

# 4-H

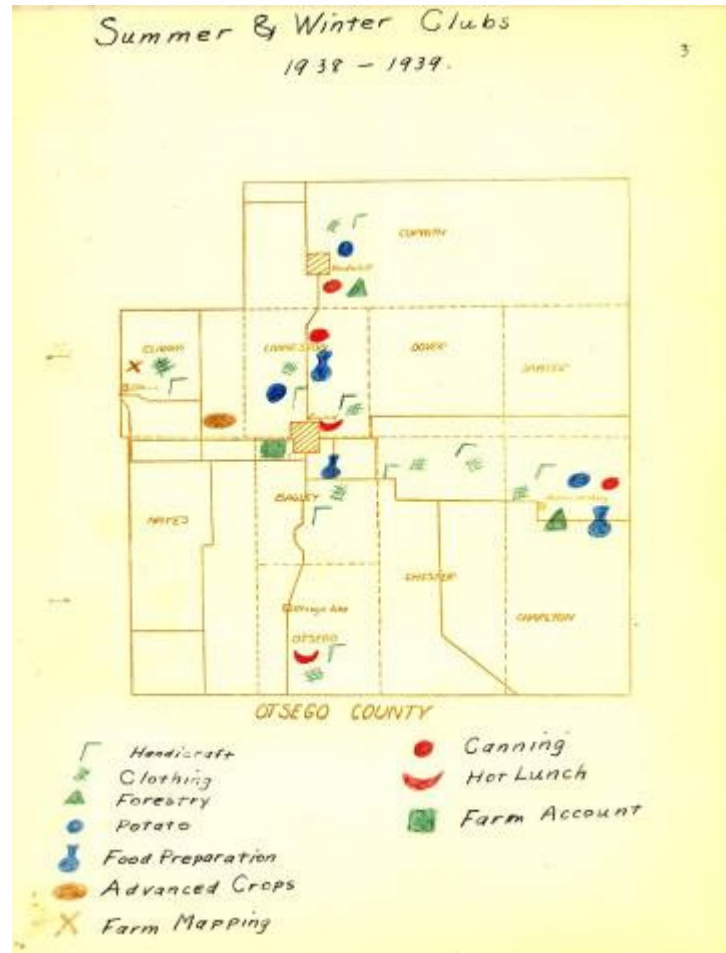
“To Make The Best Better”



4-H in Otsego County began in 1925 and was originally called Boys' and Girls' Club. The following year, Mr. Lester V. Benjamin was hired to work with 4-H in Otsego, Cheboygan, and Montmorency Counties. Financial backing for County Club work was provided by the Gaylord Chamber of Commerce. Five potato and six canning clubs were started for summer programs. Sewing, Handicraft and Hot Lunch were started for the winter months.



1940 Otsego County 4-H Dairy Achievement Day at Johannesburg



This map from the 1939 Annual Report shows the location and types of 4-H clubs in Otsego County. There were a total of 135 boys and 119 girls enrolled that year in 29 clubs. Llewellyn Karr was the District 4-H Club Agent serving Presque Isle, Alpena, Montmorency, and Otsego Counties

## 1940 Achievement Day



4-H Achievement Day was held in the spring of each year to showcase and evaluate the winter projects. Left to right: Clark Oliver, Amy Lee Fox, Robert Briley, and Junior Larson

The **Otsego County Fair** served a similar purpose for 4-H projects conducted in the spring and summer.



Some of the 4-H livestock winners at the 1994 Otsego County Fair

## 4-H

### Summer Camp

For many youth in Otsego County, one of the main events of summer vacation is attending 4-H camp. This annual event has been held since the 1920s. The location has changed from time to time and has included campers from surrounding counties.

4-H Camp provides an opportunity for youth to meet others from neighboring counties and provides a leadership opportunity for older teens. Traditional activities such as archery, canoeing, and swimming along with current ones such as water quality, goecaching, and photography.



### Horseback Riding for the Handicapped

An innovative 4-H program developed in the early 1990s to meet the needs of an underserved audience was the Proud Equestrian Program (PEP). PEP gave handicap children a fun opportunity to ride horses and improve their coordination. The program also provided 4-H teen and adult leaders a valuable learning and volunteer experience.



### What Is 4-H?

4-H is a fun, educational program designed to help kids learn more about topics they are interested in. 4-H is a great way to make new friends, and join in fun activities with people your own age. The mission of Michigan's 4-H Youth Development is to create environments, through collaborations, that build strong and healthy youth who are proactive in a complex and changing world.

4-H programs are instrumental in building life skills in youth such as leadership, communication, citizenship and career development. Adult volunteers support 4-H programs by working interactively with the young people and serving as positive role models. Both members and leaders participate in local meetings with their clubs and may also take part in the annual county fair. 4-H youth programs are found in rural and urban areas throughout Otsego County.

### Otsego County 4-H Staff

Lester V. Benjamin



Mary Ilford  
(later Guggisberg)

Andrew L. Olson  
Claude M. Elmore  
George K. Johnson  
John C. Post  
Sherry Huff  
Judy Heinowski  
Rhonda Behnke



Ann Widger Wright  
1979 – 2003



Current 4-H Educator  
Bethany Prykucki



## Camp Gay-Gug-Lun

1926: "Through cooperation with several agencies secured a district Club Encampment for boys and girls club members from 27 counties are eligible for attendance. 207 was the total enrollment this, our first year. We hope to make this a permanent institution for Otsego County." See photo below

In 1933, the buildings shown in the post card to the right were built. Funding was provided by a special grant by the Michigan legislature. Camp Gay-Gug-Lun was dedicated on August 3 by Gov. Green. The local newspaper declared it to be the "finest camp of its kind in the world".

Questions still being researched include: When did the camp close? How did it get turned over to the Otsego County Fair Association?



### How the Camp got its name

"Gay" is for Gaylord, the location of the camp.

"Gug" is for Guggisberg. John C. Guggisberg was a long time businessman in Gaylord. In the 1920s, he was the state superintendent of 4-H clubs and worked with the state legislature to get appropriations for the camp buildings. He served as State Representative of the Otsego-Cheboygan district from 1939 – 1945.



"Lun" is for Lunden.

Herman Lunden was a prominent business leader in Otsego and Montmorency Counties. He was a lumbering company executive, banker, and president of the Otsego County Fair.

*Courtesy OCHS*



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