



HISTORY OF 4-H--1902-2004

U.S., Montana, Stillwater County

The early 1900s

4-H, the largest U.S. youth development program, began as a movement over time. 4-H had its first record of a club in 1902 when A.B. Graham, Superintendent of Schools in Clark County, Ohio, organized a boys' and girls' agriculture club outside of school hours. Parents served as volunteer leaders partnering with educators to provide appropriate curriculum and materials. This trend was in response to young people, who lived mostly on farms, and their need for a better agricultural education. These "learn by doing" clubs involved the heads, hearts, and hands of farm youth in practical, hands-on education through agriculture and domestic science projects that could be used in everyday life. For example, boys' clubs concentrated on conveying new agricultural techniques from experiment stations and land-grant colleges to farm operators in such projects as seed germination and milk butterfat testing. Girls, on the other hand, concentrated on such practical skills as sewing, canning, baking and basketry. By 1904, 50,000 youth belonged to corn clubs, organized in the South to break the one-cycle crop of cotton. The emblem used nationally in 1907 or 1908 was the 3-leaf clover to represent head, heart, and hands.

The 1910s

In 1910 the movement arose in some Montana eastern counties under the management of the Farmers' Institute to organize corn clubs. In 1911, the first livestock specialist was appointed for the state of Montana. Nationally, by the end of 1911, the 3-leaf clover emblem had become a 4-leaf clover when a 4th "H" was added for the word *hustle*. Later it was suggested that *health* replace *hustle*. The 4-H emblem has stood for head, heart, hands, and health ever since. By 1912, the first agriculture agent in Montana was appointed to eastern Montana and wrote the first 4-H club project in the nation—corn. By that year, over 23,000 canning clubs for girls had been organized throughout the South, and 96,000 youth were enrolled in 4-H club work. With the passage of the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, the U.S. Congress authorized support of 4-H through the Cooperative Extension Service.

In 1915, Stillwater County got its first agriculture Extension agent—William H. Jones. In 1917 the first family and consumer science extension agent—then called *home demonstration agents*—arrived in Stillwater County. Her name was Jeanette Kelly, who later went to work for General Mills in Minneapolis and became the prototype for "Betty Crocker." In 1918 the first use of the term "4-H Club," appeared in a federal document written by Gertrude L. Warren. Membership in 1918 reached half a million members.

The 1920s

4-H became the official name in 1924 and the 4-H emblem was patented. In 1927, the 4-H Motto and the 4-H Pledge were adopted at the first National 4-H Camp. At that time the ending of the pledge read: "for my club, my community and my country." The 4-H year 1928-1929 is also the first year that we have records of 4-H work in Stillwater County. Each club in our county centered around one project with the exception of the Willing Workers 4-H Club in Reed Point and the Happy Bunch 4-H Club in Park City, which didn't specify a project. We have a record in 1929 of **canning** clubs in Reed Point, Park City and White Bird; **sewing** clubs in Rapelje, Molt, Dean, Fishtail, Limestone, Lost Creek (in the northeast section of Stillwater County), White Bird and the Holland Settlement out toward Rapelje; **corn** clubs in Columbus, Park City, and White Bird; a **calf** club at Dean (called Beartooth Calf); a pure-bred Rambouillet **sheep** club in Absarokee; a **home furnishing** club in Park City; **potato** clubs in Columbus and Park City; a **garden** club at White Bird; and a **sugar beet** club in Park City. There were some 4-H work organized countywide in the projects of corn, grain, turkey, swine, sheep, dairy calf, potato, and garden. In 1928 the club that would later become Rapeljacks and Jills was organized although it was not called this name until 1950.

Nationally, the first 4-H songbook was introduced in 1929.

The 1930s

This decade brought the Park City Wranglers 4-H Club, which was organized in 1932 but wasn't know officially as the Wranglers until 1935.

The first Federal law to protect the use of the 4-H name and emblem was passed in 1939. Other laws were added in 1948 and 1985 so that commercial firms products and services may not use the 4-H emblem, and no writing or other design may be superimposed over the emblem. The emblem colors, whenever possible, were to be green clover with white or gold H's, or black with white H's. Back in Stillwater County, two currently existing clubs were organized in 1939—the Johnny's Buckaroos 4-H Club was organized by John Nichol and the Spring Creek Stockgrowers was also organized.

The 1940s

As this decade began, the late George Eastlick organized a Molt community club called the *Busy Bodies*. This club officially became the Molt Happy Helpers in 1942 and is one of our existing clubs.

With the United States' entry into World War II, 4-H responded to the needs for increased agriculture production and support of the war effort, winning accolades for its work. After the war, interest in 4-H increased around the world. June 26, 1947 saw the organizational meeting of the Stillwater County 4-H Leaders Council, In 1948, Extension established the International Farm Youth Exchange, known as IFYE. Today it is called the International 4-H Youth Exchange.

