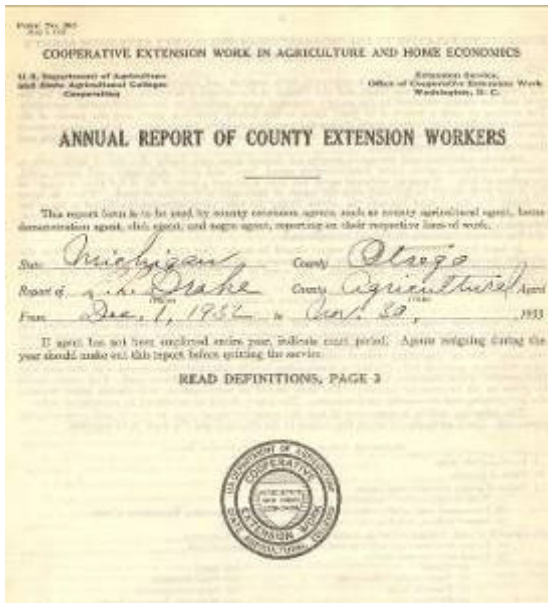


# Introduction

A few years ago, a box of Extension Service annual reports for the years 1930 to 1969 were found in storage. These documents not only record the history of the Extension Service in Otsego County, but also tell an interesting story about everyday life in Otsego County. The reports offer a complimentary yet different perspective of the past found in local newspaper articles, personal biographies, and other historical accounts. They mirror the development and progress of Otsego County. They also illustrate the changes that occurred due to Extension research and educational programs.



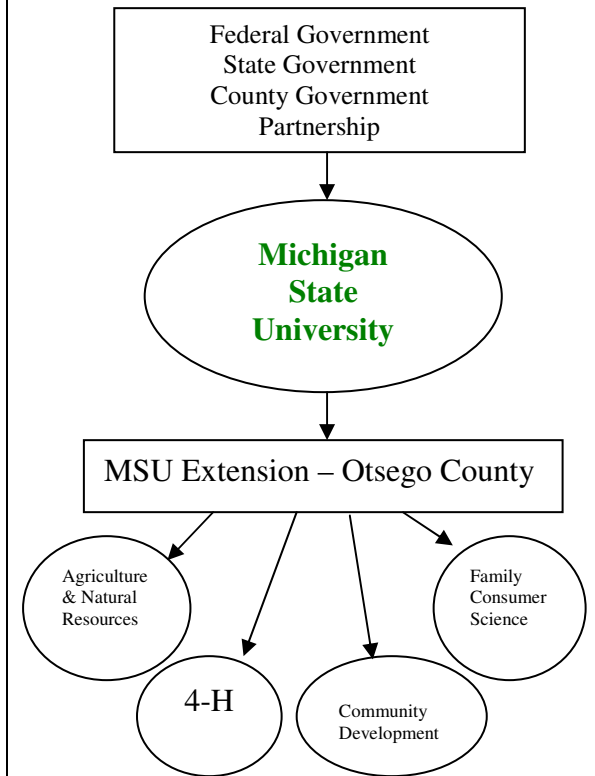
Cover of the 1933 Annual Report of County Extension Workers prepared by Leon Drake

Even after 90 years, many people are not fully aware of the Extension Service and what it does. Some people are familiar with 4-H, or know it's where they get their soil tested or take a bug to be identified, but they don't have a clear understanding of how those pieces are connected. So, let's begin with a brief overview of the Extension Service.

The Extension Service was created in 1914 by the U. S. Congress because of its concern for the education of the average citizen. In-depth information about the Extension Service can be found in the publications listed on pages 33 and 34 of this document.

The purpose of the Extension Service is to help people improve their lives through an educational process that applies knowledge to critical issues, needs, and opportunities. Tag lines such as "Better Living Through Learning", Helping People Help Themselves", and "Bringing Knowledge To Life" have been used to convey that message.

The Extension Service is a unique partnership of the federal, state, and county governments. It is linked to our state's land grant institution Michigan State University. Perhaps the following diagram of the organizational structure will help explain how the pieces fit together.



**“Learning A Living”** provides a brief summary of 90 years of Extension Service programming in Otsego County as gleaned from the annual reports. The following pages provide a glimpse of the wide variety of ways that the Extension Service has made a positive difference in Otsego County. The first part presents a chronology using a timeline of events. The second part gives highlights of key topics.