

Looking Back At The Enthralling History of 4-H

By Haylie Winn

In the late 1800's and early 1900's people began to worry about the development of Agriculture in the USA. As adults, most farmers were against the new ideas and technology created to improve the future of agriculture. Seeing this, scholars started turning to the youth, as they saw that younger people were more open to learning and exploring new ways of living. With their open minds, youth had the potential to push the development of agriculture and farming life.

The birth of 4-H happened in 1902 when A. B. Graham started a new after school agriculture club in Clark County Ohio. From there similar clubs started forming. In 1910, Jessie Field Shambaugh developed the four leaf shamrock design that would become the club's official symbol. The name 4-H was given to the clubs in 1912.

Later, in 1914, an extension system was built for 4-H. The system was sponsored by several colleges focused on agricultural areas. This system pushed the spread of 4-H. Ten years later, in 1924, the 4-H officially became a national youth organization. From then, 4-H has continued on strong, helping youth and even participating in exchanges with other agricultural groups in other countries, such as England.

The mission of 4-H can be seen clearly in the club's pledge, which was written by Otis Hall in 1927. *As a true 4-H member, I pledge my head to clearer thinking, my heart to greater loyalty, my hands to larger service, my health to better living for my club, my community, my country and my world.* Originally not in the pledge, the phrase "my world" was added in 1973.

Even after all this time, the 4-H organization is still relevant. Modern 4-H clubs still help youth discover and develop important skills such as raising animals, growing gardens, cooking, sewing and more. Club's now help with drawing, writing, photography, crafts, computer technology, and so much more. 4-H continues to give youth opportunities to learn, grow, and serve others with skills and talents, making the world just a bit better everyday.