

# County 4-H Program Had Start in Tomahawk Area

By Lillian Gladfelter Allard

Many natives and long time residents of northern Lincoln county remember the county's first 4-H club and its beginning in January, 1920.

Some of the members named in articles in The Tomahawk Leader in that first year were Irvin Bartz, Margaret Day, Vivian Gutche, Arden and William Kennedy, Cornelia Schoone, George Conant, Harold Leverance, Leon Grimes, Amy, Ruth and Edgar Tiffany, Dorothy and Margaret Davis, Clarence Samuelson, Peter Curtis, Barnabas Cottrell, William, Elmer and Bernard Allard, Minnie Voermans, Mary Amelse, Eva Yungfer, Helen Brock, Marie and Harry Ehmann, Gilbert Ellis, Lester Smith, Alice Schreiber, Mary Musch, Katy Bartschat, Pearl Schultz, Alice and Lillian Gladfelter, Elliott White, Herman Wickman and Elmer Schuffletowski.

That first boys and girls club was under the supervision of County Agent A. H. Cole, T. L. Bewick, state club leader, and Mildred Hagerty, assistant state leader. Much credit must also be given to the agricultural committee, John Lee, A. E. Sutliff and H. A. Atcherson, as well as many Tomahawk promoters.

Miss Florence Dunn, a graduate of the University of Nebraska and experienced in community work and an enthusiastic worker, set up an office in the Mitchell hotel and went out and worked with the youth in and around Tomahawk.

The Bradley company, sometimes called the Tomahawk Land company, had

land. They divided it into 40-acre pieces and built a small house and barn on some of the forties.

These buildings were stained brown and the house and barn were of equal size. They advertised and got lots of newcomers to purchase their parcels with a \$250 down payment. They would furnish a cow, pigs and chickens if the newcomer had feed for them.

Then, to help the newcomers to learn some of the fundamentals in farming, they promoted this 4-H clubwork as just one of their farmer training programs.

The children and parents did learn a great deal from this training program as did many of the children of native and newcomer farmers who were not Bradley company purchasers.

The first 4-H club projects promoted were just three - calf, poultry and canning.

County Agent Cole went to the southern part of the state and purchased purebred and high grade cattle and had them shipped here.

They sold these and some of our first or native farmers also parted with some of their purebred and high grade cattle to get these young people started. The local banks and the Bradley company financed the individual club member's purchase of a calf.

The Bradley company traded "setting eggs" from Barred Plymouth Rock and Rhode Island Red chickens for the parent's marketing eggs or sold them to the youngsters at market price.

The girls were taught the cold pack method of canning.

These first 4-H clubs were organized in the community



4-H'ERS BERNARD ALLEN [LEFT] AND ELMER ALLARD WITH THEIR PRIZE WINNING CHICKENS AT THE 1920 COMMUNITY FAIR.

were the rural schools. Some of the schools mentioned in a March, 1920, issue of The Tomahawk Leader were Harmony, Tripoli, Mitchell, Gladfelter, Spirit Falls, Bigelow, Fulsher, Skanawan, Nash, Irma, and the Tomahawk public and Tomahawk parochial schools.

Some of the local leaders at that time were Roy Conant, Frank Clark, H. H. Stolle, William Emerick, L. Knudson, C. Amelse, M. R. Jeffries and Frank Wrabitz.

It was during this great club work year of 1920 that the Bradley company purchased the land across the street from the city hall and built a large pavilion. R. B. Tweedy of the Bradley company said the building would cost approximately \$1,000. He said this would make an attractive trading place. This building was known as the community Building. It was completed in time for the community fair in 1920. This building and

present city parking lot now exists.

Quoting from a 1920 Tomahawk Leader: "We believe in having the country people take an active part in the publicity work of this county, as it is they, as much as anyone, on whose activities the future success of Lincoln county depends."

The community fair in 1920 was held Sept. 15-17. Nine townships exhibited products produced in their communities. Townships exhibiting were Somo, Wilson, Tomahawk, Birch, Bradley, King, Skanawan, Harrison and Rock Falls. There were 326 individual exhibits.

The 4-H members exhibited their calves, poultry and canning in open class along with adults.

I selected some 4-H prize winners from among the adults. They were Minnie Voermans, Cornelia Schoone, Mary Amelse, Leon Grimes, Irvin Bartz and Elmer and

commented and praised their children's work. Some fathers said their boys' calves grew as much as twice as fast as the fathers' in the regular herds.

In 1921 The Tomahawk Leader on Feb. 3 had under Community Activities on the front page the following article:

"Elmer Allard, a 14-year-old club member living in the Bigelow school district, has been chosen by the state officers as the second best calf club member in the state. This place is contested for by hundreds of club members over the state and since won by a Lincoln county boy speaks well for the work done by him.

"These placings are made as a result of a number of scores. The individuality of the calf counts 50% and the record book 50%. Elmer purchased his calf last spring from Mr. Harry Herman. He is a real farmer and calf raising was not his only summer's labor. He was also a member of the Poultry club.

"His pen of Barred Plymouth Rocks took first place at the community fair

last fall. Besides this he has practically taken a man's place on his father's farm since last spring.

"Elmer finished the eighth grade last year and won first place in a public speaking contest held for eighth graders in this section."

Elmer says for this second place rating in the state he received a free trip to the state fair. Also, Elmer says his calf gained 2 1/2 pounds per day, which helped Elmer make the good record.

Needless to say, this award and the publicity did much to advertise northern Lincoln county's 4-H work and to encourage many to participate.

The Tomahawk Leader from then on gave many reports of 4-H club activities in the Community Activity reports.

I did not have a trip to the state fair during my years as a 4-H club member. I did receive several honor pins in canning projects I carried. My prizes at the community fair helped me purchase many items I was longing to have.

4-H club work was a very educational, interesting and

entertaining part of my progress as a youth in the Tomahawk area.

I continued my enthusiasm for 4-H by acting as a club counselor at 4-H camp and as a project and general leader a number of years. I particularly remember leadership in 1937 through 1939 and again in 1949 through 1952 as challenging and rewarding years in 4-H for me.

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Much credit should be given the 4-H clubs for the help in developing the rural area of northern Lincoln county. The 1920 year of 4-H marked a beginning of better grade of cattle, poultry and farm products produced in this area.

It also helped the youth that day accept the challenge to go out and meet the world.