

# The History of 4-H in Ashtabula County



Passage of the Smith-Lever Act in 1914 by the Federal Congress established the cooperatively funded "Extension Service" that today can boast of having representatives in almost every county in the nation. The partnership created involved the United State Dept. Of Agriculture, State Land Grant Colleges and individual Boards of County Commissioners. The main objective and purpose of the organization as created in 1914 is simply to make available to the residents of the county the resources of the Land

Grant system's colleges of food, agriculture and environmental sciences. Extension agents are faculty members of the Land Grant College .

Sometime in the early 1920's a Mr. Claypoole was appointed as the first 4-H Extension Agent in Ashtabula County. One significant accomplishment during his tenure was that the first 4-H club camp was held in 1923. However, it was during the watch of 4-H Agent Ken Battles that 4-H Camp Whitewood was established in 1939 to serve multiple counties. The search for a suitable site for a camp was an interesting one, as agents avoided arousing suspicions by carrying hunting equipment as they toured various areas. They may have even done some rabbit hunting.

The first 4-H Office was housed in the offices of the County School Superintendent on the third floor of the old Court House in Jefferson. It took 58 years for the local Extension office to get to the "ground floor" from that third story beginning! As the local staff expanded, the Board of county Commissioners moved the Extension offices to the second floor of the old Probate Court Building . Then in 1975, the Commissioners remodeled an old residential home that they owned on West Walnut St. and the 4-H Office was finally on the "ground floor".

In 1991 the Extension office staff determined that we needed additional space and a plan was developed to remodel the "old blue house" on West Walnut St. A fund- raising drive was put in place and an architect hired to remodel the current structure. After receiving bids from contractors and architects doing extensive examination of the building, it was determined that this would not be a cost-effective plan. In the meantime, OSU Extension office had moved to a "temporary" location on the second floor of the Old Courthouse in Jefferson.

In 1994 the Farm Credit Service Building decided to sell their building at 39 Wall St. This was also the current home of the Soil & Water Conservation Service. There was some discussion at the time, whether all of the "ag related" agencies in the county should be housed together into an Ag Center. However, this was at the same time that the Agricultural Stabilization & Conservation Service Agency and Farmers Home Administration moved their location to Orwell to better meet the needs of the Geauga and Trumbull County participants. This left OSU Extension and SWCD to be housed together at the 39 Wall Street location.

Money from the fund-raising, along with addition funds and block grants from the County

Commissioners, allowed for the remodeling and expansion of this location. Both groups have access and enjoy the meeting facilities in the basement of this building. An elevator and handicap entrance was added during the remodeling.

After almost three years at the "temporary location", on April 19, 1995 OSU Extension 4-H moved to its current location at 39 Wall St. The county 4-H Committee donated money to pay for carpeting in the conference room. This is also where the Ashtabula County Hall of Fame wall can be found. In addition to the Hall of Fame, there are also some old 4-H Club Charters, and the Ashtabula County 4-H Hall of Fame plaque. The Hall of Fame and the plaque are designed to recognize advisors that Ashtabula County has nominated for the State 4-H Hall of Fame.

There have been many 4-H agents/educators in Ashtabula County since Mr. Claypoole in 1920. They include:

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| H. R. Waugh       | 1924-1926  |
| K. E. Battles     | 1926-1946  |
| Roger Lawrence    | 1946-1948  |
| James Limbard     | 1948-1949  |
| George Garman     | 1951-1966  |
| Lawrence Anderson | 1967-1969 (later Ashtabula County Ag Agent)      |
| Mary Scranton     | 1969-1970  |
| Lester Barnhart   | 1969-1973 (later OSU Development Office)         |
| Nancy Baldauf     | 1972-1973  |
| Bruce Brockett    | 1973-1978 (later N.E. District Dairy Specialist) |
| Nate Drum         | 1978-1979  |
| James Hill        | 1979-1988 (later Trumbull Co. 4-H Agent)         |
| Tom Hopkins       | 1988-1995 (former Wood Co. Ag Agent)             |
| Wayne Rossitano   | 1995-1995  |
| Marcy Hudson      | 1996-1999 (former Ashtabula County 4-Her)        |
| Tom Hopkins       | 2000- 2007                                       |
| Becky Holmes      | 2007 - 2010                                      |
| Jenna C. Hoyt     | 2011 - Present                                   |

***Originally written by:***

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