A CENTURY OF FLORIDA 4-H

The first Boys' Short Course was held at the University of Florida in September 1916 with 73 of the top 4-H club boys in the state attending. Extension faculty taught the boys new agricultural techniques and showed them pioneering research. When they went home, the boys often applied what they learned, and influenced how their family farms operated.

In 1914, the 373 girls in tomato clubs grew 184,821 pounds of tomatoes. These girls' tomato clubs inspired interest in home activities and helped fill home pantries, giving a greater variety to the family diet and reducing the cost of living. Sales of fresh canned tomatoes brought in extra money and even enabled a few of the girls to enter college.

Dade County Canning Club girls canned over 10,000 cans of tomatoes.

4-H BEGINNING

In 1902, A.B. Graham, a school principal in Clark County, Ohio, formed a club of boys and girls with officers, projects, meetings and record requirements. Activities included growing corn, planning a garden, and testing soil. Grahams sought assistance from the Ohio Agriculture Experiment Station and The Ohio State University. This is said to be the beginning of 4-H.

In 1914, the Smith-Lever Act was passed, establishing the Cooperative Extension Service.

The State Council of Home Demonstration Work was formed in 1919, when 62 girls attended the State Short Course.

The first addition to the Florida 4-H program was pig club work offered to boys in 1916. In its first year, 652 boys enrolled in the pig clubs.

HOW THE 4-H CLOVER GREW

Around 1907, O.H. Benson from Iowa designed the first emblem for the clubs. It was a three-leaf clover which stood for 'head', 'heart' and 'hands'. In 1911, Benson suggested the fourth H should stand for 'hustle', and the 4-H design was adopted. Later O.B. Martin replaced 'hustle' with 'health'. The emblem has stood for 'head', 'heart', 'hands' and 'health' ever since.

The 4-H colors are green and white, as represented in the clover. Green is nature's most common color and represents youth, life and growth. White symbolizes high ideals.

It wasn't until 1924 when club work acquired the name for 4-H and the 4-H emblem was patented. The 4-H name and emblem have U.S. federal protection under federal code 18 U.S.C. 707. This federal protection makes it a mark unto and of itself with protection that supersedes the limited authorities of both a trademark and a copyright. The Secretary of Agriculture is given responsibility and stewardship for the 4-H name and emblem, at the direct request of the U.S. Congress.

4-H Camp Cloverleaf was officially established in 1957. 4-H Camp Cloverleaf sits on the banks of Lake Francis in Lake Placid, Florida. The first 4-H'ers ever to attend Camp Cloverleaf paid their way in eggs, chickens, corn, and many other agricultural products that were used during the week of camp.

Those who participated in the Camp Cloverleaf dedication get together around the base of the flagpole, pause before the camp plaque. *Photo taken June 28, 1957*

Learning to mix bluestone paste in 1922. Boys' Short Course at the University of Florida.

These 4-H girls take pride in keeping a neat cabin at Doe Lake Camp. They won banner for best cabin on August 4, 1949.

African-American 4-H members initially camped at the district level using tents. In 1948, 4-H Camp Doe Lake, the first permanent camp for African-American 4-H club members, opened in the Ocala National Forest. Located on a 30-acre lake, the camp could accommodate 130 campers per week. 4-H Camp Doe Lake was a residential camping facility from 1948 to 1972.

The first Negro Farm Boys and Girls State 4-H Club Short Course was held at Florida A & M University in 1928.

In 1938, 19 judging teams and 10 demonstration teams of Florida 4-H boys were trained by county agents. This was another feature of club work that offered worthwhile training and experience through judging contests.

In 1952, there were 1,294 organized 4-H clubs in Florida operating in 64 counties. Over 110,113 youth participated in the 4-H Health Improvement program.

Florida 4-H Club members put out the welcome mat for the State 4-H Club Congress on UF Campus, June 13-16, 1966.

School-based 4-H clubs in Florida were abandoned in 1964 and replaced with volunteer-led community or project clubs. This dramatically changed the role of the 4-H agent in Florida. It also empowered the 4-H club leader to take on a more active and engaged mentoring and teaching role with young people.

Florida 4-H events became fully co-educational in 1964, with the first 4-H Club Congress held on the University of Florida campus. The separate Girls' and Boys' State 4-H Councils were combined into one State 4-H Council with eight officers in 1964.

African-American youth attended the Club Congress for the first time in 1966.

In 1969, the Tropicana company adopted a public speaking program originally established in 1952 by Inez Pettigrew, a teacher at Palm View Elementary in Palmetto, Florida. When Tropicana adopted the speaking contest, it was associated with the local Florida 4-H program. Since then, the public speaking course has expanded to accommodate hundreds of thousands of students all over Florida.

