the second major piece of equipment purchased by this group, the first being a \$100 slide projector 2 years earlier.

Gary Hullinger of Center's Cheerful Chums was elected president of the state boys' club organization.

Kathryn Cowles was awarded the Chicago trip to the National 4-H Congress for her record in Farm and Home Safety.

Decatur County once again won the KSIB Award.

New clubs added were boys: Bonnet 4-H'ers and Happy Hustlers, and girls: Busy Bonnets, Richland Ridge Runners and Sandy Point Pals. There were now 10 ag clubs with 119 boys and 10 girls enrolled and 13 home ec clubs with 131 girls.

Milt Henderson (Ringgold County) was hired as a six-county district 4-H specialist to give leadership to many multi-county and state events, including KSIB record book awards, 4-H Swine Show, 4-H Radio Program and district officers training school among others throughout the balance of the decade.

In 1954 the Richland Rangers and Terre Haute Tigers ag clubs appear. There were 12 ag clubs with 139 boys and 18 girls enrolled. For the girls, Decatur County Achievers and Terre Haute Boosters were added while Sandy Point Pals and LeRoy Merry Makers were dropped. There remained 13 girls clubs with 134 enrolled.

An afternoon field event, focused on the soil conservation special activity, was held at the Iowa State College experimental farm near Beaconsfield in Ringgold County (later known as the Shelby Grundy Research Farm).

Robert Riddle joined the county staff as assistant county director.

In 1955, the boys' special activity was tractor maintenance, and some local club leaders attended a three-day tractor maintenance school at Iowa State College. Ringgold and Decatur County 4-H then co-sponsored a tractor fuel economy contest along with tractor rodeo and plowing event on the Luther Cox farm.

The annual banquet that year had more than 200 members, leaders, parents and guests in attendance. The county 4-H officers purchased an illuminated plastic 4-H emblem sign for \$15 to "add color" to many county events. They also purchased four welcome signs to be placed on the major highways coming into the county from the north, south, east and west. The 4' x 5' signs say "Decatur County 4-H Clubs Welcome You. Drive Carefully".

Two young men from India were hosted in the county as IFYE (International Farm Youth Exchange) delegates.

The new county Extension Law was enacted providing for the election of township representatives and leads to the first county 4-H Council in 1956, nine people appointed by the Extension Council.

There were 13 home ec clubs with 140 girls enrolled. The Busy Maidens girls club was organized. There were also 13 ag clubs with 178 members enrolled.

In February, 1956 Robert Riddle resigned as assistant director.

Kathryn Cowles received a major state award (19 jewel wrist watch) for leadership and representation at National 4-H Congress in Farm and Home Safety.

Severe drought overshadowed much else during the cropping season.

There were 13 home ec clubs with 152 girls enrolled. The Terre Haute Boosters and Busy Bonnets dropped from the record but Loyal Lassies and Garden Grove Go-Getters appeared. There were 11 ag clubs with 171 enrolled. Richland Rangers and Terre Haute Tigers disappeared from the record.

In March 1957, Melvin Powers joined the staff as assistant county director.

The 4-H Food Stand at county fair, staffed by county officers and local clubs, netted \$300.00, which was equally divided among the boys and girls club treasuries.

A junior leader program, open to boys and girls 14 and older and first initiated the previous year, reached 55 members.

The girls special activity for the year was health and courtesy and boys special activity was weed identification and control.

Combined club enrollment reached 340 in 11 ag clubs and 15 home ec clubs. Two new girls clubs were added: Morgan Team Workers and LeRoy Merry Makers (revived).

After three years of planning, the county boys and girls committee joined other surrounding counties to attend a state 4-H camp.

A "400 or Bust" enrollment drive in 1958 came up a little short at 366 members. There were now 169 members in 11 ag clubs and 197 girls in 15 home ec clubs. Special activities for the year were farm electrification for the boys and home safety and fire prevention for the girls. 4-H Awards Night was introduced as a new event replacing the annual banquet. Several area businesses and the Chamber of Commerce sponsored award medals and trophies. Two half-days in late December were noted as weigh days for baby beef projects to weigh and check tattoos. 70 head (19 fewer than the previous year) were weighed in at five locations around the county. Average prices (per cwt) reported at the meat animal sale at the county fair that year were: cattle--\$26.11; hogs--\$22.85; sheep--\$23.09. It was noted that one exhibitor showed a baby beef at AK-SAR-BEN in Omaha that fall.

Melvin Powers, assistant director left, in July 1959. Club enrollment dropped slightly to 361 with 12 ag clubs and 169 members and one new club, the Grand River Ranchers, organized. There remained 15 home ec clubs with 192 girls enrolled.

A new 40' x 100' Girls' 4-H exhibit hall (still stands today, currently known as the North Building) was erected on the fairgrounds at a cost of around \$5,700.00. This building was first proposed in 1950. The 4-H Food Stand netted \$256 that year.

In August, the county girls 4-H held the first ever "Splash" swimming party as a special physical fitness and recreational activity at the Leon Municipal Pool with more than 60 girls participating.

### 1960-1969

**Clubs and members--**We begin the decade of the '60's with 12 ag clubs with 150 members and 14 home ec clubs with 151 members. They include: Ag: Bloomington Rustlers, Bonnett 4-H'ers, Centers Cheerful Chums, Decatur County Achievers, Evergreen Livewires, Grand River Ranchers, Hamilton Hotshots, Happy Hustlers, High Point Hustlers, Le Roy Merry Makers, True Blue and Woodland Willing Workers; Home Ec: Bloomington Rustlers, Busy Maidens, Center's Cheerful Chums, Decatur County Achievers, Eager Beavers, Franklin Domesti-Kates, Garden Grove Go-Getters, Hamilton Boosters, High Point Hustlerettes, Le Roy Merry Makers, Lively Lassies, Morgan Team Workers, Richland Ridge Runners and True Blue. By 1969, there are eight ag clubs with 109 members having lost Bonnett 4-H'ers, Evergreen Livewires, Happy Hustlers and True Blue. The home ec clubs number 10 with 123 members, having dropped the Bloomington Rustlers, Eager Beavers, Franklin Domesti-Kates, Lively Lassies and Morgan Team Workers.

**Staff--**Arvid Miller is Extension Director until his retirement in 1965. Foster Glen Hembry is the summer youth worker in 1960 and Mrs. Marlene Scott is an Extension assistant trainee in 1961, assisting with summer activities like local achievement shows, demonstration help days, county and state fair and club re-organization. Paul Harms was a county extension associate shared with Ringgold County in 1964 and 1965. George Piesen was named county extension director in 1966 and Eugene Carroll extension associate 1966-69. Milt Henderson remains the district 4-H staff person coordinating area and multi-county events and training. These include project and leader training, career exploration, citizenship and leadership development, decision-making skills development, county committee and officer training, assisting with enrollment drives, fairs and achievement days, KSIB Record Book Awards program, Creston Spring Market Swine and Dairy Shows, District Soil Conservation Day and the area 4-H Radio Program, "4-H On The Air" on KSIB (Creston--a 15-minute program every Saturday sponsored by Coca-Cola Bottling and featuring area 4-H members. He remained in this position until 1967 when William Short took over these duties as a multi-county 4-H Extension associate and later as 4-H area coordinator with the formation of the Midcrest Extension Area toward the end of the decade. Lillian K. Price (Clarke/Decatur) and Helen Myers (Clarke/Decatur/Ringgold/Taylor) are shared home economists joining staff in 1967 with some 4-H subject matter responsibilities. In 1969, George Piesen leaves and Jerry L. Hall takes over the county director position.

**Events and Activities--**County activities that are conducted annually include Award Night, 4-H Party, 4-H Fun Night (later), Leader Training School, County Officer Training, Girls Rally Day, Annual Top Club (two clubs) tour Kansas City, MO, in 1960, Ottumwa in 1961 and Des Moines in succeeding years); three-County Camp at Lake Aghuabi and Leader Recognition Dinner. State events include Leader Recognition day at ISU; State Leadership Camp; 4-H Boys Short Course; State Health, Conservation and Leadership Camps; Girls 4-H Convention and State Conference. Livestock showing opportunities included County

Achievement Shows (County Fair), District Swine and Dairy Shows, State Fair, St. Joseph Interstate Show and Kansas City Royal. Decatur County was well represented at these events.

