

# The BRIDGE



*4-H History:  
Yesterday, Tomorrow, and Now.*

Vol. 11, No. 2

March, 2022



## ***BREAKING NEWS:***

On February 22, 2022, National 4-H Council announced receiving the largest donation in its history, referring to the gift as “transformational”. Go to <https://4-h.org/about/blog/opportunity-4-all-a-statement-on-behalf-of-national-4-h-council/#!read-more> to read National 4-H Council’s official statement concerning the \$50 Million gift..



## **The Pandemic: Then and Now, and 4-H**

By Ron Drum, PA 4-H Member 1967-1977

People began getting sick. It seemed like a new type of Flu. It spread very quickly. Doctors struggled to find ways to treat their patients. At first, the only thing they were sure of was that they needed to slow the spread of this disease. People were encouraged to stay indoors away from others, not to shake hands, and to wear masks. Any places where people congregated were told to close; theatres, businesses, churches. Libraries stopped lending books. New York City even banned spitting on the sidewalk.<sup>1</sup>

It sounds a lot like 2020, but the year was 1918 and it really WAS a flu! First recorded in the U.S. in March of 1918, before the pandemic was over, 675,000 Americans had died.<sup>2</sup>



In March of 2020, the advent of COVID-19 forced many Extension Offices to pause their 4-H programming, shuttering clubs and canceling 4-H activities. In 1918, Extension youth development programs, then called Boys and Girls Club Work, was just getting started; Pennsylvania’s first “4-H” club began meeting in 1912, Maine’s first club organized in 1913. Although some states postponed programs for 2-3 months, generally the 1918 “Influenza epidemic” had little impact on most 4-H programming. Club Work was far more impacted by World War 1 than the Flu.

*The official Newsletter of the National 4-H History Preservation Team*

Montana saw a Club enrollment high in 1918 of 11,703, due mostly to a patriotic fervor to support the soldiers. Montana's 4-H enrollment did drop in 1919, to 5,251, but this drop was not attributed to the Flu. As the war ended, the country experienced a period of "postwar relaxation", compounded in Montana by a drought that made agricultural success difficult.<sup>3</sup>

However, Montana In-school Clubs were impacted by the epidemic. According to one report,

The flu epidemic cut heavily on the bread and garment club work as the schools were closed down. Upon opening, the school work was so heavy in order to make up what was lost that many members had to give up the work. The number of working days was also cut short on account of this epidemic and many who had partially finished were unable to complete in time for county contests.<sup>3</sup>

Maine's experience was similar. In 1918, Maine saw active clubs in every county for the first time, reaching an enrollment high of 9,153 members, achieved largely because of counties hiring temporary Club Work Leaders and, once again, patriotic fervor. Like Montana, Maine also saw a substantial enrollment decrease in 1919 to 4,598. Again, this was not epidemic related, but was credited to the lessening of patriotic fervor when the war ended.<sup>4</sup>

Many states reported similar stories. Nationally, enrollment fell from the 1918 WW1 fervor-induced high of 518,154 to a 1919 "Relaxation" low of 323,340.<sup>5</sup> Oddly enough, in many ways, as far as programming went, things in 2020 were not much different! Yes, most 4-H programs came to an abrupt halt in 2020, for far longer than 2-3 months, but through the creativity of our Extension 4-H Educators across this country, 4-H continued on!

In our June, 2021 issue, we saw how Hennepin County, MN responded to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Below is a story about one of the ways Luzerne County, PA 4-H responded.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-i/1918-flu-pandemic> accessed 2/3/2022.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/1918-commemoration/1918-pandemic-history.htm> accessed 5/16/2020.

<sup>3</sup> Burlingame, Merrill G and Edward J Bell, Jr, *The Montana Cooperative Extension Service: A History 1893-1974*, pp 181-182 (Document is posted to the National 4-H History Preservation web site at: [https://4-hhistorypreservation.com/eMedia/eBooks/4-H\\_Story\\_in\\_Montana.pdf](https://4-hhistorypreservation.com/eMedia/eBooks/4-H_Story_in_Montana.pdf))

<sup>4</sup> Day, Clarence Albert. *Forty Years of Extension Work in Maine, 1910-1950*. Unpublished. 1955. pp. 56 – 60.

<sup>5</sup> Reck, Franklin M., *The 4-H Story, a history of 4-H Club Work* (Chicago: National 4-H Service Committee, 1951), p 194. (Document is posted to the National 4-H History Preservation web site at: [https://4-hhistorypreservation.com/eMedia/eBooks/The\\_4-H\\_Story.pdf](https://4-hhistorypreservation.com/eMedia/eBooks/The_4-H_Story.pdf))



## **LUZERNE COUNTY 4-H COUNTY ROUND-UP REVUE: Innovation During a "New Normal". How Luzerne County 4-H made the best better during COVID-19.**

By: Meghan Carroll, 4-H Educator- Luzerne County,



Prior to COVID-19 restrictions, Luzerne County 4-H members & volunteers had been meeting regularly to work on 4-H projects for the 4-H year which runs from October to September. To complete their 4-H year, Pennsylvania 4-H members must exhibit their projects in a competitive setting, in Luzerne County that's usually during the Luzerne County Fair held in September. With excitement building throughout the year, 4-H members looked forward to meeting with judges and displaying their projects at the fair. However, due to COVID-19 restrictions, Fair officials had to cancel the 2020 Fair.

