

STARK COUNTY

The first agricultural club in Stark County, a corn club, was a Boys' and Girls' Club organized in Nimishillen Township in 1912 by Charles Weeks. In 1923 nine 4-H clubs were started with ninety-eight members; however, only six clubs with forty-eight members finished their projects and exhibited at the country fair. The boys were in pig clubs and the girls were in clothing and food clubs. In 1922 there were fifty-five boys and girls in five 4-H clubs.

In 1925 nine Stark County 4-H'ers attended 4-H Club Congress in Columbus for the first time. The first Stark County 4-H camp was held in 1926 at the D. R. Sickafosse Farm near Waynesburg. Twenty-one girls, four boys, and eleven counselors and leaders attended, and the charge for five days was five dollars. Forty-four campers attended the second annual 4-H camp. In 1930 six members attended 4-H Club Congress, but the Depression ended these trips for a number of years. The first Officers' and Advisors' Training Conference was held in 1935, and in 1936 the conference was attended by 160 advisors and officers. World War II affected the 4-H program unfavorably during the first half of the 1940s; the number of clubs dropped from a peak of ninety-three in 1938 to seventy in 1946.

In 1941 Gordon Briggs was hired as the Assistant County Agent and was responsible for boys' work and advisor and leader training; there were fifty-six advisors and leaders for girls and thirty for boys. Junior Leaders were organized in 1945 to develop leadership skills through participation in community activities and monthly educational/recreational meetings. In 1948 the Plain Township Clothing Club, which was organized by Mrs. Carl Bair in 1923, celebrated its silver anniversary. Following the end of World War II, the 4-H program showed impressive growth. The low number of seventy clubs in 1946 grew to ninety-nine clubs by 1957.

By 1950 the 4-H clubs in Stark County conducted four hundred demonstrations a year. Some of the new activities included successfully raising five thousand dollars for the Ohio 4-H Foundation. Also in 1950 a 4-H Club Council was formed with an advisor from

each township, and a Junior Fair Board was organized and was composed of one representative from each of the seven rural youth organizations. The board later was expanded to seventeen representatives from additional organizations. In 1956 the oldest 4-H club was the Parisian Maids 4-H Club, which had been organized in Paris in 1918 by Mrs. J. L. Powell under the name Paris Girl's Culinary and Hygienic Club.

By the end of the 1950s, the Stark County 4-H program had largely been developed by the staff of Ormann Keyser, County Agricultural Agent for thirty-four years; Addis Barthelmeh, County Home Economics Extension Agent for thirty-two years; and Bertha Phillips, County Extension Agent for fourteen years. Clothing and food projects remained the most popular projects with the girls, and it was reported the boys had an increased interest in baking. The Style Review was a popular event for the girls.

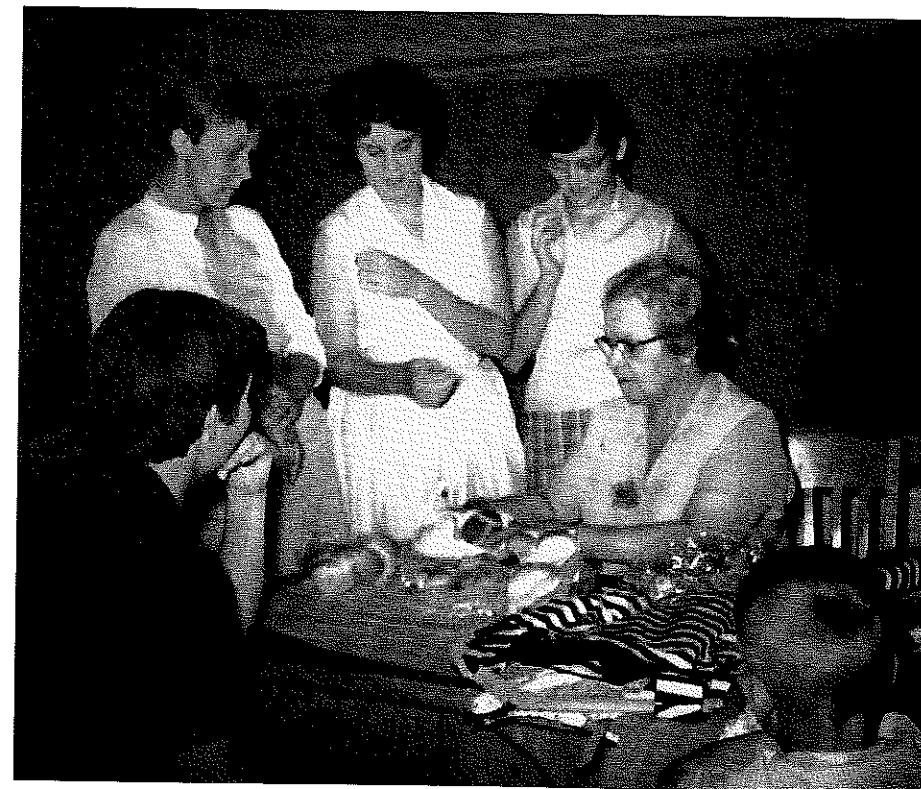
—Contributed by Marlene Beggs and Libby Smith



Stark County clothing judging took place at the Washington Township School in 1959. Left to right: Eva Jean Semon, an unidentified judge, Bertha Phillips, and Marleen Mani (Grant).



Marleen Mani (Grant), Carolyn Becker, and LaVonne Douds of the 4-H Live Wires Club stand in front of their display at the Stark County Fair in 1958.



Bertha Phillips examined baked goods at the Washington Township School in 1958 while (left to right) Marleen Mani (Grant), Eva Jean Semon, and Eleanor Deming looked on.