**Items of special note-**

- 1960 Decatur County was selected by the State 4-H Club Office as the first and only county in the state for a new opportunity for advanced project work in clothing for girls in their fourth year or more of club work. Nineteen girls enroll in and 17 completed the special advanced project.  
Members participate in a three-county music workshop in Osceola conducted by Max Exner, Extension Music Specialist.  
Phyllis Olsen, State Extension Nutritionist, conducted three nutrition training schools with 14 clubs participating. There are 488 different food entries at county fair.
- 1961 County 4-Hers contribute \$24.70 to the fund drive for the new National 4-H Center (10 cents/member)  
A State 4-H Camp Fund Drive is approved for Winter 1961-62 with a \$1,000 goal.
- 1962 - Two carloads of delegates attend a career day at Iowa State University.  
- The State Camping Center Fund Drive nets \$1,005 (\$505 local clubs, \$200 County 4-H Fund, \$300 from county banks).  
- 255 attend Annual Awards Night program at which a former 4-H'er from the Philippines is guest speaker.
- 1963 - The first annual county 4-H Conference is held in June with 255 in attendance.  
- Career exploration with emphasis on personal appearance and courtesy are special topics for the year.
- 1964 - Max Exner conducts a joint Decatur-Ringgold music workshop for club music chairpersons.  
- Glen Thompson, recreation specialist, conducts a six-county recreation training with 16 members from each county attending. (also in 1965 and 1966)  
- The first County 4-H Day Camp for younger members is held at Nine Eagles State Park with 109 boys and girls participating.  
- The Annual County Party is "temporarily" dropped. (Would become permanent)
- 1965 - An improved entry system is introduced by Mr. Carroll at County Fair. All cattle projects are stalled by club groups.  
- A four-county (Clarke, Decatur, Wayne, Lucas) livestock fitting and showing field day is held in Humeston with 250 in attendance.  
- The 4-H photography project is initiated with a county leader and 12 project members.  
- The enrollment campaign "333 in 1966" is kicked off in the fall.  
- A new system of identifying baby beeves is introduced utilizing plastic ear tags in place of tattoos.
- 1966 - The enrollment drive falls a little short at 307.  
- County horse project leaders organize and plan county horse project.  
- County Demonstration event is held off the county fair. A County Demonstration workshop helps build renewed interest with 18 girls and eight boys teams. One boys and one girls team selected for state fair and a girls team for National Dairy Cattle Congress.  
- Decatur County exhibitors win the Herdsmanship Trophy at the St. Joe Interstate Show.  
- Senior 4-H Camp, discussed for some years, is finally held.
- 1967 - The Junior Feeder Project (Feeder Pens) is inaugurated. Noted that facilities at fair limit participation to eight pens.  
- Rate-of-gain contest is instituted for baby beef and feeder projects. Well received and members as well as purebred breeders get the message that some breeding and feeding programs need to change.  
- Dress Revue is open to the public for the first time and plays to an over-full house.  
- The first camp at the State Camping Center (in conjunction with Taylor County) is held with great success.  
- First mention is made of the AK-SAR-BEN Livestock Show.  
- The Kansas City Royal 4-H Conference also shows up in the record (in addition to the livestock show).
- 1968 - The Midcrest Area Extension is in place and 4-H is seeing some "structural" reorganization.  
- Special program emphasis is "Emergency Preparedness."

- A 4-H Winter Recreation Camp is held with Clarke and Union Counties.
- A County Youth Council is formed, made up of one representative elected from each club. They plan and carry out most county events.
- An Area 4-H Council is formed with three members from each county. They plan an exchange 4-H trip for 1969 or '70 and Citizenship Short Course to Washington, D.C. in 1971.
- 1969 - In spite of a new barn at the fairgrounds, facilities are crowded.
- Four members are appointed to the Area Council. They host a Youth Exchange group from Pennsylvania.
- A County 4-H Policy Statement is adopted and published to clarify rules and regulations.
- A youth tractor operator safety school is conducted.

### 1970-79

**Staff**--Jerry Hall was County Extension Director until Dec. 31, 1971, followed by Ron Bengel from January 3-June 30, 1972. Dennis Maxwell followed as CED until May, 1975. On June 1, 1975 Jack Van Laar was named County Extension Director and remains in that position to the current time. Lillian Price remained home economist until about 1974, when Margaret Hansen Van Ginkel took over the Clarke/Decatur Home Economist position. She served until around the 1979-80 program year when Pamela Millang was appointed to the position. Shirley McBroom joined the staff as 4-H Program Aide in 1971 and served until April, 1972. Kathryn (Kitty) Baker followed and served until the latter part of the 1970's when Linda Cox joined the staff as county 4-H Aide. Bill Short continued as Midcrest Area 4-H Program Leader and a second area program leader. Marilyn Yashek Werner, joined the staff at the Area Office in Creston in the mid-1970s.

**Events and Activities**--County, area and state activities remained about the same as in previous years with a few additions. District Livestock shows were expanded to include market hog, dairy, horse and dog. Area beef and lamb carcass shows were added in 1971 which initially involved both youth and adult participants. However, these eventually became adult producer evaluation contests and programs. The dairy and horse shows became qualifying shows for AK-SAR-BEN. Summer Nutrition and Recreation (SNRP) programs were conducted with the children of EFNEP (Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program) clients. Area Exchanges are held with the Oak Ridge neighborhood in Des Moines, Franklin County Pennsylvania and the Ozarks Area of Missouri. Other special area events and activities are noted below.

#### **Items of special note-**

- 1970- There are now eight Ag and 10 Home Ec clubs with 241 total youth enrolled.
- The countywide project leader and training system is gaining ground.
  - The home economist conducts food and nutrition training for club leaders and achievement show judges for both ag and home ec clubs.
  - An area program called "Adjustment to City Living" is carried out in Decatur and neighboring counties designed for junior and senior girls who may be moving to the city after graduation.
- 1971-Club enrollment climbs to 283 after a county-wide membership drive.
- With a 4-H aide now on staff, many program details previously lacking in attention are handled.
  - Countywide project leaders are in place for knitting, babysitting, gardening, arc welding, photography, horse, woodworking, dog, citizenship and Jr. Leadership.
  - This was the first year for a 4-H and FFA Livestock Judging Contest at county fair and the first year for a county team to compete at State Fair.
- 1972 - Randy Boswell, an IFYE delegate, speaks at the annual Leader Recognition Dinner.
- The comment is made that too much emphasis at county fair shows seems to be on winning and not enough on sportsmanship and participation.
- 1973 - An Intermediate Co-ed camp is held for Midcrest Area counties for the first time at the State 4-H Camping Center.
- The first countywide basketball tournament and fun day is held with 80 percent of all club members participating.
  - A new home ec club is added making 11 county home ec and eight ag clubs. Enrollment is 262. The club is an outgrowth of summer youth SNRP programs.
  - Conference judging is conducted with home ec, visual arts, and science/mechanics classes for the first time at county fair.
- 1974 - Youth are invited to sit on the County 4-H Committee for the first time. There are

- now 10 adults and five youth on the committee.
- 1975-76--County youth beef and swine carcass shows are conducted for the first time in conjunction with county fair with 22 market beef and 12 market hogs shown. 21 youth and adults attend a follow-up meeting in the fall.
- The first county-wide rabbit project leader is recruited and group formed.
  - A new 4-H Building is erected at the Fairgrounds, thanks to combined efforts of staff, 4-H Committee, Fair Board and county government officials. It boasts 6,000 square feet of exhibit space and 2,400 square feet of food stand and meeting area.
- 1977- The County 4-H Youth Council helps finance a monument and flag at the fairgrounds from sale of T-shirts to help dedicate the new 4-H Building.
- Several clubs are doing various community service activities such as cancer and heart fund drives, visiting nursing homes and election precinct reporting.
  - A local slaughter plant in Lamoni is used for the county fair beef carcass show.
  - Pet Care meetings are held with over 200 elementary youth using a local vet as a resource.
- 1978- Five years after its beginning, the 4-H EFNEP-derived club continues with 44 percent of its original membership.
- Jr. Day Camp at Nine Eagles State Park features a park officer discussing his job, career opportunities, park history and area wildlife flora and fauna.
- 1979- The county 4-H Committee re-organizes to utilize sub- or ad-hoc committees to handle routine issues they had become bogged down with and concentrate more on policy and program development. They meet just five times per year rather than monthly.
- The "Leon T-Birds" 4-H Club organizes as an outgrowth of youth--several with special needs--which an EFNEP client once babysat. She is their first leader.
  - Summer CRD, an area-wide program, involves 30 4-H club youth and 96 non-4-H youth in four Decatur County communities. Their activities include painting and repairs in a town park and rodeo arena; establishing a museum in a city hall; helping set up a recreation slab for tennis and basketball, and fundraising for a town welcome sign and school activities sign.
  - Enrollment going into 1980 stands at 208 in 16 clubs--six ag clubs, seven home ec clubs and three co-ed clubs.

