

Ohio 4-H History

When and Where Did the First 4-H Club Meet?

Ohio's 4-H coaching legend, A.B. Graham, led the first 4-H club in the basement of the Clark County Courthouse. As superintendent of Springfield Township Schools, he established the earliest 4-H club (a Boys & Girls Agricultural Club) on January 15, 1902. One hundred and three youth learned production practices to improve corn yields on the family farm. The beginning of "Learning the 4-H Way" through hands-on activities began with this very first club. Members learned how to test the acidity of the soil with litmus paper, splice rope, and tie knots, identify weeds and insects and grow vegetables and flowers.

Then and Now in 4-H...

- 1902, one 4-H club in one Ohio county, today, 4-H is in every Ohio county, in every state in the United States and in more than 80 countries worldwide.
- 30 4-H projects in the 1920's were your choice, today, over 200 4-H projects are offered in the 4-H Family Guide.
- 3,650 members in 42 Ohio counties were enrolled in 4-H in 1916 and nearly 300,000 members in 88 Ohio counties currently.
- 663,000 Ohioans were involved in 4-H by 1952, today one in every six Ohioans is a 4-H alumni with more than 45 million 4-H alumni nationwide.
- 47,453 youth participated in 4-H school programs in 1975, today more than 100,000 school students participate in 4-H in the Classroom Programs.
- Ohio 4-H camps were established in 1919, these camps serve nearly 60,000 youth today.

Where can you learn more about Ohio's 4-H History?

There are several Ohio 4-H History sources for you to read. Check with your County Extension Educator for a copy of one of these books, visit your local library or access information from the web.

- [A.B. Graham, County Schoolmaster and Extension Pioneer](#), by Virginia and Robert McCormick, Cottonwood Publications, Worthington, Ohio 1984.
- [Ohio 4-H Celebrating 100 Years of Youth Development](#). By Erin Shea Deel. Ohio 4-H Youth Development, The Ohio State University. Donning Company Publishers, Virginia Beach. 2002.
- [Ohio 4-H History](#). By Julie Dalzell, Ohio 4-H Fact Sheet, 4-H 001-99.

- [4-H A.B. Graham's Dream](#), Robert W. McCormick and Virginia McCormick, The Ohio Historical Timeline, January/February 1996 (Volume 13/Number 1).
- [4-H: An American Idea, 1900-1980, A History of 4-H](#), by Thomas Wessel and Marilyn Wessel, National 4-H Council, Chevy Chase, Maryland

Where can you and your club visit to learn more about Ohio 4-H History?

- [A.B. Graham Memorial Park](#), [A.B. Graham Building](#), [Ohio Heritage Center](#) in [Springfield, Ohio](#) of Clark County
- [A.B. Graham Memorial Center](#) in Miami County