Without the Fair, Luzerne County 4-H was forced to look for a new and innovative way for 4-H members to complete their 4-H year. The answer was to host a socially-distanced 4-H County Round-Up Revue. This fair-like, in-person event was held in the parking lot of St. James Lutheran Church in Wapwallopen, Pennsylvania. 4-H members were told to bring project displays and educational posters to be exhibited, and were encouraged to decorate the trunks of their vehicles with themes representing their 4-H project. Judges would visit their display and interview the 4-H'ers about their projects and accomplishments.

On the day of the event, 19 4-H members with their families, and five County Extension-cleared 4-H volunteers, drove into the parking lot. Each 4-H member was assigned a parking spot and given 1-hour to decorate and set up their 4-H project display. Once set-up was complete, four judges (with face masks!) made their way around the parking lot to visit and interview each 4-H member about their projects. Projects ranged from chickens, cows, and horses to composting worms, science experiments, and even table setting! At the conclusion of the event, members were awarded with merit ribbons and certificates of completion to recognize all of their hard work, Awards were also given for best parking spot display & most fashionable face mask. With a combination of enthusiastic 4-H Members, positive attitudes from the parents & volunteers, and great weather, the day was full of 4-H fun!

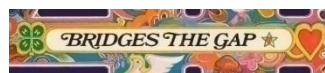


Some 4-H Members felt uncomfortable attending in person. These 4-H Members were offered the opportunity to meet with a judge via Zoom to present and discuss their projects and accomplishments for the 2019/2020 4-H year. While meeting with the judge virtually, 4-H members were interviewed about their project and accomplishments while presenting an educational poster, just as if they had attended in person. Sixteen 4-H'ers participated in the Round-up Revue virtually.

In addition to the County 4-H Round-up Revue (virtual and in-person) and a variety of other virtual 4-H

camp & events, Luzerne County 4-H also offered 4-H'ers virtual 4-H educational opportunities including:

- ✿ UNSTRESS YOURSELF WEBINARS
- ✿ ANIMAL GENETICS COURSE
- ✿ HORSE CAMP
- ✿ TECHNOLOGY FREE 4-H PROJECT KITS



## A Reader's Question:

**Kent Whitman of Keene, NH**, wants to know the date of the 1954 Spencer (MA) Fair.

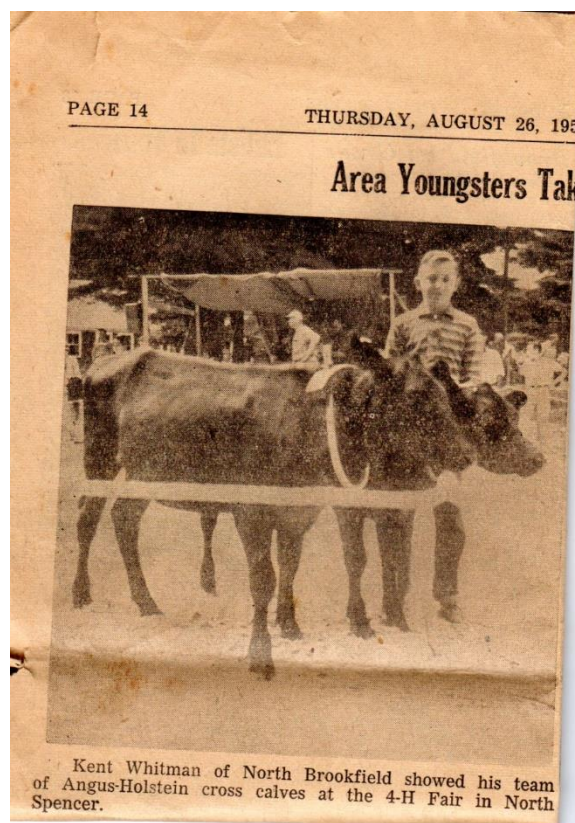
I was 11 or 12 when I drove my oxen at the Spencer, MA 4-H Fair. I lived on a Farm in North Brookfield, MA and we all participated in 4-H club activities showing our animals. I want to know the date of the 4-H Fair in Spencer, MA in 1954 when this photo was taken. Hoping you can help me with that. I think the photo was taken by a Worcester (MA) Telegram and Gazette reporter.

We all went to the fair every year. One time when I was about 5-years-old my family and other participants were all enjoying some ho-down country stomping music by a big campfire. Me and some other young kids were raising hell chasing each other in the nearby wooded area. It was dark, probably 10 or 11 PM. I happened to stumble and fall into a nest of rotten geese eggs. Boy, did I stink. My parents took all my clothes off except my underwear for the car ride home.