### **1980-89**

**Staff--**Pam Millang resigned as Home Economist around 1984, and Michelle Maguire Beck became the two-county home economist serving Clarke and Decatur Counties. Linda Cox remained the 4-H Aide (Program Assistant) until 1987 when some major reorganization and staff reductions took place. In the early 80's, Jim Almquist left as Area Director, and Bill Bogue, a former state 4-H staff member, took over that position. Marilyn Werner also left the area 4-H Leader position leaving Bill Short alone in that position until about 1986, when he retired, and Deb Hall took over the area 4-H staff position. Around 1986-87, a sharing arrangement put three staff members in charge of Decatur and Ringgold counties. Jack Van Laar remained CED in Decatur County and served as agriculturist in both counties. Michelle Beck was named CED in Ringgold County and served as home economist in both counties. Preston Hayse became the 4-H program leader in both counties and served in that role until 1989 when Darwin Campbell took over the position.

**Clubs and Enrollment--**The legacy of clubs and enrollment in the 80's is club consolidation with decline and leveling off of traditional community club numbers, offset by growth in special interest and non-traditional youth programs. In the early part of the decade there are 13 clubs--Bloomington Rustlers Ag and Home Ec, Centers Cheerful Chums, Decatur County Achievers, Grand River Ranchers and Rancherettes, Hamilton Boosters, Hamilton Hotshots, Leon T-Birds, Le Roy Merry Makers, Mormon Trail Vibrations, Woodland Willing Workers and True Blue. There are around 200 community club members. This drops to 170 by 1982 and holds steady until about the end of the decade when it stands at about 160. On the other hand, non-traditional programs such as 4-H CRD, Summer Leisure Ed, Special Interest, School Enrichment (Energy Challenge, Environmental Education, Outdoor Classrooms, etc.) add between 200 and 300 youth each year. By the mid part of the decade there 10 clubs--Bloomington Rustlers consolidating into one co-ed club and Woodland Willing Workers joining with True Blue to become True Blue Workers. As clubs at this time were under pressure to remove sexist names, Grand River Rancherettes became the Riviervas. They continue until 1988. All clubs are co-ed, and no sexist names exist by 1986, one year ahead of the 1987

state goal for this. A new club, the Lamoni Lariats, is formed in 1989, and the decade closes with 10 community clubs.

#### **Items of special note-**

- 1980-81 - Recruitment includes New Member Night at the 4-H Building along with school visits.
- For the first time, an ad hoc committee is appointed by the 4-H Committee to make record book award selections. This change will become permanent.
  - The value to one community of CRD Youth involvement is estimated at \$54,543.
  - More than 25 percent of all club members are enrolled in the Horse project.
  - The CED assists other agencies in taking the Plant Iowa Program to four elementary schools and other youth groups reaching over 300 youth and planting over 1,000 trees.
  - Thanks to interested leaders, parents and sheep producers, the county 4-H sheep project enjoys resurgence from six exhibits a few years earlier to more than 50. Other livestock project numbers also remain high.
  - Jr. Day Camp is conducted at the 4-H Building with Leisure Program Aides (from the Area Office) presenting many fun activities on the "Outer Space" theme.
  - Youth Carcass shows at county fair maintain popularity with quality grade and cut-out values gradually improving. Some youth receive more money grade and yield for their carcasses than comparable animals bring live at the county fair sale.
- 1982-83--A pilot effort in environmental education and outdoor classrooms is initiated through the county Conservation Education Committee with Lamoni 6 sixth graders and Central Decatur sophomores. This leads to expanded effort reaching 57 grade school and 53 high school youth the following year and even larger numbers in subsequent years.
- An inter-area exchange is conducted involving six Decatur County youth and an inter-state exchange with Michigan involves several older 4-H'ers.
- 1984-85 - A "Crime Puppets" (drug and safety awareness) puppeteer program delivered by county and area staff reached 700 youth in 19 elementary schools. The program would be repeated over the next few years.
- A combination leader recognition and training is held for the first time, featuring concurrent sessions and/or displays covering many project areas.
  - A performance formula is introduced into the swine carcass show at county fair. All species (cattle, sheep and swine) carcass show animals will be evaluated on performance measures from this point on.
- 1986-87 - A volleyball fun day is held.
- Junior Day Camp is held at Slip Bluff, a county park.
  - Being in the heart of the Farm Crisis of the 80's, there is much concern about stress and related health issues that spill into the 4-H and Youth area. A joint Leader-Youth workshop is presented on gardening, handling stress and crafts. In the fall, a 4-H Health and Wellness (ASSIST) curriculum is used with club leaders.
  - The computer is used for the first time to set up club enrollment records and for county fair entries, show lists, recording placings and figuring premiums. (MAC III EZ Pieces).
- 1988-89 - A four-county grant provides a serger sewing machine to lend to textile and clothing project members.
- Major reorganization and staff changes occur as the Creston and Southwest Extension areas are merged. The area now includes 18 counties.

#### **1990-99**

**Staff--**With reorganization came staffing changes. Bill Bogue left the area director position to take a position on campus. Bob Ramsey became the new SW IA Area Director. Field Specialists are disbursed throughout the area in county offices. Dave Seilstad became the first youth field specialist later joined by Barb Dunn Swanson. In 1999, Jean Sheridan joined the area staff as field specialist with responsibility for counties in the eastern part of the area. There are county level changes as well. The two county sharing of staff between Decatur and Ringgold counties ended early in the decade (1993). Darwin Campbell moved to Ringgold County to be full time CED. Jack Van Laar remained in that position in Decatur County, and Michelle Beck took the CED position in Clarke County. Decatur County would not have a professional youth staff or program assistant to help with 4-H programming for another 15 years.

**Clubs and Enrollment**--Community Club enrollment remained fairly steady at around 150-160 through the mid 90's then slipped to around 120 in the 1997-99 time period. There were nine clubs in 1990 as Centers Cheerful Chums folded. In 1992 the True Blue Workers and Grand River Ranchers clubs dissolved, but a new club--Little River--was born. It continued until 1994 when it folded. The remaining seven clubs continued through the end of the decade. They were: Bloomington Rustlers, Decatur County Achievers, Hamilton Hot Shots, Hamilton Boosters, Leon T-Birds, Le Roy Merry Makers and Lamoni Lariats. In 1996 the Bloomington Rustlers, Decatur County Achievers and Le Roy Merry makers Clubs were recognized by Iowa 4-H as 50 Year Clubs.

School enrichment, special interest activities and other non-traditional forms of 4-H programming (i.e. non-community club activities) reached several hundred other youth each year. Environmental Education or outdoor classroom programs, planned and delivered in conjunction with the County Conservation Board and Central Decatur Schools, became an annual event for fourth through sixth graders reaching up to 150 youth each year. For a couple of years in the early 90's this day was held in the fall but was moved back to a day in May for the balance of the decade.

Livestock projects--especially market livestock and horses--remained strong and balanced through most of the 90's. At their height in 1993, weigh-in numbers were 120 lambs, 80 pigs and 135 beef calves. Lamb numbers would slide to around 90 to 100 head; pigs to 75 to 90; and market beef 70 to 90 head over the next few years to a low of 59 pigs, 37 market lambs and 59 market beef calves in 1999.

