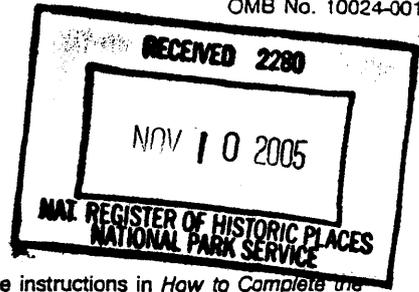


1436



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name 4-H Club Building, Murray County Fairgrounds

other names/site number 4-H Round Barn

2. Location

street & number off Broadway Avenue not for publication n/a

city or town Slayton vicinity

state Minnesota code MN county Murray code 101 zip code 56172

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Britta L. Bloomberg 11/3/05
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Britta L. Bloomberg, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Minnesota Historical Society

State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Elson A. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action 12.22.05

4-H Club Building
Name of Property

Murray County, MN
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Federal Relief Construction in MN, 1933-1941

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation & Culture/Fair

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation & Culture/Fair

Other/Storage

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Octagon

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Wood, Metal

roof Asphalt

other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

4-H Club Building
Name of Property

Murray County, MN
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture

Social History

Politics and Government

Period of Significance

1936-1955

Significant Dates

1936

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Works Progress Administration

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Murray Co. Historical Society

4-H Club Building
Name of Property

Murray County, MN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property less than one acre

Slayton, Minn., 1967

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	5	2	7	8	9	7	0	4	8	7	3	4	1	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

3

Zone				Easting				Northing						

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David C. Anderson

organization _____ date June 27, 2005

street & number 169 Lundy Bridge telephone (563) 382-3079

city or town Waukon state Iowa zip code 52172

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Murray County Board of Commissioners

street & number P.O. Box 57 telephone (507) 836-6148

city or town Slayton state MN zip code 56172

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

4-H Club Building, Murray County Fairgrounds
Murray County, MN

DESCRIPTION

The Murray County 4-H Club building is located on the county fairgrounds at the south edge of Slayton, the seat of government in Murray County, Minnesota. Murray County is in southwest Minnesota, a region characterized by flat to gently rolling landscapes largely devoted to farming.

The 4-H Club building comprises two major segments dating from 1936 and a minor addition. One of the major segments is a 1½ story octagonal structure 48 feet in diameter, and the other is a 60-foot-long by 40-foot-wide rectangular unit attached to the south. For descriptive purposes this narrative will refer to these elements as the octagon and barn, although the entire complex is locally referred to as "The Round Barn." A hand-painted wooden sign to that effect hangs on the north side of the octagon above the entrance. Just below this is a plaque identifying the building as a WPA-sponsored project.

In 1975 a 15 x 16 corrugated steel clad addition containing water hydrants and a scale was constructed on the east side of the barn.

The octagon comprises two levels below a hipped roof. The lower level has a concrete floor, and the floor above and roof are supported by eight built-up six by six inch posts set on concrete footings placed 12 feet in from the exterior walls. These run through the second floor to the roof at the hip angles and support plates into which two by six inch rafters are nailed on 24-inch centers converging at the peak.

The ground floor was originally equipped with bleacher-type seats between the vertical posts and exterior walls, creating a 24 foot diameter "arena" for judging livestock and exhibitions. These have been removed, and the interior walls on this level are now clad with four by eight foot sheets of imitation wood grain paneling. The ceiling remains exposed, revealing two by ten inch floor joists.

Access to the second floor is gained via a narrow stairway along the west wall. This space was built to house the youngsters (boys) whose livestock was housed in the barn to the south for the duration of the fair each fall.

The barn segment to the south has a dirt floor, and the space is laid out with pens and stalls on either side of a north/south corridor in the center leading to the octagon. It rests on concrete footings, and on the exterior, with its monitor roof, it looks more like an exhibition building than a barn.