In Stillwater County, the Flaherty Flat Rustlers 4-H Club was organized in 1946, although it was called the *Flaherty Flat Hustlers* the first year.

The 1950s

In this decade 4-H continued its expansion nationwide, with special interest groups becoming one of the fastest growing 4-H delivery modes. A history of 4-H work by Franklin M. Reck was published in 1951 entitled, *The 4-H Story*. Age requirements for 4-H members changed from 10-21 years of age to 9-19 years of age. In 1956, the 25th anniversary of National 4-H Club Camp was observed and in 1958 the name was changed to a national 4-H Conference. In 1959, the National 4-H Center opened in Chevy Chase, Maryland, with President Dwight D. Eisenhower participating in the dedication ceremonies.

The 1960s

This decade brought the creation of the Stillwater Ranchhands 4-H Club in Stillwater County in 1963. The passage of the 1965 Civil Rights Act preceded a national workshop held in Chicago in 1966 to determine ways to expand 4-H for disadvantaged youth in both rural and urban areas.

The 1970s

The 70s revealed even more diversity in types of young people entering 4-H in both urban and rural locations. The National a 4-H Council was established to help serve these various interests, and promote nationwide youth development initiatives. In 1973, the 4-H Pledge was changed to add the phrase, "and my world." In 1974, 4-H exceeded 7 million youth nationwide for the first time, largely as a result of the 4-H TV series, "Mulligan Stew."

The 1980s

4-H continued to grow in the service of young people in the nation. A new national 4-H history book was published in 1982 entitled, *4-H: An American Idea, 1900-1980*. It was written by two Montanans—Thomas Wessel and Marilyn Wessel. In 1985 a 4-H Alumni study was conducted nationally about the long-term impact of the 4-H program and concluded that the powerful effects of 4-H continues for decades.

The 1990s

The 1990 decade saw an expansion of 4-H to the 6 to 8 age group when county agent Roubie Younkin developed the Cloverbud program in Stillwater County. The Cloverbud program went statewide a couple of years later. Charles Egan, who served as Extension agent in Stillwater County 26 years, retired in 1993. Also, this decade saw the start-up of 2 currently existing clubs in Stillwater County—the Stillwater Outlaws in 1996 and the Stockade Mountaineers in 1999.

Nationally, in 1990 the National 4-H Council and the Cooperative Extension Service got together to make some changes in the national 4-H program. One outcome was a redesign of the curriculum categories within 4-H which gave equal weight to all disciplines, rather than concentrating effort and recognition on agriculture and home economics topics.

In 1999 the 4-H emblem guidelines changed to specify the color for printing the emblem as well as the proper ways to display the emblem.

The 2000s

This decade saw an increased emphasis in 4-H on community service, and the Power of Youth Pledge Campaign began where youth and adults make pledges to spend hours making their community, country and world better.

In 2001 a national strategic plan was developed for 4-H which stated that the mission of 4-H is *to empower youth to reach their full potential, working and learning in partnership with caring adults.*

In December 2001, 29 youth and 21 adults throughout Stillwater County got together in a Conversation on Youth to determine needs of youth in Stillwater County. In the fall of 2001, Montana had 11,277 members in organized clubs, while nationally there are 6.8 million youth, ages 5 to 19, involved in 4-H. In 2002, Stillwater County had the largest 4-H enrollment for many years—9 clubs with 186 members, including 164 regular 4-H members and 22 Cloverbuds, with 61 leaders.

In October 2003 two more 4-H clubs organized in Stillwater County. The Stillwater Independence was formed with Lynn Phipps and Kim Frank as organizational leaders. The club was comprised of 4-Hers who mostly resided in the Reed Point, Springtime, and Rapelje areas. The Rosebud Adventurers 4-H Club began in the Absarokee area. In the fall of 2003, the Flaherty Flat Rustlers disbanded. In December of 2007 Stillwater Independence changed its name to Springtime Tumbleweeds with Elisha Lewis as the organizational leader. The club encompassed youth from the Reed Point/Springtime area.

The year 2008 saw the formation of two clubs. Montana 4-H Mini Equine Club was formed June 17, 2008 when Marge Wegner approached the horse superintendent about starting a mini horse county project. This club had an emphasis on miniature horses; however, the club was a community club, as it allowed members to take other projects. Most beginning members were from the Columbus and Park City areas.

As the 2007-08 4-H year drew to a close, the two clubs in the Columbus area (Johnny's Buckaroos and Stillwater Outlaws) were quite large. Therefore, the decision was made to organize another club in the area. On September 18, 2008, the Beartooth Ramblers 4-H Club was born with co-organizational leaders Joey Blankenship and Dena Griffel.

After more than a 100 years, the overall objective of 4-H has remained the same: the development of youth as individuals and as responsible and productive citizens.

This history is based on a script originally written by Jessica Gieser from the Park City Wranglers for the 2000 Achievement Program as well as 4-H history websites, several books written on 4-H, and Stillwater County documents.
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