The Florida 4-H/Tropicana Public Speaking Program is an educational program aimed at teaching young people the techniques of effective public speaking. This educational program is taught by classroom teachers and is incorporated into the established school curriculum. The results of Florida 4-H/Tropicana's dedication to the program are evident in the confidence displayed by young people in making prepared or extemporaneous presentations later in their school and professional careers.

1984 Florida delegation to the 63rd National 4-H Congress.

By 1984, over 10,400 adult and teen volunteers work with Florida 4-H youth. Of the 84,000 members at that time, about 40 percent lived on farms and in small towns, while 60 percent were urban residents.

In 1972, Florida 4-H began a move back into the public schools, taking this opportunity to reach more youth through special interest programs. These short-term, mini 4-H projects provided a variety of learning experiences to a large number of youth, and at the same time enriched classroom subject matters. Major project areas include: Exploring your world through banking, management, shopping, supermarkets, and money master; forest ecology; traffic safety; grooming; pet care; teen consumer; citizenship; and the energy crisis. Emphasis on the short-term special interest series helped increase 4-H enrollment to a height of 86,000 members in 1974.

In 1983, the University of Florida signed a lease with the U.S. Forest Service for 4-H Camp Ocala, located in the Ocala National Forest. Camp Ocala is the largest of Florida's 4-H camps and offers campers the true beauty of nature at its finest.

FLORIDA 4-H TODAY

Today, Florida 4-H has 234,000 members and more than 10,000 volunteers who interest youth in learning. Through positive youth-adult partnerships and a variety of subject matter, youth receive workforce preparation and meaningful developmental assets such as communication skills, organizational abilities, wise decision-making skills, independence and self-confidence, as well as respect and caring for others and the community.

In 2003, Florida 4-H and the United States Air Force began a joint military partnership for youth, at all of the U.S. Air Force bases in both Florida and Europe.

Liberty 4-H'ers at Lakenheath AFB in England held a "County Fair" at their base. Over 200 exhibits were on display from 100 4-H'ers. Projects included cooking, gardening, photography, arts and crafts and many more.

In 2001, thousands of 4-H members participated in county "conversations" about the future of youth development in their communities. Through these interactive discussions around key issues facing contemporary young people, 4-H forged new ties with other youth-serving agencies and built consensus with community partners.

4-H Camp Timpoochee's unique location on the shores of the Choctawhatchee Bay made it the perfect location for marine science study. In 1998, a marine center was built that helps bring science to life for campers and adults. The living laboratory houses a number of 50- to 250-gallon aquariums where freshwater, bay, and gulf life can be seen up close and personal.

In 2005, Florida 4-H began a military partnership to offer Operation: Military Kids (OMK). OMK in Florida reaches out to youth with a deployed military family member through a variety of ways. OMK state and community partners provide support to Florida citizens and communities addressing the issues facing military families.

PRE 1900 | 1900 | 1910 | 1920 | 1930 | 1940 | 1950 | 1960 | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2000

In 1859, the Morrill Act is passed to create land-grant colleges in every state.

Boys' Corn Club exhibits their work in a display room at an experiment station building in Gainesville, FL on October 20, 1911. *Photo by A.P. Spencer.*

In 1909, J. J. Vernon, University of Florida Dean of Agriculture, organized the first 4-H clubs in the Sunshine State for boys in Alachua, Bradford and Marion counties.

In 1912, the first tomato clubs for girls were organized through schools in Florida. The 4-H girl's clubs began when Agnes Ellen Harris left her position at Florida State College for Women (now known as Florida State University), to become Florida's first home demonstration agent. Five hundred girls were enrolled in tomato clubs during 1912 in 11 counties.

Tomato club prize winners were awarded trips to Tallahassee, where they took "short courses" at the Department of Home Economics at Florida State College for Women.

Tomato exhibit in Escambia County, 1912.

Extension work with African-Americans began in Florida in 1915 and was headquartered at Florida A & M University.

In 1921, Palm Beach County organized the first county council of home demonstration for girls.

Florida was a pioneer in the camping program. The first club camp in Florida was in Clay County in 1917.

As was common in the southern United States at that time, 4-H work was segregated. By 1917, Florida 4-H had about 1,250 African-American boys and girls enrolled in farm makers clubs and homemakers clubs in Alachua, Gadsden, Jefferson, Leon, Marion and Washington counties.

In 1930, a state council for boys was formed at the 1930 Boys' Short Course to promote club work throughout the Sunshine State.

By 1939, Florida 4-H club projects covered practically all aspects of agriculture.

Hillsborough County 4-H Club girls attended a state 4-H Short Course at Florida A & M University in 1933. Floy L. Britt was the home demonstration agent at that time. In 1943, Britt was appointed District Supervising Agent.

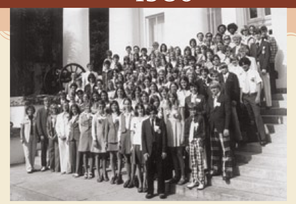
A state council for African-American girls was organized during the annual short course at Florida A & M University in 1955.