All segments of the building are built of pine dimension lumber with wall sheathing of one by six inch drop siding except for the metal-clad weighing and water station. There is no sub-sheathing, and all the walls in both original segments are fitted with large-hinged panels (also of drop siding) that can be opened to admit light and air. An historic photo indicates that each of the eight-roof bays was equipped with a skylight in the lower slope, but only one remains.

The exposed rafters and single layer of sheathing in the entire complex illustrates balloon frame construction at its most minimal and economical, and this is consistent with the seasonal functions the building was intended to serve.

Except for the ground floor in the octagon, the 4-H Club building retains a high degree of historic integrity. On the exterior, only the roof has been changed in that the original wood shingles have been covered over with asphalt

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4-H Club Building, Murray County Fairgrounds
Murray County, MN

counterparts. And although the building is all white today, it was originally "white with green trim, the club colors of the (4-H) organization" (*Murray County Herald*, 8-27-36).

SIGNIFICANCE

The Murray County 4-H Club building is eligible for National Register listing under Criterion A in the categories of Agriculture, Social History, and Politics and Government. The building is locally significant for its association with the 4-H Club activities in Murray County, which were an important dimension of the Cooperative Extension Service efforts in support of agriculture and farm families in Minnesota and across the nation through the 1940s. Since the facility was built with labor provided by the Depression-era Works Progress Administration program of providing work for unemployed local citizens, it is being nominated under the Minnesota National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form "Federal Relief Construction in Minnesota, 1933-1941." It also relates to the statewide context "Railroads and Agricultural Development, 1870-1940." The building remains in use, but 4-H members are no longer housed there and judging of livestock was moved to a different building on the fairgrounds in 1955.

Introduction

The land including what is now Murray County was opened for Euro-American settlement only after the Treaties of Mendota and Traverse des Sioux were negotiated with the Dakota Indians in 1851. Murray County was created in 1857, and by 1860 19 persons were counted in three townships near Lake Shetek in the north-central part of the county (Luehmann, 109), and events associated with the U.S. Government-Dakota conflict of 1862 delayed further occupation of the area until 1866. Only after the Winona and St. Peter Railroad reached Murray Township of Murray County in 1872 did serious settlement activity take place. The village of Currie was platted in 1874 and became the first county seat. Within a decade the village of Slayton was platted with transportation thereto provided by a second railroad, the St. Paul & Sioux City. Mr. Charles W. Slayton, for whom the place was named, was a land agent for this railroad, in which capacity, and as a large landowner in the area, he sent agents to Europe recruiting settlers. Slayton personally made a trip to England for this purpose in 1882. By 1890 the seat of government had been moved to Slayton, and Currie began a decline, reaching a population of about 225 in 2000.

Murray County is in the southwest region of Minnesota, an area with silty and medium to fine textured prairie soils (Arneman). It is topographically flat to gently rolling with some of its counties, including Murray, containing lakes and marshland, most of which having been drained over the years. Most of the settlers came here to occupy the land and establish farms, and by 1870 Murray County had 15 farms in operation averaging 160 acres, but with only one including more than 50 acres "broken" (Luehmann, 466). By 1885 the number of farms had risen to 766, with flax the leader in acres under production followed by oats and wheat, the last having emerged as the leading cash crop early on. Some of this was locally processed into flour by roller mills at Currie, Fulda, and Slayton. Wheat was successfully grown in Murray County into the 1920s but had begun to decline by 1910 (Robinson, Table XIII). In 1922 the County Extension Agent recommended switching to winter wheat, specifically a variety (Minturki) developed at the Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station (Luehmann, 469). It was thought that humidity generated by the extensive wetlands in certain parts of the county helped rust to flourish in spring wheat. This was not a lasting success, and corn and soybeans became the leading crops in the southwest region as a whole. Flax production, however, remained important, and in 1924 Murray County was among the leading producers in the state.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 3

4-H Club Building, Murray County Fairgrounds
Murray County, MN

Farm Organizations, Extension and the 4-H Club Movement

The Murray County 4-H Club building is located on the fairgrounds in Slayton, and 4-H Club members along with the Future Farmers of America (FFA) are the major exhibitors at each annual fair event. The dominant role that youth now play in these events is the result of historical factors locally and at the state and national levels. While our main concern is with the 4-H clubs, these developed in conjunction with other groups on the basis of shared goals for American agriculture. The overriding theme was, in a word, "improvement" – improvement in farm efficiency, output, and farm life as a whole.