Can you answer Kent's question?

What do YOU want to know?

Send answers and questions to: [Editor@4-HHistory.com](mailto:Editor@4-HHistory.com)



### A Peek at the Past

One of the reasons 4-H is so successful at meeting the youth development needs of young people is that it reaches out to young people where they live. It does not matter who the child is, their race, creed, economic status, or religious belief; nor any other aspect of life except for two things: their age and need for the essential elements in their lives. As a mirror of the larger society in which 4-H exists, it has not always been implemented with perfection but the attempts were made.

The following article tells the story of a successful Native American 4-H program. It appeared on page 19 of the May, 1960 issue of National 4-H News. You can find it, and similar stories of outreach to Native American populations posted on the National 4-H History Preservation Team's website at: [https://4-hhistorypreservation.com/History/Native\\_Americans/](https://4-hhistorypreservation.com/History/Native_Americans/)

### **In Any Language - They're Builders.**

Fort Hall 4-H Klatiwah Club is a name with a pleasant rhythm, but it's more than that; it's the name of a young Idaho club which got off to a fast start on service to its community. Saying "4-H Klatiwah Club" in the Shoshone Indian language is about the same as saying "4-H Builders Club" in English. This Klatiwah Club was organized in December 1959 on the Fort Hall Indian Reservation in Idaho.

Four older boys, Bernard Eschief, Gilbert Teton, Carl and Lewis Olney, were the first members of the club. By the time of its second meeting, the club had seven members, with the addition of Bernadine Eschief, Belma Truchot and Irene Olney.

Both of the projects that the group agreed on at once were for community service. First, they would see that some needy family had a good Christmas. Second, they would hold a party for students home from school for Christmas vacation.

The 4-H'ers collected food, packed a basket, and went as a group to deliver it. There were some gifts for the family, too.

The potluck dinner and party for students was held in the Fort Hall tribal building. Soft blue lights enhanced the decorations inside the building. Mixers such as the balloon dance, passing the orange and others were used. Thirty local and home-from-school students enjoyed the party, which concluded with social dancing.

In February, the Klaticwah Club was called on by the agricultural Extension service to take part in a television program, one of a weekly series. They were asked to demonstrate parliamentary procedure as a useful guide for other clubs. The demonstration planned by the Klaticwah club included the 4-H pledge, given in the Shoshone tongue.

There is talk now of a Fort Hall Fair, organized and operated by this club, which has some time to go before reaching its first anniversary. No matter how you spell it, these 4-H'ers intend to build a program for service to their community and to themselves.



## Caption Please!

This painting has been selected from our historic 4-H Calendar Art collection. Your job is to give the picture a caption! Make it funny. Make it pull at the heart-strings. Make US smile!

Send your caption no later than April 14, 2022 to: [Editor@4-HHistory.com](mailto:Editor@4-HHistory.com).

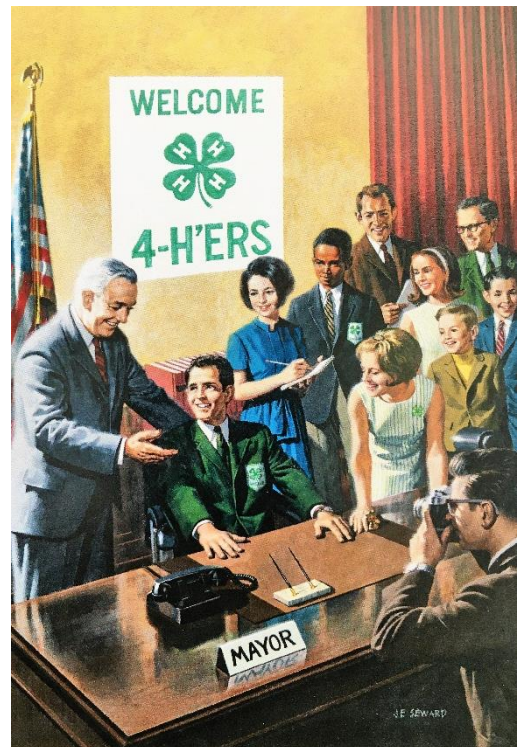
Our EdBoard Team will review the suggested captions and select “the best” (in our humble opinion, of course). Look to see if YOUR caption appears in a future issue of The BRIDGE.

## Tell Us Your 4-H History Story

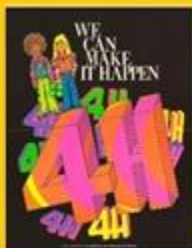
We know you've made 4-H History! So, tell us about it! The world wants to know YOUR 4-H history!

Send your articles to: [Editor@4-HHistory.com](mailto:Editor@4-HHistory.com)

Submissions longer than 500 words must include a 500-words or less summary. The in-depth articles will be posted to our web-site and linked to the summary that will appear in the newsletter.



*Thanks for reading The BRIDGE. Look for our next issue out May 15, 2022!*



*The BRIDGE Editorial Board:*

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