#### **Items of special note-**

- 1990 - A 4-H school enrichment program focused on self-esteem and targeting low resource youth and reached 50 youth in the Central Decatur Schools.
- Joint two-county (Decatur/Ringgold) club officer training and youth council meetings were held.
  - Central Decatur Schools and Decatur County Extension jointly received a \$10,000 grant for an educational and recreational program known as "4-H Cares." County 4-H Council Youth assist staff in conducting the program with more than 300 elementary students.
  - Money Management sessions were presented to more than 100 youth.
- 1991 - The 4-H Jubilee and Dance are held at the 4-H Building in Leon with great attendance.
- A 4-H Foundation Grant provides a Groundwater Flow Model which will be used for water quality demonstrations at outdoor and environmental education classroom presentations to several hundred youth over the next several years.
  - The Extension Home Economist taught "ages and stages" of youth development to 4-H club leaders at their annual training.
  - County staff worked with the Lamoni Community Betterment Youth Committee to develop and conduct a youth needs and perceptions survey.
  - Youth EFNEP (Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program) is piloted in the summer with excellent participation and results. It would continue for another year when the EFNEP program unfortunately is ended due to lack of federal funding.
- 1992 - A Youth Community Leadership Program is conducted in Lamoni with 19 youth involved.
- Kid-Ability, a child abuse prevention program, is conducted in Decatur and Ringgold counties in collaboration with county schools and reached 86 second graders.
  - Sessions on feeding and care of market beef calves are presented to 4-H project members, and frame score projection and ration analysis computer programs are used to help fine tune individual feeding management.
- 1993 - A Kids' Day Event at County Fair focused on farm safety, and growing out of collaboration with the Healthy Foundations Committee, reached more than 200 youth. The 4-H Field Specialist presented the "Head Over Wheels" tractor safety display at the event.
- More than 50 percent of all 4-H members are carrying one or more livestock projects.
  - Swine and sheep carcass show cut-outs are conducted at nearby locker plants so members may view the carcasses and learn first-hand about meat quality measures.
- 1994 - A Farm Safety Day Camp was held in June at the Decatur County Fairgrounds in collaboration with Agri-Health and Safety Network and Farm Bureau. Around 20, 8- to 13-year-olds attend.
- Youth LEAD, a special leadership program for older youth in the south central area of Iowa is conducted thanks to a 4-H Foundation grant. Decatur County has the highest enrollment with 14 youth and three adult volunteers. Some Central Decatur High School FHA members participated

and

identified child care and abuse issues and said their chapter would provide leadership for these issues. Some 4-H County Council youth also participate to gain more training for use in their leadership roles.

- The County 4-H Youth Council continued to plan and carry out several county events such as 4-H Award Night, 4-H Jubilee and Club Officer Training.
- 1995 - The new state 4-H Child Safety and Protection Policy is implemented. It involves an application process and background checks for new leaders.
  - New livestock project materials--4-H Skills for Life: Animal Science Series--are introduced.
  - About 100 youth and adults attended a combined 4-H Award Night/Jubilee called "4-H Fantasia."
  - The first 4-H Day is held at the ISU Homecoming football game with 13 youth and four adults attending from Decatur County. It would continue to be held under various names over the next few years and then would be discontinued due to NCAA recruiting rules.
- 1996 - The 4-H Blue Ribbon (enrollment data-base system) was introduced.
  - Beef and sheep fitting and grooming clinics, sponsored by the county 4-H Youth Council are conducted with 45 project members and adults attending.
- 1997-98- The County 4-H Youth Council and several community clubs carry out various community service projects, including major improvements and repairs at the county fairgrounds.
  - Some project subject matter training for volunteers and older club youth is conducted over the ICN (Iowa Communications Network).
  - County staff assisted Central Trail FFA members with a Farm Safety Day Camp at the fairgrounds which reached 21 youth.
  - A sixth Grade Lock-in is one area event held at the Creston YMCA.
  - Kimberly Sullivan (Weldon-LeRoy Merry Makers Club) is elected to the 4-H State Council and qualifies at the area level for state awards in Leadership and Communications.
  - A statewide task force developed new 4-H record keeping materials and guidelines which are introduced to local club leaders.
- 1999 - County staff assisted Farm Bureau, county school personnel, commodity organizations and other groups to present the first Ag Awareness Day to more than 200 elementary youth. This would become an annual event with strong planning and input from extension and 4-H.
  - PQA (Pork Quality Assurance) Certification became mandatory for swine project members to be able to show and sell pigs at county and state fairs. More importantly, however, the training helps members understand and utilize production practices to ensure a quality, wholesome and safe product. Eighteen swine project members were trained and certified in PQA, Level III.

## 2000-Present

**Staff**--In 2002 Jean Sheridan left and Heidi Bell took over the 4-H and Youth field specialist position. Heidi served in this position with responsibility for Decatur, Clarke, Ringgold, Lucas and Wayne counties until 2006 when she left, and Karen Pattison was hired to the position where she remains at the current time. Thanks to passage of the Extension Referendum in Decatur County in 2006, funds were available to hire a program assistant for the first time in 20 years, and Kala Leeper was hired as part-time County Youth Coordinator (CYC) in September 2007, and continues in the position at the present time. She had previously served as a 4-H program summer intern from Oklahoma State University in 2006 working in both Clarke and Decatur counties.

**Clubs and Enrollment**--In 2000 the Lamoni Lariats Club folded, but a new club called the Wranglers was organized. Thus there remained seven clubs until 2006 when another club called the Decatur County Starz was born making eight clubs briefly. However, in 2007 the Leon T-Birds Club folded, and we were back to seven clubs, which remain until today--Bloomington Rustlers, Decatur County Achievers, Decatur County Boosters, Hamilton Hot Shots, Le Roy Merry Makers, Decatur County Starz and the Wranglers.

Enrollment in Community Clubs started out at 115 in 2000, then gradually rose as follows: 2001-122; 2002-123; 2003-136; 2004-145; 2005-157. Then there came a fairly large decline to 119 in 2006 and 98 in 2007. These numbers, however, were greatly reflective of enrollment growth and decline statewide and mirrored a general population decline in 4-H-age youth. In 2008, 4-H statewide embarked on a goal for each county to attain three percent growth annually in 4-H community clubs. Decatur County exceeded this goal with total club enrollment of 105.

School enrichment, special interest and other non-club enrollment and activities continued to reach several hundred additional youth each year. Some of these activities and events will be discussed in the next section.

**Activities/Events**--Many county, area and state events continued as in previous years and decades with some changes and adjustments. In the county, Environmental Education Days were discontinued around 2004-2005, but Ag Awareness Day was continued as a school enrichment or special school activity to the present time, reaching 200 or more older elementary youth from the county's school systems annually. Other school enrichment programs included Robotix, Toys in Space, Bridges, Bio-technology (DNA Fingerprinting and Bt corn), and Circle of Support. Leadership opportunities beyond the club level remain such as County, Area and State 4-H Council. Youth qualify at an area-wide recognition event to be considered for state project awards or leadership positions. State 4-H Conference continues to be held each summer. Decatur County manages to send one or two delegates most years, but more youth need to take advantage of this great opportunity. Area Junior Camp at the State 4-H Camping Center continues to be held, but has been limited to just sixth grade youth the past few years. Intermediate and senior 4-H camps were discontinued some time ago, but other opportunities exist or have been offered for these groups. For example, overnight intermediate trips to Kansas City or Omaha have been offered. State camps are offered at the camping center every summer around a variety of themes and a few Decatur county 4-H'ers have attended some of these.

County Fair has been and remains the premier county event for most 4-H'ers. The 4-H Food Stand at County Fair remains an important fund raiser for county 4-H programming, netting about \$2,000 annually, which is used for camp and conference cost-share, to offset enrollment fees, help pay for project materials and other 4-H program needs.

