



National 4-H History Preservation Program

Celebrating 10 Years of Preserving and Sharing National 4-H History

October 2017 Newsletter

Volume VIII Number VII

“Yes, Virginia, National 4-H Congress was Once Held in Chicago”

This is the first of 15 articles introducing a new section, soon to appear on the 4-H History Website: the history of the first 70+ years of National 4-H Congress when it was held in Chicago.

At a recent NAE4-HA conference, two 4-H Extension educators were having a discussion. One was overheard asking her colleague, "Did you know 4-H Congress was once held in Chicago?"



Welcome to 4-H Congress. (From "A Dream to Reality", page 48)

For those of us old enough to have actually experienced one or more of the National 4-H Congresses in Chicago (which were actually held in that city for over 70 years), that comment would probably be a shock. But, then again, the last 4-H Congress in Chicago was 24 years ago. There may well be no need for a young Extension educator to know about these Chicago events.

But, yet, there is. National 4-H Congress in Chicago is a large and important part of national 4-H history. For over half a century, it was the premiere event on the annual 4-H calendar. It was the showcase of 4-H to the entire American population. It was the culmination of individual 4-H project achievement

which extended from the club level to the awarding of scholarships in Chicago. Tens of thousands of 4-H'ers accomplished project work for six, seven, eight or more years with a goal of becoming a state winner and going to Chicago.

The history and the memories of National 4-H Congress in Chicago must be preserved. For over five years the National 4-H History Preservation Team has been researching, documenting and writing this history, with over 200 pages of history written and still not complete. We will never be able to tell the whole story. It really cannot be done. Plus, much of the history, the records, the programs and the photos have been lost.

Guy Noble, director of the National Committee on Boys' and Girls' Club Work (a predecessor to National 4-H Council), who conducted the first Armour tour of boys and girls in Chicago in 1919, and continued on with National 4-H Club Congresses for over 30 years, explained that National 4-H Club Congress cannot be described on paper. One has to be a part of it and "feel" it to fully comprehend it. Perhaps Noble was correct. Clayton Yeutter, US Trade Representative and architect of NAFTA, and later U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, often remarked to audiences that every time he walked through those doors of the Chicago Hilton, chills of excitement ran down his spine remembering back to that first time he entered the Hilton's lobby as a young Nebraska 4-H'er coming to 4-H Congress.

The Federal Extension Service Weekly Newsletter for December 10, 1970 began with a feature by Walter John, director of Information Services, FES, US Department of Agriculture. Titled "**4-H Congress Greatest Youth Happening in Today's World,**" John commented on the event upon his return to Washington, D.C. from Chicago. Referring to 4-H Congress, he explained, "It had just about everything that appeals to youth - serious discussion, entertainment, awards, good food,

music, dancing and lots of public attention." He went on to express his admiration for the tremendous interest and participation shown by the individual national and regional donors. "The National 4-H Congress is the epitome of success in joint action of government, education and industry in helping youth find its role in this world."



Conrad Hilton Hotel, delegates' home for the week. (1985 National 4-H Congress Official Program, page 6.)

The delegates to Club Congress were the top achievers in the National 4-H Awards programs, year after year. Many of them had worked untiringly for years to win their trip to Chicago. They had diligently assembled project record books which were judged by a national 4-H record judging committee. For many, if not most, their trip to Chicago to attend 4-H Congress was the crowning achievement of a 4-H career as a member. It was their goal. For those who received 4-H award scholarships while in Chicago, Club Congress had even more meaning. It often helped them to go to college and to choose a career. So, what made 4-H Congress so very special? For many delegates it was a week of firsts. Some had never traveled on a train or airplane. Staying in the largest hotel in the world. Some had never ridden in an elevator and the Conrad Hilton Hotel had a lobby with at least 10 or 12 elevators – in the early days all manned by courteous elevator operators. For many, to sit down at an elegant banquet and be served by dozens of waiters in white coats and gloves, live music playing, and face a place setting with china and crystal and six or eight pieces of silverware; definitely a new experience.

The history segment on National 4-H Congress - Chicago is near completion and will be in the National 4-H History section (at the bottom under 4-H Program Events) on the History Preservation website: http://4-HHistoryPreservation.com/History_National.asp

Over the next several issues of the 4-H History Newsletter we will feature various aspects of this very important event in 4-H history, the one that was held in Chicago!