Brock DeMuth uncaps a frame of honey, Raymond Summerford slings honey from the comb in the extractor, and Jack McCown pours honey into settling tank as it comes from the extractor. A 4-H honey house at Camp McQuarrie in 1958.

Located in the Ocala National Forest, records indicate that 4-H Camp McQuarrie operated from 1939 to 1966.

Camp Cherry Lake was officially deeded to the 4-H clubs in Florida in 1967. Every summer since then, young boys and girls have looked forward to exploring and interacting with nature in a way that can only be done at camp.

In 1972, Standard Oil Company gave Florida 4-H $1,656 to fund 25 Community Pride projects. Through the 4-H Community Pride Program, Florida 4-H'ers learn about their community and are encouraged to improve the quality of their environment. Today, Chevron U.S.A. continues to support the Florida 4-H Community Pride Program.



Florida 4-H Legislature on the Capitol steps.

The first State 4-H Citizenship program was held in 1973. This program became known as the Florida 4-H Legislature. LEG, pronounced "ledge" by Florida 4-H'ers, provides an opportunity for teen 4-H members to have a "learn-by-doing" experience in state government each summer. When delegates participate in the Florida 4-H Legislature, they gain actual experience in all three branches of Florida's government: Executive, Legislative, and Judicial. Florida 4-H laws are considered and passed or vetoed in a mock legislative session at the Florida State Capitol.

National 4-H celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2002. Florida hosted a parade and celebration in St. Augustine.

The Florida 4-H Foundation initiates the Florida 4-H Hall of Fame in 2002, where 104 individuals were first inducted.

Although the volunteer base has been around in Florida 4-H since its inception, in 2004 the Florida 4-H Volunteer Association became official.

In 2009, the Executive Board, comprised of 4-H youth, initiated a state service project that commemorates Florida 4-H's 100th anniversary. Youth across Florida will donate time towards the "100 hours of community service for 100 years" project. Youth have already started helping their community by planting trees.

FIRST FLORIDA 4-H CAMP

Opening in 1926, 4-H Camp Timpoochee, located in Niceville near the Gulf of Mexico, became the first permanent 4-H camp in Florida. Many 4-H boys and girls donated a chicken to be sold to support the building of 4-H Camp Timpoochee. J. Lee Smith traveled northwest Florida on a train, picking up donated chickens from 4-H members who met the train when it stopped, and then sold the chickens to support the camp's construction. 4-H Camp Timpoochee remains one of the oldest camping facilities in the nation.

Woodrow W. Brown, boys state 4-H leader, congratulates the 1955 short course public speaking winner.

In June 1963, thanks to the planning by Woodrow Brown, Emily King, Joe Busby and others, the Florida 4-H Foundation was established. This direct support organization would play an important role in recruiting private donors to support 4-H. Funds contributed through the foundation have helped Florida 4-H members go to college, support new public awareness efforts, funded new 4-H programs, helped hundreds of Florida 4-H'ers attend National 4-H Congress and National 4-H Conference, and recognized countless 4-H members for their outstanding achievements.

SEMINOLE TRIBE OF FLORIDA 4-H

The Seminole Tribe of Florida 4-H has come a long way, dating back to 1955 and first known as Seminole Indian 4-H. Some of the earlier programs were chicken projects and cooking and sewing classes for both boys and girls. The agents assigned were considered "Special Indian Agents." The first Extension 4-H agents were Fred Montsdeoca, who worked with the young men, and Edith Boehmer, who worked with the young women.

The Indian girls who attended the first 4-H camp for the Seminole Tribe gather around the emblem at the base of the flag pole.

In 1992, the Special Indian Agent Program was re-established through the U.S. Farm Bill. Funding was made available for a special program known as the "Extension Indian Reservation Program." At this time, the Seminole Indian Tribe became a "county" for administrative purposes, and therefore was assigned their own Extension professional.

In 2006, the special Indian program became known as the Federally Recognized Tribe Extension Program. Today, Seminole Indian 4-H is one of the most successful programs in Indian Country. The Seminole Tribe has traditionally been an agricultural and animal husbandry community. Approximately 50 percent of youth and young adults are introduced to these histories through 4-H school enrichment programs. The Seminole Tribe of Florida has six reservations: Brighton, Big Cypress, Immokalee, Hollywood, Tampa and Fort Pierce.

In 2007, proposed by the Seminole Indian Tribe 4-H, a consortium of Southeastern Native American 4-H Clubs met at the National 4-H Headquarters in Chevy Chase, Maryland. This was the first time that a Native American group had been hosted at the National 4-H Headquarters. Whereas most of Florida is being developed for housing communities, the Seminole Tribe is able to recognize their strong heritage in agriculture and animal husbandry and the role it plays in the past and future.

UF UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA
IFAS Extension