Meat Animal Livestock and horse projects continue to be carried by a large number of 4-H and FFA youth, though numbers have been subject to some fluctuation just as have enrollment numbers. For example, number of market beef calves weighed in went from 72 in 2000 to 65 in 2001 (22 project members), then gradually rose and stabilized from 90-100 in the 2002-2005 time period (25-30 members); before dropping off to 81 in 2006 and 71 in 2007. However, project member numbers increased to around 40 at this time. (More kids weighing in fewer animals). Other species follow similar trends. Swine numbers reflected the decline in family farms raising pigs with just 32 pigs weighed in by seven members in 2000. This gradually grew to 89 pigs weighed in by 20 members in 2005 to over 90 head by nearly 30 members today. Almost all are purchased feeder pigs fed out for show, as only one or two members have commercial swine operations on their home farms. Market sheep numbers follow a similar pattern with 33 lambs weighed in by 16 members in 2000; going to 102 (20 members) in 2004, then leveling off to 70-85 lambs (15 members) until 2008 when we had 98 lambs (16 members).

#### **Items of special note-**

2000- Two youth and their parents attend an area 4-H-sponsored Career Trek to ISU. One parent comments that this gave her son new insight into career plans.

- The year came and went and the Y-2K computer bug never bit!
- Through 4-H community club, school enrichment and other Extension youth program venues, more than one-third of all 4-H age youth are reached in the county.

2001- Something new was tried with the 4-H/FFA Carcass Show cattle. They were sent to slaughter two weeks prior to the fair so cut-out results would be available and prizes awarded at the fair. Eleven youth participate exhibiting 14 head.

- Kevin Hatfield received area recognition for state award consideration in the Dairy project.
- Clarke and Decatur county staff team up to present joint PQA Level III training.
- Training in the 4-H Blue Ribbon (enrollment database) system upgrade is held via ICN.

2002- The year of the 4-H Centennial Year celebration in Iowa.

- The 4-H County Youth Council re-organized with a voluntary approach (senior 4-H'ers accepted at large, need not be club-elected or appointed). The 10 members assisted with several countywide events, including special activities at County Fair, such as a volleyball tournament, pedal tractor pull, and a 4-H Centennial Birthday Party complete with homemade ice cream. (Note: It just happened to be the County Extension Director's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday as well).
- The Fair Board erected two new sheds for shelter and cage space for the rabbits and poultry exhibits on the slab south of the 4-H Building where the old CCC Camp Barracks once sat.
- The County 4-H Youth Council teamed with the Clarke County Council youth to hold a "4-H Fest."
- Lucille Deemer was selected by Decatur County 4-H and inducted into the 4-H Hall of Fame at a ceremony held at the Iowa State Fair.

- Decatur County staff and 4-H members and volunteers participated in the National Conversations on Youth Development with 17 participating.
- 2003 - Circle of Support teams, organized through Extension leadership, are formed in Leon and Lamoni schools and conduct teacher training, displays and presentations to address teen stress and depression issues. A large segment of students, teachers and the public are reached in both communities.
- Many clubs conduct a variety of community service activities, including food and clothing drives, assistance with community celebrations, roadside clean-up and fairgrounds improvements. Some clubs apply for and receive Pioneer Community Improvement grants to add on to and improve the small animal shelter, build picnic tables for the campground area, and landscape the flagpole and memorial area, as well as several other projects over the next several years.
  - A Junior Project Fair, jointly sponsored by the Decatur and Clarke County 4-H Youth Councils, is held at the 4-H Building in Leon and draws 33 junior members from these and neighboring counties.
  - Livestock Quality Assurance is conducted jointly by Clarke and Decatur County Extension staff, still primarily for swine project members and PQA training requirements, but other species exhibitors are invited to look ahead to FSQA (Food Safety and Quality Assurance), which will eventually be required of all meat animal project members. Thirteen youth and six adults attend from Decatur County.
  - A joint 4-H Leader Training is held at the 4-H Building in Leon for Clarke, Decatur, Ringgold, Wayne and Lucas County 4-H volunteers and includes a satellite downlink originating from the state 4-H office.
- 2004- The County 4-H Council sponsored a combined Award Night/Fun Night in November with about 80 people attending.
- They also sponsor a Project Fair at the fairgrounds with 38 attending from Decatur and surrounding counties.
  - FSQA takes the place of PQA with the beef species added. A joint Clarke/Decatur meeting in Weldon had over 100 in attendance with 45 from Decatur County.
  - Heidi Bell, Youth Field Specialist, presented Challenge Team Training to 111 youth in the Mormon Trail school district and continued to work with Circle of Support (Peer Helper, facilitator) in the Central Decatur and Lamoni school districts.
  - County 4-H Youth Council members took part in the 4-H Day at the Legislature.
  - The Decatur County Fair Board embarked on an ambitious plan to remodel the 4-H Building kitchen, Food Stand and meeting room area.
- 2005 - A Clover Kids (K-3) club is started in Lamoni with their after-school program with 25 members enrolled.
- Sheep and dairy exhibitors join the FSQA certification list. Clarke/Decatur sessions grow to six with 68 project members from Decatur County trained.
  - Events conducted by the County 4-H Youth Council include a Livestock Project Fair in the spring and a Bonfire Cook Out/Haunted Walk/Hayride in the fall--both well attended.
  - Heidi Bell and two Council Youth attend 4-H Legislative Day.
  - A new county Extension web site is launched and 4-H news and other program items are posted to the "Kids and Teens" link there. It is also linked to the State Extension web site and 4-H/Youth links.
  - The 4-H Building renovation is completed at a total cost of over \$80,000, thanks to many donations, grants and donated labor and materials. The result is a much improved, modern, energy efficient attractive and functional facility for Extension and 4-H as well as other public and private events and activities year-round in addition to use at county fair.
- 2006 - A new club--Decatur County Starz--is organized.
- 4-H and other Extension Youth programs reach 43 percent of all 4-H age youth in the county.
  - This is the last year for the AK-SAR-BEN District Qualifying Horse Show.
  - FSQA certification is now required for all 4-H/FFA meat and Dairy project members, including those with rabbits and poultry. Training is conducted with all junior members while Intermediates and senior members have test out options.
- 2007 - An Environmental Ed Day, which as an annual event had been discontinued a few years earlier, was held once more with the help of Karen Pattison, 4-H and Youth Field Specialist, and involved 101 Central Decatur fifth and sixth graders.
- Club leader training--once in the fall and once in the spring during the club year--was made mandatory statewide. Leaders now have the option of attending the training meetings or viewing a video or on-line web session as alternative training.
  - The old swine barn is razed and a new one constructed on the Fairgrounds at a cost of \$25,000, thanks again to donations, in-kind volunteer labor and materials, and state fairgrounds infrastructure funding.
  - A new technology known as "retinal imaging" is used to verify market beef and market sheep for State Fair nomination. It uses a device which takes a picture of the retinal vessel pattern in the eyes of the

animal. It takes the place of nose-printing and DNA sampling and becomes mandatory in 2008 for State Fair nominated market cattle and sheep in Iowa. Decatur County buys into a retinal imaging machine (\$2,500 device) shared with neighboring counties with Extension and the Fair Board sharing in the cost. A group of staff and volunteers are trained in the use of the device.

2008 - Clover Kids is conducted in Leon for the first time with 35 members enrolling.

- Joe Leisz, Iowa 4-H Foundation, attends Awards Night and gives presentation to around 60 attendees.
- A new livestock weigh scale is purchased by the Fair Board and installed at the county fairgrounds.
- Decatur was one of only seven counties in the SW area to reach or exceed the state three percent

growth goal.

- There are 21 Decatur County 4-H'ers with static exhibits and 12 with livestock exhibits at State Fair.
- Jim and Marlene Scott are selected and inducted into the 4-H Hall of Fame at the Iowa State Fair.

### **Notes From a 4-H Club Historian's Book 1935-1943**

The oldest record we have available (or could find) comes from the Decatur County museum and is the club historian book for the Merry Workers girls 4-H Club (Long Creek Township) and covers the years 1935-43. It gives us a unique look at the nature of 4-H club work at the time.

The club was organized on October 18, 1935, at the Woodard Country School. There were six charter members, five of which filled club officer positions. The club disbanded July 20, 1936, but reorganized again in the fall with a new membership of 13.