We welcome your comments, questions and observations at info@4-HHistoryPreservation.com

Hands-on History Looking Back – the 2002 4-H Centennial

Many 4-H members of today weren't born when 4-H celebrated its centennial in 2002. While there were programs in several states created around the start of the 20th century to teach agriculture skills to youth, the 4-H program has come to recognize the work of A. B. Graham in Ohio as the beginning of 4-H in January 1902. Fifteen years ago, millions of 4-H members, volunteers, staff and alumni showed their 4-H pride with special events, celebrations and news and media stories.

The centennial celebrations in 2002 began in grand fashion. A group of fifteen 4-H members from Texas and the DC area joined USDA officials at the White House to present President George W. Bush with the National Partner in 4-H Award "for sustained support of the 4-H Youth Development program, for officially launching the national centennial celebration of the 4-H program on January 17, 2002, and for a fervent and unwavering commitment to young people and education." USDA Secretary Ann Veneman added, "As a former member of 4-H, I know first-hand the value of this outstanding youth development program. For 100 years, 4-H has provided unique opportunities for its members to learn, to grow and to work cooperatively in their communities and for their country."



Texas 4-H'er presents President Bush the Partner in 4-H Award in the oval office as Alumna and Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman looks on. (White House Photo)

The website "4hcentennial.org" was created as a showcase of 4-H history and accomplishments. It included a 4-H history timeline with a collection of photographs highlighting important 4-H events of each decade selected by 4-H'ers, 4-H staff, volunteers, alumni, and others. There were also recordings of official 4-H songs, many written in the 1920s by Fannie R. Buchanan, the first Iowa State Music Extension Specialist. (Learn more about two of those songs in the item under **90 years ago in 4-H history** below in this Newsletter issue.)

Community service and leadership are central to 4-H youth development. For the centennial, the Power of Youth Pledge Campaign encouraged youth and adults to make a pledge of hours of service on the 4-H centennial website. Over five million service hours were pledged during the campaign.

Another feature of the centennial celebration was the "National Conversation on Youth Development in the 21st Century." Launched during National 4-H Week in October 2001, a series of discussions between youth and adults from around the country was conducted to gather action ideas of ways to improve urban, suburban, and rural communities nationwide. Ideas collected from 1,577 community and 63 state conversations became the basis for the national conversation held on February 28 – March 1, 2002 at the National 4-H Center outside of Washington, DC. A group of 1,200 youth and adults, representing over 400 organizations, developed these local and state suggestions into specific national strategies and action steps. The final report was presented to President George W. Bush, members of Congress and 4-H leadership.



USDA Deputy Secretary Moseley cuts the 4-H centennial cake as 4-H'ers wait patiently at the Centennial Party.

The final national event was a 4-H centennial party celebrated at the USDA Whitten building in Washington, DC. The day included remarks from USDA and 4-H National Headquarters leaders, 4-H youth and alumni. Area 4-H youth presented exhibits demonstrating some of their 4-H work. The festivities concluded with the cutting of the 4-H centennial cake by USDA Deputy Secretary Jim Moseley. It was an exciting and memorable year for the people who participated in the local, state and national events. And we're all helping to write the second hundred years of 4-H.

Hands-On History

In just 10 years, 4-H will be celebrating its quasiquintennial (125 years). What ideas do you have for ways that 4-H can celebrate this milestone? What do you think are significant 4-H achievements since 2002? Create a display or exhibit to share your ideas with others.

How States Use 4-H History

Maine Shares 4-H History



A blog earlier this year was about 4-H charters.

"As Maine goes, so goes the nation" or so they have said since 1820 when Maine's first constitution set their election date in September to avoid the colder, snowier November when everyone else held their elections. Folks across the country surmised that Maine's results would be a bellwether of how everyone else's elections would go and usually they were. Sort of. The idea stuck or at least was promoted as true, in politics as well as many things.

Maine 4-H started sharing their history with interested people through a blog in mid-2016. Since then many aspects of Maine's 4-H history have been shared through that site. As Maine goes, so goes 4-H? Well, why not!? On October 13 the Maine 4-H Fix, Maine's 4-H blog told the story about Maine's 4-H Clubs. It is a story that, although specific to Maine, will ring true for many states.