Associations of farmers devoted to improving agriculture go back to Colonial times in the United States. More often than not, the members of such groups were already successful farmers but realized that there was always room for improvement. The first of these in Murray County, the Murray County Agricultural Society, was established in 1878. Its objective was "the improvement of agriculture and the study of the kindred arts and sciences" (Luehmann, 471). An important means to these ends was to put on an annual fair, the first being held in Currie. The success of these early fairs was hampered by poor roads, and in 1883 a different group was formed in Slayton, which had become the county seat. This was the Murray County Agricultural and Mechanical Fair Association, a private corporation formed to purchase land and whatever else was deemed necessary for fairs and other exhibitions of the "agricultural, horticultural, mechanical, manufacturing and household arts" pursued in Murray County with the goal of improving said avocations and arts by the payment of premiums for excellence therein in order to further develop "the natural and agricultural resources" of the county (Articles of Incorporation. Copy on file in the Murray County Historical Society Museum).

Interest in holding a county fair each year was sporadic, however, and only after yet another fair association was formed and the present fairground secured in 1912, did this become a regular event. This was and remains the Murray County Fair Association, and the County provided the land with a \$5,000 bond sale. Apparently only one building was erected for the "First Annual Fair" – a 32 by 90 foot structure for housing "vegetables, grains, industrial exhibits, etc." (*Murray County Herald*, 5/10/12). This structure remains in place and in use today as the Horticulture Building.

An important, even crucial, element that had been lacking in early improvement efforts was local government, while the federal government has been perhaps the most important single factor in the history of American farming, going back at least to the Land Ordinance of 1785 that required states to set aside land for school purposes. This was followed by the Morrill Land Grant College Act that provided grants of land to the states to establish colleges for teaching "agriculture and the mechanic arts" (Rasmussen, 23). This was signed into law in 1862 along with the equally important Homestead Act. The U.S. Department of Agriculture was created the same year.

Being a land grant institution, the University of Minnesota created a farm campus devoted to teaching and research in agriculture and associated sciences. It also set up experimental farms (experiment stations) and created an agricultural extension service to carry scientifically-based knowledge to the state's farmers. Most of the County Extension Agents were also trained there.

Although Minnesota and several other states had extension programs in operation by 1914, the passage of the federal Smith-Lever Act that year was an important boost to their efforts in terms of funding and administrative structure. Smith-Lever created the U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service, the new official name for agricultural extension. Cooperation was to exist between Federal, State and County levels of

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4-H Club Building, Murray County Fairgrounds
Murray County, MN

programmatic function, with funding provided at each level as well. The key figure in this program was the County Extension Agent, whose job was multifaceted in that it included education and outreach but also building interest in what Extension had to offer. He* also had to raise money to help fund his projects, not only from farmers but also local business interests that stood to gain from improvements in farming practice in the way of increased yields and greater efficiency. The County Agents were instrumental in creating county farm bureaus where they did not already exist.** Their function was to organize support for the Extension Service in each county. Their importance is illustrated by the fact that in 1919 a State law was passed requiring the organization of a farm bureau in any county seeking State funds for its Extension Service. Over time, the farm bureaus joined together to form the Farm Bureau Federation, the most powerful farm group in the nation. In 1954 the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) decided that the Extension Service could no longer accept funds from private organizations (Schwieder, 135). This severed these organizations administratively, but they remained close in terms of goals and objectives.