Among activities and reports noted in the minutes were leaders attending county leaders' schools and sharing what they learned; various talks and demonstrations on a variety of topics given by leaders and members or groups of members; a "terrible snow storm" preventing the February, 1936, meeting from being held; singing club songs; planning for and attending County Rally Day, including recognition received for all members present; members running for county 4-H offices; sending a delegate to the state 4-H convention in Ames, June 24-27, 1936; planning and holding club Christmas parties; talks and record keeping on home furnishings and décor; "memory" pictures; "music memory" records and contests; a health talk presented by the county health nurse; planning for and holding local achievement days, including securing judges for these; working on record books; preparing for County Achievement Days; ordering miniature pictures; setting up and exhibiting in the club's county fair booth; playing games; buying war bonds; and joining a campaign of 4-H girls contributing to the war effort and war-time emergency assistance, especially around 1942 and 1943.

From 1938 on, a 4-H Girls' Secretary Report form, which included the club minutes, was submitted monthly with a copy sent to the Farm Bureau office, the sponsoring organization for Extension at the time.

### **The Decatur County 4-H Fair**

A discussion of 4-H in Decatur County would not be complete without inclusion of the Decatur County Fair. Not much is available about the county fair prior to 1940. There was an early fairgrounds site a few miles north of Leon and east of Highway 69. It is known that there were horse races held there as the track area can still be faintly detected from the air. There was a grandstand of sorts but most of the rest of the fairgrounds was covered by tents at fair time. A violent storm struck in the twenties one evening as the fair events were concluding and caused a lot of damage to the fairgrounds. From then on until the 1940's we have no account available of where the fair was held or how it was organized.

The Decatur County 4-H Fair Association, the structure of the current county fair association, was incorporated and articles filed on June 7, 1940. The original board of directors was: W.A. Reed, Arvid F. Miller, T.E. Van Dyke, W.F. Roberts, E.W. Stoll, Earl Hullinger and Burbank Halstead.

The site picked for the county fairgrounds was the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp barracks on the north edge of Leon on the west side of Highway 69. The Fair Board acquired 10 acres of land including improvements at this site, which included three barracks buildings, a water system and septic sewage system. A five-year building program was immediately adopted but shelved due to World War II. Founding individuals of the fair association had in mind a county fair event that "focused attention on youth and not the race track." Inflation following the war further hindered building plans.

In 1951 membership, which could be obtained for a one-time fee of \$5 (this would later be dropped), totaled 184. The Fair Board considered this at the time to be “too small to adequately provide public support.” There was felt a great need for new buildings to avoid the great amount of tent rental necessary for the fair. A membership and fund drive, launched in the fall of 1952 in conjunction with the Farm Bureau membership drive, garnered 137 new members and some cash donations, and a new facilities renovation plan was adopted.

In 1952 the first carnival since before the war was booked at the fairgrounds. The Royal United Shows of Minneapolis contract provided for the advance sale of 5,000 carnival ride tickets. Carnivals would remain a feature of the fair through the following two decades, and then problems with scheduling, space requirements, safety issues and cost led to the multi-ride old time carnivals becoming a thing of the past from the 70's on. In 1953, funding remained very short, but help from the county engineer laid some important groundwork with construction of water diversions, a lighted parade field and dirt fill for a new calf barn. In June and July, a 24' x 104' pole shed calf barn was constructed and the girls exhibit building remodeled.

Many other improvements were to come over the years including more barns, an enclosed show ring, a new 40' x 100' Girls' 4-H exhibit hall in 1959 (currently known as the North Building--discussed previously in the main section), the new 4-H exhibit building and food stand (1976--discussed previously), addition of a horse barn west of the hog barn (which later became the sheep barn) in the early 80's, extension of the north cattle barn, numerous grading, graveling and drainage projects, a tractor pull pad, chain link fence around the grounds perimeter, construction of portable stages on wheels, various water line and wash rack improvements, connection of the sewage system to the city sanitary sewer, a scale house and permanent set of livestock scales, a “demolition derby” pit, an extension of the North Building, and metal siding for all the barns and buildings. More recent projects have included the 4-H Building renovation in 2005 and new swine barn in 2007 (both discussed earlier) and an RV campground area along the south fence complete with electrical stubs. In addition, recently the North Building has undergone and continues to see some remodeling and improvements. Over the past two years continuous steel fencing has replaced the wooden panels around the show ring and in the cattle barns. A set of steel panels was erected two years ago west of the swine barn as a cattle tie-out area. Upkeep, maintenance and improvements of the fairgrounds remain priority but costly obligations of the county fair board.

Some mention needs to be made here about other facilities on the fairgrounds. The Leon Rodeo Arena was built in the 60's and although it is on the fairgrounds, it is owned and maintained by the Leon Chamber of Commerce through their Rodeo Committee. However, through working arrangements with the Fair Board and other community groups, the facility is used by 4-H and FFA horse project members, saddle clubs, youth or junior rodeo and other groups throughout the year. It is a first class facility, excellent for 4-H and other youth horse shows (including the fair show), besides providing the site for the award winning annual IRCA Leon Rodeo, which occurs around the Fourth of July. The facility has constantly been improved and today boasts roofed “sky box” seating above the regular grand stand seating almost around the entire perimeter of the arena.

Another building which is evident on the fairgrounds is a large red metal pole barn at the south east corner. This was built in the early 70s by the Decatur County Historical Society as an agricultural museum and housed a lot of antique farm machinery and equipment they had acquired. For a few years they conducted a “Threshing Bee” in the fall on the site and fired up an old steam engine and threshing machine they owned. For a few years in the early 80s, the “Bee” was held in conjunction with the county fair. Shortly thereafter, due to lack of manpower and support, the Threshing Bee was discontinued, although on occasion some of the machinery was pulled out and displayed during the county fair. More recently, in 2006 due to lack of funds and active membership, the Historical Society auctioned off the machinery and sold the building. The Rodeo Committee purchased the building, however, and made it available for other uses. It came in handy during the 2008 Decatur County Fair, for example, when due to rain, the Bill Riley Talent Show and Farm Bureau annual meeting and barbeque were conducted there.

The original 4-H Fair Association articles of incorporation were established to be in place for 50 years and hence were to discontinue in 1990. However, the Fair Board at the time was not aware of this and continued operating from these articles, not realizing the need to re-organize until it was called to their attention in 2005. The new corporation is now the **Decatur County 4-H & FFA Fair Association**. The initial officers and directors are: Robert DeLong, president; Benji Hullinger, vice-president; Terry Bundt, secretary; Sandy Marcus, treasurer; and directors Roger Elliott, Wade Hamilton, Teena Hash, Jerry Hatfield, Roger Leeper, Sam Mendenhall, Roger

Percell, Lathum and Rose Saxton, Dennis Showers, Rosa Sondag, Julia Van Laar, and Brandi Hullinger. Most of these directors remain on the Fair Board today.

Space does not permit inclusion of everyone who has been instrumental through service on the Decatur County Fair Board over the years. However, a few that have provided some long terms of exemplary leadership, in addition to those listed above on the current Board, include: Arvid Miller, Paul Griffith, Clifford Cowles, Joe Dale, Edwin Woods, Harry Daugherty, Bud Hamaker, Bob Redman, Howard Baker, Olin Rippey, Leon "Bud" Kessel', John and Zana McKibben, Jimmie Perry, Dale McAlexander, Denzle Bethards, Kenneth Smith, Tom Stone, Dale Moeller, Lucille Deemer, Dick Bettin, Don Templeton, Ordale Frandle, Dick Neubauer, Don Erpelding, Dennis Hullinger, Monte Baker, Linda Binning, Mark Tharp, Jerry Parsons, Roger Vanderflute and many, many others.

### **Decatur County 4-H Reflections**

Reminiscence from Former Participants in Decatur County 4-H

#### **Serena McKibben Linn**

Charter member of Garden Grove Go Getters girls 4-H Club from 1956-62  
Member of Center Cheerful Chums boys 4-H Club a few years

I can remember how excited we were when we started the Garden Grove Go Getters Club in the mid 50's. Many of us who had started school at Garden Grove were the charter members and were a cohesive group of girls. Our parents, especially our mothers were active and involved in the club. Many were leaders over the years including mine. Somewhere at the farm, is my Record Book with all the project books in it. Over the years it has been moved from storage place to storage place and at present I have not been able to locate it so I can give more of a dated historical count on some of the following events from a young farm girl's memories.