Then on November 17, the Maine 4-H Fix will be all about Maine's 4-H Champions. Not every state 4-H Program designates outstanding 4-H'ers as "champions" (in fact, not even Maine does that anymore), but most, if not all, recognize their outstanding 4-H'ers in some way. So again, much of the November Maine 4-H Fix will be a winner with many.

Finally, on December 15, the Maine 4-H Fix will turn to Maine's 4-H Singing and Games. Here is yet another story that many 4-H'ers will find note-worthy, whether from Maine or not.

So maybe it is true - as Maine goes, so goes the nation.

To read the Maine 4-H Blog go to <https://extension.umaine.edu/4h/tag/4-h-fix/> Take a look at it to see if it gives you some ideas of how you could tell the public or your state or county 4-H family more about 4-H in your state!

Do you Have Your Historic 4-H Postcards?



You can buy them from <http://Shop4-H.org>

Miriam's Dream and a 4-H Peace Corps Story – Part Two

This is the second part of a serialized story; more chapters will be published in the coming months. In the early 1960s, the National 4-H Club Foundation, now National 4-H Council, was asked to recruit US 4-H and Extension professionals to strengthen the agricultural extension service of Brazil and create 4-S clubs there, the beginnings of Peace Corps in Brazil. Francis Pressly, later National 4-H Council Director of International Programs, coordinated the program of those 4-H Extension workers in Brazil. This is the story of one Returned Peace Corps Volunteer, a 4-H alum who went back to Brazil after 50 years to find his family and see whether his work with 4-S clubs had survived. You'll recall that last month we learned some of Joe Thigpen's Peace Corps work in Santa Catarina and the plans to return to Brazil to fulfill his host mother Miriam's dream of reuniting her Peace Corps family. Preparations were being made on in both countries and excitement was mounting.

The "Dream" Visit

By Joe Thigpen, Brazil VI, 1963-1965

A few months before our visit, Zezo called to inform me that Miriam had passed away. It was sudden and unexpected, and they were all at peace with the full and vibrant life that she had lived, but he and his siblings were determined to fulfill her dream and execute her plan for our visit.

On April 17, 2014, Becky and I left for Brazil. When we arrived at the airport in *Florianópolis, Santa Catarina*, Zezo, Jota and their families were there to greet us. It is difficult to fully capture the depth of emotions and smiles of joy we shared after 50 years apart. Suffice it to say it was one of the most remarkable and touching moments of our lives.



Zezo, Joe, and Jota meeting at the *Florianópolis* airport after 50 years apart

Over the next couple of weeks, we reconnected with Tânia and Jane, and came to know and appreciate the families of these remarkable siblings. We were embraced as family and we learned how their children and grandchildren had learned about the American Peace Corps Volunteer who lived with them. To them, I was their “long lost brother” who went missing, and now was back to be with them.

Our last stop was a return to *Capinzal*, the town of my Peace Corps service, and where Jane and her family still live. One day while there, Zezo insisted that we jump in his car and head out to the rural areas to find some of the “kids” I worked with while I was serving in the Peace Corps. It felt awkward to me, but Zezo was not allowing my hesitancy to change his mind because this was what Miriam had wanted. Soon we were on the unpaved roads I remembered so well. Once or twice Zezo stopped and asked someone, “Are there any old people around here who might have been in the 4-S Clubs when they were young?” On the third stop, we were directed to a farmhouse at the bottom of the hill. A lady answered the door and invited us in. Her name was Edith.

Her husband, Naudi, was indeed a member of 4-S, and she sent word to him to return to the house. Soon, we saw him hurrying to greet us. He remembered fondly his experiences with Bonnie, me, and 4-S. It was especially emotional because when I lost connection with my contacts in Brazil they had assumed that I was killed in Vietnam. After coffee and conversations about our lives, he mentioned that Alduino Bonamigo, now in his late 80s and one of the active local leaders supporting our work with 4-S, was alive and lived up the road just a few miles. Off we went to visit my old friend and colleague.