Murray County's first County Agent was Frank J. Brown, and he arrived at Slayton in 1917. His first project was to carry out germination tests on some locally grown seed corn (Luehmann, 468). Among the varieties planted in 1918 was Minnesota 13, a variety developed at the University of Minnesota for northern latitudes. During his tenure (1917-1922) he also facilitated the recruitment of farm labor during the First World War, promoted food conservation (e.g. canning demonstrations), and assisted pig and calf club efforts, all of which being summarized as "practical service to the agricultural interests of Murray County" (1982 Murray County History, 556). In 1933 an additional person was hired as "4-H Agent," and a "Home Demonstration Agent" was put on staff in 1943 (ibid.). These activities were coordinated by the County Agent with local volunteer leaders and University Extension consultants.

The entire decade of the 1920s (and most of the 1930s) was a period of economic depression for American farming. The County Agent actively sought to ameliorate this situation by promoting crop diversification and farmer co-ops (Luehmann, 477-8). He tried to increase dairy herd numbers in the county, but farmers were unable to raise the capital needed to purchase the relatively expensive dairy cattle. In 1924 the first sugar beets were successfully grown, but the lack of a market discouraged further efforts in that direction. And soybeans were first grown in Murray County in 1919 following the initiative of the Extension Office. They grew well, but hogs would not eat them and they didn't make good silage. Farm youth in the 4-H clubs were important in these programs and in other Extension initiatives. With the advent of WW II, the issues facing farmers changed in that while income rose, they were urged to take every means at hand to expand production and increase efficiency.

The Rise of 4-H Clubs

Among the responsibilities of the County Agent was oversight and support of rural youth clubs, after 1924 known across the nation as 4-H clubs. Like the County Agents and Extension Service, these had a history predating the Smith-Lever Act and even the term 4-H itself. They go back to the early 1900s and were generically known as boys and girls clubs.

*Initially they were exclusively men, but now many women occupy these positions.

**They were initially known as "county farm improvement associations."

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4-H Club Building, Murray County Fairgrounds
Murray County, MN

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The idea of creating rural clubs for young people came out of the American Country Life Commission, a public body created by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1904 (Bailey). This was a diverse group of politicians, scientists and intellectuals charged with formulating a program to address the "problem" of rural life that was presumed to lie behind a decline in farm numbers and rural population that varied from section to section of the country but that had become a general trend by about 1900. This was a period of relative prosperity for American farmers, but a major issue was the high cost of food paid by urban dwellers resulting from an international shortfall in agricultural production (Hofstadter, 50). Roosevelt's charge to the commission was to find ways to "make country life more gainful, more attractive, and fuller of opportunities, pleasures and rewards" (quoted in Erickson, 65). The Commission's report, issued two years later, included a critique of the public schools for not providing education related to living, in particular rural living, in the country schools and that these schools needed to teach farming and other "country life subjects." Further, "as the home is the center of our civilization, so the home subjects should be the center of every school" (ibid.).

The work of the Commission had a significant impact on education theory and practice, and in 1909 the Minnesota legislature appropriated \$25,000 for ten high schools to develop curricula for agriculture, manual training, and home economics (Erickson, 66).

Meanwhile, in the Midwest and South, teachers had already taken steps on their own to address a perceived lack of relevance in rural areas of much of the material they were directed to teach and had set up extracurricular informal clubs for the students who were interested in pursuing experimental projects in horticulture and small animal raising in a mildly competitive context (Reck, Chapter II).

Teachers in the rural schools of Iowa and Minnesota got into this as early as any, but it was in Page County, Iowa where 4-H took shape. A woman named Jesse Field Shambaugh began teaching in 1901 and immediately felt a need to try to relate the school curriculum more closely to the present and future lives of her students. Her goal became to develop the perceptions and sensibilities of students for the world they lived in through nature studies, and thereby help them attain creative appreciation for country living in general and farming and homemaking in particular. Her own education had included study at a local college and material obtained from Farm Institute* meetings attended by her father (Friedel).