I loved the Sewing and the Home Furnishing projects. The Food and Nutrition was not my favorite. My sister was also in 4-H, but I cannot remember if she was old enough to join when the club was formed.

Mom was not one of the original leaders but did serve as a leader. In later years she also served on the Decatur County Fair Board. She was a true 4-H'er. And it was fun to hear tales about her. For example, she made a fashion statement by wearing bib overalls to help do work at the fair grounds before it was vogue.

One year when sewing was the project, and she was leader, we had several of the "new" members to our house, and we helped them learn to sew. It was fun working with other girls and watching them make their first seams and the frustration when we had to "rip out." Several years later, perhaps around 15 years, one of those then small girls approached me at an event in Garden Grove and was telling me about how much she learned about sewing and the fun she had at our home, in the heat of the summer, in the 50s, no a/c, treadle sewing machines, and one electric one. Believe it or not, that treadle sewing machine is still at the farm and still works. The electric one is long gone and has been replaced several times. I still enjoy occasionally seeing this friend, and when we meet we seem to always talk about sewing.

I do not remember what I had achieved to be on a wonderful trip with 4-H'ers to Omaha. Two or three counties were involved. I do remember that Milt Henderson was our Regional Extension Director and Jean Keeler was the Decatur County girls 4-H president. We had some time to shop at a Mall in Omaha. We were told to return to the west entrance at a certain time. Jean and I were a bit adventurous and Milt told us to stay together and make sure we were back on time. When the time came we went to the west entrance, only to find the bus was not there, no one was insight. We asked some kind of a uniformed security officer, and he said there was another west entrance up two flights. We walked around the building like the security officer told us to and finally found the bus. Milt was extremely upset with us and then more so with himself when he found out we were at a west entrance. He did not realize there was more than one. Jean and I never figured out if we were at the right entrance, and the driver went to the wrong one. He frequently reminded us he could not let the two of us out of his site when we were together thereafter. Often when I drive down Highway 69 and look to the west at the Weldon corner, (Jean lived down that road;) I think of Jean and the fun we had. She may have been a few years older

then I, but we always had a good time when we were together. And Milt, he was always there for his 4-H kids.

As I grew so did our 4-H adventures. Our family always went to Des Moines three times a year, on a July Wednesday to go to Riverview Park on penny day, to the State Fair and then the day after Thanksgiving for Christmas shopping. We camped out in the fair camp ground area by putting a tarp from the top of the stock rack to the ground. We were State Fair campers long before it became vogue. We could camp almost anywhere in the camp area as no one camped other than a few of the exhibitors.

We camped as a family for a year or two and then when the club had a demonstration team go to state fair, our club wanted to see them demonstrate. We decided to camp out as a club. There were about 10 or so of us. We put the tarps from each side of the stock rack to the ground so there was enough room for all of us to sleep "in the tent." We had a camp stove and cooked our meals there, too. Several other family members joined, and by the second night there was quite a group from the club. Night number three found it getting cloudy and the demonstrators joined the group as they had been "released" and were going to camp out with us. About midnight it began to rain. And it rained, and RAINED, and RAINED until about 2 o'clock. Everything was wet, soaked, and we were beginning to float. So we loaded up the cars, four, if I remember correctly, plus the pick-up. I rode home in the pick-up with my dad in the driving rain. It was almost 6 o'clock in the morning when we arrived home, wet, tired and hungry. Now that is what you call camping the 4-H way. It rained for a couple of days, and it took a while to get everything dry and back to its owner. I still chuckle about the wet camping night--when we now camp in an RV.

I also had the privilege to attend 4-H camp at the campground in the Boone area. The name escapes me right now (is it old-timers disease?) but I got to sleep in the tents with the wooden floors, not the cabins that some stayed in. I do remember when it started to storm the one evening, those of us who were sleeping in the tents were taken to the "mess hall" to spend the night until the storm blew over, and then we returned to the tents to finish the night.

I also had a 4-H garden. It was my pride to watch it grow and try to keep the weeds out of it. I also liked wildlife and enjoyed watching the animals around the farm UNTIL a rabbit decided to eat my garden. Now this met all out war. He was ruining my County Fair entries. I had learned to shoot the gun, an old 22 rifle, several years earlier, and that pesky rabbit was going to end up in my sights if he continued to make my garden breakfast, lunch and dinner. My dad laughed at me when I finally got the rabbit, and I could not come to carrying it out of the garden. My dad took him to the cornfield.

That was the beginning of my "hunting." I may not be as good of a shot now as I was then, must be that old-timers thing again.

I also raised chickens. And when I say I raised chickens, I mean several hundreds a year. There were always a few that became pets and were named and answered to their names. They were always the prettiest with beautiful coats and personalities. I took them to Decatur County Fair several years and then one year took them to the Iowa State Fair. Those beauties won blue ribbons at the State Fair but the sad thing was my "pets" were not allowed to come home. Somewhere those ribbons are still in that missing project book that will sometime in the future appear.

After being in the Garden Grove Go Getters girls club for several years, my sister and wanted to have our horses in 4-H. Our dad's philosophy was "if you have the ability to do something, then do it." He allowed us to do things that many girls were not allowed to do because they were girls and girls in the 50s and 60s didn't do those things. We joined the Centers Cheerful Chums Boys Club and boys, here we come, horses and all. We had a wonderful time with the horses. There were others in the club that had horses too, boys of course. The first year we were not allowed to leave the horses at the County Fair. We brought them in, showed them and then returned home the same day. The second year, our dad and a couple of the other dads who had sons with horses decided they would help and the horses could stay. Someone had to be at the barn with the horses at all times while the fair grounds were open to the public. We also had a wonderful time as this was the time of summer when our cousins from Ohio came, so they spent the time at the fair with us. The cousins still laugh about the fun we had at the fair. Dad stayed active in the horse part of 4-H for several years after my sister graduated. I know he enjoyed the 4-H'ers

he worked with. One of his favorites was Annette Warren. Her friendship met much to him and mom. Annette remains a family friend. Another friendship made thru 4-H.

My favorite memory of all the many 4-H memories was taking a single demonstration to the State Fair. Always before this year, the early 60s, they were team demonstrations. My demonstration was Photography. Having won at the club level, then the County Fair, I was the first to take a single demonstration to the State Fair. I took pictures around the state fair grounds the day before my demonstration and then developed those pictures and printed them during the demonstration. The judge was very surprised when she saw the pictures, one of her as a judge the day before. I do not remember her name now, but I saw her several times at the fair in the next few years, and she always spoke--another 4-H friendship.

Another memory is that of Christmas Caroling. Dad would hook the hayrack to the tractor and drive it into Garden Grove. Then we would gather at a home of one of the club members, ride from house to house in the hayrack, singing to anyone who would listen, making sure we visited the elderly and the shut-ins. We would sing several songs and then leave them with a plate of Christmas goodies. Then we would go back to the club member's home and have a soup supper.

These are a few of the many memories I have of Decatur County 4-H. There are many more and when I find that hiding Record Book, the pictures, records, club notes, ribbons and such will bring a flood of more memories.

4-H and the Iowa State Fair is still part of my life. With the exception of a few years, after graduation from high school and living out of state, I have entered sewing projects in the Fabric and Threads Department at the Iowa State Fair. I still go to the 4-H building--back then, it was the poultry building--and spend at least 4 hours reading and enjoying the hard work the present day 4-H'ers do for their projects.

### **Ted and Barbara Skinner and Family**

Members and Leaders: High Point Club  
County 4-H Girls Committee and later a club leader

Ted--4-H was an important part of our family's life on the farm in the 30's. Venita, Margaret, Paul and I had Holstein projects. I became a leader in the 50's and 60's. Barbara and I were involved in the 60's with Norman, Duane and Jean [children] being in 4-H. They had articles that went to State fair. A highlight for Norman was his Grand Champion pig and pen-of-three.

An amusing remembrance that I recall was one evening we had some new baby chicks and I was in the brooder house to set the heater and to watch for awhile and I fell asleep. Arvid Miller [county director] came in. Of course, he got a chuckle out of that.

Barb--While serving on the county committee, we were asked to judge at each club's local achievement shows where demonstrations or items were eliminated from going on to county fair. There were lots of girls involved in 4-H! I collected money for construction of the building now known as the Heritage Building [North Building] because most of our buildings were CCC camp buildings needing repairs.

