



# 100 Years Of 4-H In Wisconsin

## History of 4-H Nationally

The history of 4-H starts back in the late 1800's when new agricultural experiments were being discovered. Researchers found that many adults in the farming community were not open to these new ideas and technology, but young students were very accepting of these ideas and willing to share them with adults. This was the first step toward community's coming together to solve agricultural problems "hands-on" together.

The actual 4-H program officially started in 1902. A.B. Graham started the "Corn Growing Club" or "Tomato Club" in Clark County, Ohio. Meanwhile in Dou-

glas County, Minnesota T.A. Erickson was organizing after-school agricultural clubs and fairs. Even though these new clubs had been started they weren't officially called 4-H yet.

In 1907, Jessie Field Shambaugh and O.H. Benson started using a three leaf clover for the symbol of these new clubs. The original three H's were Head, Heart, and Hands. In 1911 they then added the fourth H, Health. Shambaugh created the clover pin with a H on each leaf and by 1912 these new boys and girls clubs were called 4-H.

In 1914, the Smith-Lever Act which informs people of current devel-

opments, created the Cooperative Extension System at USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture). These nationalized 4-H and by 1942 clubs across the country were being formed and the clover identity was formally approved.

The first 4-H club here in Wisconsin was the Linn Junior Farmers Club in October of 1914. Today 4-H is the nation's largest youth development organization. It serves rural, urban, and suburban communities all over the United States. 4-Hers all over the U.S. are taking on the nation's top issues and tackling the challenges of the 21st century.