In 1906 she was elected Page County Superintendent of Schools and proceeded to develop clubs in each of the 130 (sic) schools in the county, emphasizing friendly competition to stimulate interest in projects relevant to what was going on in the immediate environment. The first of these were corn clubs for boys and home clubs for girls (Friedel, 99). The students learned how to do germination tests on seed corn, and they introduced the Babcock butterfat tester on their family dairy farms. She also organized a "Junior Exhibit Achievement Show" for the clubs in Clarinda, the Page County seat, where medals, certificates and cash prizes were donated by city merchants. The phrase "to make the best better," which later became the 4-H motto, emerged during the early days of these club activities (Friedel, 107).

Perhaps the most remarkable group that emerged under Ms. Shambaugh's tutelage was the Road Dragging Club. Drags, devices made of split logs and timbers in various arrangements, were pulled behind teams of horses to maintain dirt roads. Club members designed and built their own drags and maintained the roads near their farms.

*These were educational seminars developed by land-grant colleges and devoted to improved farming methods based on science.

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4-H Club Building, Murray County Fairgrounds
Murray County, MN

They were organized into teams of ten, and a competition was held as to which team did the best job on a five-mile stretch of a public road. In 1910 a cash prize of \$200 was given to the winners by the President of the New York Central Railroad (Friedel, 106).

This example illustrates the essential feature of the early clubs and their successors in the 4-H movement: Encourage youngsters to get involved solving real problems and issues that affect everyone in a setting that promotes creative thinking and that draws no arbitrary lines between children, youth, and adults.

The use of the cloverleaf as club emblem started in Page County as well, although initially it was a three-leaf clover symbolizing conservation. The three H's stood for Head (to think and know), Hand (to do everyday things well) and Heart (using it all to help others). The fourth H was added later to symbolize Home, but this was later changed to Health (Friedel, 108-9).

The story is much the same for Minnesota. A young county school superintendent, T. A. Erickson, observed that the curriculum often failed to include subject matter relevant to the needs of country people. Elected Douglas County Superintendent of Schools in 1902, he was bothered by prevailing attitudes toward work, children, and farming he encountered in his trips around the county. He too took notice of the Country Life Commission's activities, analyses and recommendations. In his book, *My Sixty Years With Rural Youth*, Erickson quotes the Commission's 1910 report, which included commendation of the "pioneering boys' and girls' clubs." Further,

There is a demand that education have a relation to living, that the schools should express the daily life and that . . . they should educate by means of agriculture and country life subjects. (Erickson, 65)

Moreover, Erickson was a strong advocate of "learning by doing," which became a leading principle in 4-H work. This and a deep appreciation of country life had been learned on the farm in Douglas County of his parents, first-generation Swedish immigrants. He later sought to promote self-esteem among farm children who were, along with their parents, often derided by town folk. He also felt that the well-being of the nation depended on stemming the rural to urban migration that was well underway in many parts of the country by 1900.

In 1912 Erickson was hired by the University of Minnesota Agricultural Extension Service to fill the newly created position of "rural school specialist," with the assignment to promote and support boys and girls clubs. By the mid-1920s these clubs in Minnesota had all adopted the 4-H emblem, motto, and organizational structure. After passage of the Smith-Lever Act in 1914, youth club work became a branch of Extension.

Both the clubs and County Extension offices benefited from this arrangement. The clubs were a source of vitality at the local level, in part because 4-H members achieved recognition in State fairs and at national events, e.g., the 4-H Club Congress in Chicago (Reck, Chapter 16). Club projects were often important sources of innovation that could be used in Extension programs. And their importance as a source of energy for many Extension programs was immense. Extension officials soon realized that the youth clubs had great potential for bringing new ideas to farmers and farm wives. Some farmers were more impressed by what their children accomplished – since it was there to see – than by what the County Agents and University farm experts were preaching.

A project in Murray County can serve as an example. For boys, pig and calf clubs were the first projects introduced in Minnesota, and somewhat later sow and litter projects were started. Erickson tells a story of traveling around Murray County with Ralph Crim, who taught agriculture in the school system.