Officials on the State Fair grounds wouldn't let Norman take his motorcycle into the grounds when he was giving a demonstration on motorcycle safety until he got [county] confirmation.

### **Ron Helton**

Member: Bonnett 4-H'ers from 1958-61

My most memorable 4-H experience was the Decatur County Fair in August of 1959. I showed hogs. The night we unloaded them at the fair it started raining. It rained 13 inches before it quit. We had a flood comparable to 1993. I was surrounded by flood waters where we lived. A friend of mine cared for my hogs at the fair. Funny part--my hogs would not drink the Leon city water. It was terrible (Leon was on deep wells at the time and had lots of minerals and chlorine). My friend hauled water from his home to the hogs. That year I had Grand Champion Boar and Gilt, and he showed them for me.

**Loirel Hinds**

Member: True Blue from 1946-49

My most memorable 4-H experience was showing steers. One was named Joe Lewis.

**Ron and Lucille Deemer and Family**

Lucille: Leader of True Blue from 1972-1980; Hamilton Hot Shots from 1981-84  
Decatur County Fair Board secretary (many years)  
County Fair 4-H Judge from 1995-2005

Christine (daughter): Member of True Blue from 1973-80

David (son): Member of Hamilton Hot Shots from 1976-84

Ron: Member of True Blue from 1955-60; Leader of Hamilton Hot Shots from 1980-82

Service on various 4-H and County Fair Committees, including swine superintendent, during same time period.

Ralph Deemer (Ron's father): Leader of True Blue from 1956-60; County Committee in 1955

Helen Deemer (Ron's mother): Leader of True Blue (girls) from 1955-58; County Committee from 1962-65

Lucille: My most memorable 4-H experiences are families working together to achieve goals; encouraging and observing youth as they participated in their chosen projects, and 4-H members receiving awards for their achievements. It is a pleasure to visit with former 4-H members, now adults, and hear them share how 4-H has helped them in their careers.

**Larry and Anita Opfer**

Larry: Leader of Hamilton Hot Shots in the 1950s

Anita: Leader of Hamilton Hot Shots in the 1970s

Larry: Charles Landphair and I started the Hamilton Hot Shots 4-H Club in the early 1950s. Joe Dale was on the 4-H Leadership Council and was helpful getting it going. We had a group of active boys: Pat Graham, Francis Willis, Eldon Dale, Joey Dale I can remember and several others.

Anita: Linda Hamaker and I were the first two women leaders of an all boys 4-H Club. We had close to 20 boys. We had several boys teams of educational presentations go to state fair on varied subjects from wrestling to weather. We had some champion teams of livestock judging. Larry Lee Opfer (our son) went to 4-H Congress in Chicago in 1975 and received a scholarship there.

**Janet (Trembly) Leeper**

Member for eight years (1964-1972)

(two years in Morgan Team Workers and seven years in True Blue)

My most memorable 4-H experience:

I remember being so excited to finally turn 10 years old so that I could join 4-H! To a kid who lived 14 miles from town and had no close neighborhood children, this was a chance to have new friends, new things to learn and new places to go. Looking back through the pages of my old Record Book, I see the story of a young girl who began her journey in 4-H very timid and shy who through years of club office responsibilities, fair projects and demonstrations eventually was brave enough to represent her county at the State 4-H Conference in Ames and later participate in an exchange program in the State of Pennsylvania. The purpose of this program was to help youth experience farm life in another part of the country.

As was typical of most farm families, I had never traveled very far from home, so to travel by bus several hours to a state that I had never been to was quite thrilling. I stayed two weeks at a dairy farm in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, and also visited our nation's capital, Washington, D.C. I learned that even though farms in another state can be very different from mine, the cares and concerns of another 16-year

old are pretty much the same. I made some lifelong friends through this experience, and we still correspond with each other at Christmas time, even though we haven't seen each other for 38 years.

4-H not only taught me very practical skills in cooking, sewing and home furnishings, but it also broadened my horizons. And through the encouragement and help of my dedicated 4-H leaders, I gained the skills and confidence to become a responsible, community-minded citizen. I really think the words of the pledge that began every meeting made such an impression: "I pledge my head to clearer thinking, my heart to greater loyalty, my hands to larger service, and my health to better living, for my club, my community, my country and my world." I owe a great deal to this organization that enriched my life in many ways.

I have attached some pictures. They include (clockwise-next page) me with the family I stayed with in Pennsylvania (I'm holding a cat). The article I wrote for the Spokesman about my trip. The demonstration I gave at the state fair, the article about my participation in the state dress revue, and the leaders of my club, True Blue, Maxine McDaniel and Freda Osborn, who are in our booth at the county fair.





and fresh squeezed real orange juice. We read nutrient charts, squeezed, measured, bought, tasted, timed and had other members take a blindfold test as to which drink they preferred. The outcome was in favor of Tang and I was a little concerned as I knew from attending training sessions that natural orange juice was not preferred (in the training materials), but as I felt it was important for the girls to be truthful in filling out information about their projects, we entered the display with the girl's own conclusion.

It was not the information the judge was looking for when she saw the display, and she attempted to have it kicked out of the fair. The girl and I were both upset because of the time spent on this exhibit. I rushed over to the temporary Extension office set up at the fairgrounds to appeal this ruling and a fair board member happened to be there who was also upset about the exhibit being kicked out. He immediately called a special fair board meeting at which they reinstated the exhibit and required the judge to put a rating on it.

Needless to say, the exhibit received the lowest rating possible, and did not receive any good comments, but both myself and my 4-Her learned two things that day: There is fairness at the Decatur County Fair, and the judge's decision is final!

### **Robert Bjorland**

Member: Evergreen Livewires 4-H Club from 1950-55

Our leaders were Glen Twiliger and Ralph Snively. My most memorable experiences were taking 4-H project exhibits to the fair, showing animals; learning to keep records and how to take care of cattle and camping experiences. The highlight of my youth experience was raising sheep and cattle. Good memories. Leaders were good examples.

### **Emett Joy**

Member-LeRoy Merry Makers-late 40's, early 50's; Leader-mid 50's; 4-H County Council

Most memorable experiences were the 4-H Short Course in Ames and 4-H Camp at Madrid. Worked with Milt Henderson and Arvid Miller.

### **Jim and Marlene Scott**

Jim: Member of LeRoy MerryMakers from 1946-1954; Leader from 1967-82

Marlene: Assistant Leader in 1961

Jim: I joined 4-H as soon as I got to be 10 years old in 1946. My club was the LeRoy Merry Makers, and all the kids attended school at LeRoy. My first project was a Hereford steer I bought from my uncle. He had horns and I showed him with his horns intact. All the meetings took place at the members' homes and most of the parents attended. It was a good excuse to get together for families. The fair was a big event, but the fairgrounds was much different. The only permanent buildings were the cement barn, a hog and sheep barn, a band stand and two frame buildings. Most of these had been built before WW II by WPA work crews.

Arvid Miller was the Extension Director. At that time Farm Bureau and Extension were both together. The Extension office was in the basement of the post office. Arvid made home visits to all the members and was very well acquainted with all the families. When we showed cattle, a show ring was made up by putting snow fence in a circle south of the cement building. A large tent was erected in the area, too. In 1949 a heavy rain and wind blew the tent down, but there were no fatalities.

The cattle sale took place in the show ring. My steer sold for 25 cents per pound, and I cried a lot when I led him up the chute into the truck. There were no cattle trailers in those days. Very few farmers had pickups, but several people owned stock trucks and made a living hauling livestock.

Davey Jones from Van Wert had a large family and they all had calves. They won the Iowa State Fair Steer Show in 1948. Their cattle were the ones everyone tried to beat. I spent a lot of time watching Davey and his kids, trying to pick up skills to help me do better.

4-H had a very large influence on the farm families of the county, both educationally and socially. Each member had to give demonstrations and talks, which I dreaded, but it did help me learn to speak and perform in public. My 4-H years were the groundwork for learning in livestock production and management, showing and

grooming cattle, public leadership and conduct of meetings. None of these happened without the devoted leadership of Extension people, volunteers, parents and public spirited community members.