Joe as a PC Volunteer with Alduino Bonamigo along with Naudi and Aloir Buzelato

Alduino had lived a remarkable life. His old barn was now a museum of his life size sculptures and carvings. Shortly after we arrived, Delma, Alduino’s daughter, made a telephone call to her sister, Zélia, who told us how much her involvement in 4-S had meant to her. As Zélia said, “Working with you and Bonnie in 4-S opened up a new world of possibilities to me.” Zélia is now a freelance journalist and a book editor working in *Curitiba*, the capital of the State of *Paraná*.

She asked her father to show us a copy of the book she and he had put together on his life. Although showing signs of Alzheimer’s disease, Alduino’s eyes still sparkled as he paged through the biography. Soon he showed us the chapter on his work as a local leader with 4-S. A photo of Bonnie and [me] was on the first page, and it credited our work in introducing him to local leadership and 4-S. In return, I showed a photo book I had put together for this trip, which included photos of Alduino and Zélia as we worked together during 1964 and 1965.



Naudi, Joe, Alduino, and Zezo looking at photo book.

All through this exchange, Zezo was thinking how proud his mother would be to see this, and he struggled to hold back his tears. At some point, Naudi and Zélia started talking about the next time I was back in Brazil they would gather the people from that era and host a reunion to celebrate those days. I smiled, but little did I know about what was to follow.

Before we left Brazil, Becky and I solicited a commitment from Zezo and Jota to visit us in the United States. Two years later, along with their wives, Marcia and Regina, they arrived in our small town of Alachua [FL]. Our family, our neighbors, and our friends went all out to give them an experience of our community and our country. Language did not seem to be much of a barrier to real moments of joy, laughter, and love. My brother,

Larry, suggested that good wine may have helped as well.

Over the next three weeks, we introduced them to their first game of golf. I entered us in the Alachua Women's Club Scramble tournament. We may have been terrible, but I think no team had more fun. We took them to see alligators in Payne's Prairie; we kayaked the Ichetucknee River; we flew them out to Los Angeles and Hollywood; and we took them to the outlet malls of Orlando, Florida, which may have been their favorite place to visit. I think the evening dinners with family and friends turned out to be the most special time of all, and after three weeks we were still loving our time together. Before they left, they achieved the miracle of getting my brother and his family to agree to visit them in Brazil the following year.

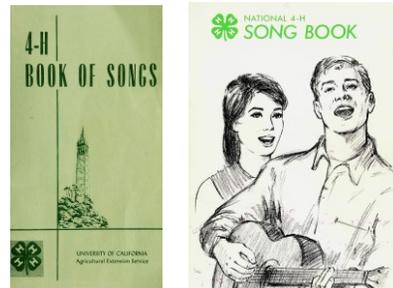
90 Years Ago in 4-H History: "Plowing Song" and "Dreaming" Introduced

Did you know that there is a 4-H Song for girls and another for boys? These two songs were written by Fannie R. Buchanan, rural life specialist in Iowa and introduced at the 1927 National 4-H Camp (now known as National 4-H Conference) on the Mall in Washington, DC. The background for the two songs comes from "The Music and Story of Fannie R. Buchanan."

As she met and learned to know 4-H girls in all parts of the country, she discovered that each of them built castles in the air, had beautiful dreams of the love, the homes, the children that would someday be theirs. She tried to translate these dreams into

words in "Dreaming."

As she watched 4-H Sheep Club boys judge the "density of wool" on a sheep, suddenly she realized that "the lads of the flock" were learning far more than the petting and feeding of a lamb. "They were learning lessons of mental application which would stay with them all of their lives." That day and "The Plowing Song" were closely associated in her mind.



4-H music can be a way to explore 4-H history. Max Exner, the editor of the song book above said in the book's introduction, "Encourage your young people to sing their popular favorites but also help them enjoy durable songs that are favorites of many generations."

You can find copies of the two songs in 4-H Song Books that might be found in clubs or attics today. Take a look and write to tell us the experiences you have in singing either of these songs. If you can't find a copy; you can read or sing from the books on the 4-H History website. The two songs are found on pages two and three of the 1968 songbook pictured above right at <http://4-historypreservation.com/eMedia/eBooks/National-4-H-Song-Book.pdf>

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