

**Wednesday, May 24, 2006**  
**10:30 a.m.**  
**Paul Woodward 4-H History**

John F. Haines, Hamilton County Superintendent of Schools, organized the earliest Indiana Boys Corn Club meeting of record. This monthly meeting was held April 9, 1904. There is a picture of East Hamilton County Boys Corn Club of 1906 on the steps of the county courthouse (from John Haines History of Hamilton County, Indiana).

93 boys enrolled in that first Corn Club (at the end of the 1904 year, the members exhibited their corn in the court house walk ways).

I enrolled in 4-H in 1935. I was born in 1925 in Madison County and spent early years north of Lapel on a farm. My family moved to Hamilton County in 1932. We lived in Fall Creek Twp. near the old Klepher School – a one room school house – 8 grades. My older brother and I joined the Fall Creek Twp. 4-H Club led by Newell Hurlock and his wife. There were 11 or 12 members in the club. Today, the club is known as the Jolly Rogers Club. I enrolled in mostly livestock projects – beef, cattle, steers and heifers. Other projects at that time were dairy, swine, poultry, corn, wheat, oats and hay. In 1912 the first girls club was started, offering sewing projects.

In later years, the 4-H Fair was moved to different locations throughout Hamilton County, most of which took place under a large tent or county school grounds. The girls' projects, usually clothing and foods, were exhibited inside the schools.

At that time, meetings were conducted in members or leaders' homes, usually four or five times a year. Most of the meetings were spent talking about the County 4-H Program and the 4-H members projects. Each club had officers. The recreation was handled by the host family and limited to space in the home and yard. Members also played ball in barn lots. Later, song leaders and recreation leaders were elected for each 4-H club. 4-H clubs usually had only boys or only girls. There was never any gender restrictions on membership in any of the clubs.

Girls generally joined Home Economics clubs and showed dresses, skirts, sweaters, and foods. Girls began showing livestock locally in the mid 1940's. Girls did show livestock prior to that time at the State Fair.

By the late 1940's, most clubs met at the schools and were led by Agriculture and Home Economics teachers.

I was a member of 4-H for 9 years. I was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1945 and 1946. In 1947 I was an assistant 4-H leader in Noblesville Township. Harold McKinney was the Noblesville High School Agriculture Teacher and 4-H Leader. They named the club Friendly Farmers.

O.V. Winks was the County Agriculture Agent and Betty Van Nice was the County Home Demonstration Agent. The clubs needed all the help they could get. The number of 4-H members started to multiply in 1948 and after. As the clubs became larger, the clubs had to be broken into smaller clubs. They went from 18 clubs in the county, to 45 or 50 clubs in this county. Federal Hill 4-H club was organized in 1949. It was one of the expansion 4-H clubs. Garrick Mallory and I were the 4-H club leaders. Federal Hill 4-H club usually had 20 – 30 members each year.

County agents were always 4-H leaders. J.B. Todd was County Agent when I joined 4-H in 1935. Todd remained County Agent until 1939. O.V. Winks was County Agent 1939-1966.

The county 4-H Council was organized in the mid 1940's. Nine County Ag agents were on the 4-H Council. One from each township, also the County Agent. In the 1950's, one woman from each township

was elected to the 4-H Council. The 4-H Council members went from nine to eighteen. I served on the 4-H Council for a number of years.

The 4-H Fair in the 1935-1946 years lasted about 3 days. No livestock sales, most of the projects were directed toward rural families. The 4-H fairs were held on the Noblesville city streets. In 1935 cattle were sheltered in the livery stable on Logan Street where the County Government Center is now located. The County Fair was held at Forest Park in 1936-37.

The first Hamilton County 4-H Fair Livestock Auction was held in 1958. Calvin Hiatt was the first chairman of the Livestock Auction Committee.

The 4-H Fair moved out to the present 4-H Fairgrounds on Pleasant Street in Noblesville, in 1948. Monte Jessup donated 2 ½ acres for a fairgrounds. At this time there was an airport. The Hamilton County 4-H Council purchased 12 acres more land from Jessup. The 4-H Council raised more than \$40,000 through donations. They used that money to construct the current O.V. Winks building and the first swine barn, which was used for small animals and horticulture exhibits. The other buildings were added when the 4-H Council was able to raise donated money to pay for their buildings. I was on the Building and Grounds Committee from 1945 until today. Many family businesses and organizations donated to the 4-H programs each year. Eli Lily – Conner Prairie donated \$5,000 to start the Building Fund. The County Farm Bureau Inc., donated \$5,000 plus the nine townships Farm Bureau Organization donated \$1,000-\$2,000 each, totaling \$10,000. Door to door fund drives raised much money for 4-H Building plans.

The tax laws in the 1940's prohibited using tax money to build 4-H buildings and grounds. Those laws were changed in the early 1950's.

The 4-H buildings that were constructed:

- 1<sup>st</sup> - O.V. Winks Building
- 2<sup>nd</sup> - Small Animal Building
- 3<sup>rd</sup> - Small Animal Building
- 4<sup>th</sup> - Cattle Barn
- 5<sup>th</sup> - Show arena
- 6<sup>th</sup> - O.V. Winks Building was enlarged
- 7<sup>th</sup> - Annex Building
- 8<sup>th</sup> - County Ag office plus an apartment Building
- 9<sup>th</sup> - 1<sup>st</sup> Horse Show Building and Arena
- 10<sup>th</sup> - Cafeteria Building
- 11<sup>th</sup> - New Swine Barn
- 12<sup>th</sup> - Present County Ag Office and Exhibition Building
- 13<sup>th</sup> - Present Horse Barn and Show Arena