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Section 8 Page 7

4-H Club Building, Murray County Fairgrounds
Murray County, MN

We weighed the father's pigs which were being raised in the usual unhampered way. Then we prepared to weigh the boy's pigs but found that they were all inside a little straw house he had made to keep them from being too active. "How are we going to get them out?" we asked. "Oh, they come when I call them by name" the boy said, and while we watched in astonishment he quickly proved it. What's more, they weighed much more than his father's. "I am convinced," the father said. "My boy has shown me how to raise hogs." (Erickson, 90)

4-H in Murray County

Just when the first youth clubs were formed in Murray County is not certain, but documentation relating to the County's "First Annual Fair" in 1912 suggests that nearly all the exhibits (livestock, produce, grain, sewing, etc.) were put together by adults (*Lake Wilson Pilot*, 9/6/12). It would seem that the first agriculture projects for youth were initiated by Ralph Crim, a 1913 graduate of Ohio State University's "Agriculture Dept." who was hired the same year by the Slayton public schools as instructor in agriculture (*Murray County Herald*, 6/4/15).

The next mention of youth work is from 1917 when the Assistant State Leader of Boys' and Girls' Clubs came to Murray County and visited 15 schools and signed up 70 youth for a pig club, with 14 showing at the county fair that fall (Luehmann, 476). In 1919 youth work "consisted of ten in pig club work and five in the calf work" (1982 County History, 556). Another source indicates that a calf club was added in 1919 with 31 members countywide, but bad road conditions in the winter and spring seriously hampered club activities (Luehmann, 477).

The formation of clubs accelerated dramatically in Murray County during the 1920s.

During this depressed period . . . Boys' and Girls' Club work was extended to corn and poultry projects. Girls' Club work was done in sewing, canning and baking.

1923 was a busy and successful year for the Clubs. Twenty young people received free trips to the State Fair and Junior Livestock Show. One boy won a trip to the International Livestock Show (in Chicago).

This was also a year for those who exhibited at the country fair to line up for picture taking. There was a lot of pride in this. The boys showed their calves while dressed in suits(!) . . . The girls canning team wore white uniforms.

In 1924 Vivian Wornson won the grand championship in the dairy calf class and was awarded a free trip to the Club Congress at Chicago. (Luehmann, 478)

4-H became part of the county club names by 1924. In 1925 there were seven 4-H clubs in the county, and some had colorful names, e.g. the Skandia Scouts or the Chanarambie Club. In 1926 there were 150 youth enrolled, and a story in the *Murray County Herald* indicates how this was seen in the community:

Boys' and Girls' club work in Murray County promises to be the best year yet for the popular projects in which many boys and girls have already enrolled. Club work has come to be recognized throughout the whole of the United States as one of the most practical ways of building for better agricultural conditions.

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Section 8 Page 8

4-H Club Building, Murray County Fairgrounds
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Valuable lessons have been learned in the caring for and feeding of livestock and the many trips awarded to the State Fair, Junior Livestock Show, and other places. (4/8/26)

Projects included Baby Beef, Dairy Calf, Fat Barrow, Purebred Gilt, Sow and Litter, Colt, Sheep, Bread Baking, Cake Baking, Garments, Canning, Poultry, Corn, Leadership, and General Livestock Judging. In 1933 there were 200 youth enrolled in 18 clubs, and three years later it was 525 in 17 clubs (1982 History, 556). They had developed on a basis of one club per township except for two clubs that included two townships. In 1950 the count was virtually the same, with 525 in 19 clubs (membership list in the Murray County Museum).

By the 1930s the typical county fair (and the State fair) in Minnesota was mainly an affair orchestrated by and for the 4-H, the Future Farmers and Homemakers of American, (FFA and FHA), these last groups being sponsored by the public schools and the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. 4-H got its own building at the State fairground in 1939, "a monolithic concrete structure on the high point of the fair grounds. . ." (Erickson, 121).

