

The youths meeting in Chicago this week can do anything from raising cattle to remodeling furniture — but, best of all, they show the way to good citizenship



THOSE AMAZING

4-H'ERS!



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4-H'ers all, and the projects earning them the respect of their communities: Sylvia Fahrenkrog in the room she decorated; Billy Hackman and the corn he grew; Elwood White and prize tomatoes; Tom Hess and top lamb.

IN RAYMOND, MISS., a girl named Melanie Matthews and a handful of friends decided more people ought to go to the polls on election day. So they tacked up posters, baby-sat, and drove voters to and from their homes in autos. Dozens of persons who otherwise might not have voted did so.

In Tipton, Okla., Andrea Seuter made 150 radio talks and wrote 60 newspaper stories on aspects of home and community safety. In Clayton, N. M., Dwight Walker not only stirred up interest in voter registration with a series of broadcasts, but also acted regularly as a student preacher in two mission churches.

This was good citizenship at its best, and these youths were among many who won national recognition for it last year. More will be honored this week. For a stirring national convention is about to begin in Chicago, the 38th annual congress of one of the most remarkable youth groups in the country—the 4-H Clubs.

To many, 4-H may have connotations of some kind of homespun, semi-isolated existence on a farm. Indeed, the group that founded 4-H in 1919 did have rural youth essentially in mind. But times have changed. The 4-H still serves farm areas—but nearly half of its 2.2 million members now are city or rural nonfarm youngsters.

It's amazing what these boys and girls—their ages range from 10 to 21—accomplish. They're junior leaders in local, state, and national improvement efforts. By their dedication to wholesome, stimulating, educational activity, they're virtually delinquency-proof. Also, through their drive for self-improvement, they're builders of a better way of life at home, whether rural or urban.

Any who have observed 4-H'ers (or are 4-H

"alumni" like myself) never cease to marvel at their ambition and ingenuity. Ronnie Gollehon of House, N. M., for example, made enough money on 4-H livestock-raising projects to buy a car and make a down payment on a farm. Sylvia Fahrenkrog, whose parents live on a 155-acre farm near Davenport, Iowa, remodeled some old walnut furniture and replanned her bedroom—and did so well her suite won a national 4-H home-improvement award and a featured-exhibit ranking at the Iowa State Fair.

Imagine trying to raise livestock in a metropolis such as Chicago. Yet several hundred "city" 4-H youths are doing just that; by special arrangement, they keep their animals in a restricted corner of the immense Chicago Stockyards.

ORIGINALLY the 4-H Clubs were launched as an extension service by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, state colleges, and counties. They provided the financial support. Now our largest corporations have joined in, contributing hundreds of thousands of dollars to encourage 4-H work. There are 4-H'ers in some 40 countries (some under different names), all devoted to developing the four H's: Head (learning), Heart (character), Hands (skills), and Health.

Credit for many accomplishments is due 4-H—not the least of them helping spread the miracles of modern farming. But most often, I think in terms of its never-failing ability to broaden an individual's horizons.

Last year, national achievement winner Robert Etter of Bradford, Mass., revealed how 4-H had led to his enrolling in a college engineering course—he once worked on an electrical project. I well know its influence in my own case. As a 4-H youth in

Catawba County, N. C., I won a Duroc hog. This directed my interest into the science of animal husbandry, which resulted in my attending four colleges and choosing education as a career.

Not long ago, someone began listing a few prominent Americans who once were 4-H'ers. The group included Senators Herman Talmadge of Georgia and the late W. Kerr Scott of North Carolina, former Governors Raymond Gary of Oklahoma and Dan Thornton of Colorado, and a number of U. S. Congressmen.

It also included businessmen in many fields, journalists, career officials at all levels of government, doctors (among them the director of Harvard University's health service), a movie star (Roy Rogers), a former Mrs. America (Mrs. Carl Deitemeyer of Lincoln, Neb.), and hundreds of educators, including Presidents Ben F. Hilburn of Mississippi State College, Hilton M. Briggs of South Dakota State, and R. R. Renne of Montana State.

You could only begin to make a complete list of important "alumni." For the qualities of initiative and leadership which 4-H activity develops are required not only by various major institutions and organizations, but also for the building of successful homes and communities which, after all, are the things that make our nation great.

An outstanding Oklahoma 4-H girl probably expressed this best a few years ago. Explaining why she joined 4-H, she said:

"I knew a high-school girl who belonged to 4-H. She was the most ideal girl I had ever known. If 4-H could do for me what it had done for her, I wanted to be part of it."

Some 20 million Americans have been part of it. And we'll never forget it.