According to Erickson, county fairs in Minnesota were on the wane when he became State Youth Club Leader in 1912. It occurred to him that youth clubs might be a means to rejuvenate county fairs, so he contacted fair officials in all the counties with annual fairs suggesting that youth club competitions be given local support, with some of the State funds that were available for local fair costs. He also urged the State Fair Board to provide exhibition space and prize money for youth club projects (Erickson, 115).

Pretty soon every fair in Minnesota had a boys' and girls' club department, which quickly blossomed with demonstrations, judging contests, parades, and camps of boys and girls attending the fairs. . . County fair 4-H winners received free trips to the State Fair, where they ate and slept in special 4-H camps and dormitories. Soon the marks of 4-H participation became the most noticeable part of any fair. (Erickson, 116)

In Slayton it had been customary to house club members on the fairgrounds or nearby during the fair each year, since the "live" exhibits needed care, and transportation between home and the fair was often problematic. The boys were housed in tents and the girls in a large "cook shack" belonging to the County, and later in school facilities next to the fairgrounds. One year heavy rains flooded the boys' camp, causing great inconvenience, and this was among the factors that led to building the current 4-H Club building (Crowley). Another was the strong growth in 4-H membership and activities outlined above.

The Murray County 4-H Club Building

The need for this facility was apparent by 1927 when planning and fundraising first got underway. By 1935 over \$1,000 had been raised by staging a pageant depicting the 1862 Indian attack at Lake Shetek, a series of "Back to the Farm" plays, running concession stands at the fair, and sponsorship, with the Farm Bureau, of the State Corn Husking Contest in 1931 (*Murray County Herald*, 8/27/36. Annual Report of the Murray County Agricultural Agent, 1935).

With an appropriation of \$600 from the Board of County Commissioners, enough money was at hand to pay for the materials needed to put up the facility, and in 1935 the County was awarded funds to hire ten relief clients to do the work through the Federal State Emergency Relief Administration (SERA). This agency was soon merged into the Works Progress Administration (WPA), and this part of the story will be taken up below.

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Details on how the rather unique plan for the 4-H Club building was arrived at and who was involved in the design are limited. One report names Mr. A. T. Drackley of Shetek as having "conceived" the "unique and practical" plan with the assistance of William Phalen (*Murray County Herald*, 8/27/36). The regional WPA engineer, John Artgetsinger, played a role as well in providing a cost estimated for the project application (*ibid.*, 10/31/35). The functional requirements were to provide an arena with seats for 350 people on the first floor of the octagon with "dormitory quarters for 150-200 boys upstairs. The wing to the south would "provide pens and stalls for lambs, pigs, colts, dairy and beef calves which will be placed on exhibition" (*ibid.*, 8/27/36). Moreover, the layout (ground plan) was designed to provide for the addition of more wings as necessary over time and

Appropriately enough, the building (will have) a conspicuous location on the fair grounds. (*ibid.*)

Local documentation of the 1936 fair is the best source for what this building meant to the local 4-H organization and the larger community. It also illuminates important facets of 4-H philosophy and objectives. 1936 marked the Silver Anniversary of the Murray County Agricultural Society, the organization that had revived the annual county fair tradition in 1912, but the major event was the 4-H Club building dedication ceremony. This followed music performed by the 4-H Club band and short speeches by representatives of all the organizations involved in the youth club movement and the realization of the new facility. Among them was the County's first Extension Agent, Frank Brown, who had become State Extension Field Agent. This was followed by a candle-lighting ceremony in which T. A. Erickson, State Club Youth Leader, played the central role as commentator.

While the band played a march, 520 club members, each bearing a candle, marched in and formed a four-leaf clover in the center of which was a small bonfire. This represented a council fire, "torch of knowledge" or source of information. A leader in each of the leaves approached the central fire, lit a candle, and passed the light on to the members in his/her leaf. The 4-H pledge summarizes the meaning of each H:

My head to clearer thinking
My heart to greater loyalty
My hands to larger service
My health to better living for my home, my club, my community, and my country.
(*Murray County Herald*, 9/10/36. Erickson, 89)

A 4-H camp was held as usual, but this year the boys were housed upstairs in the octagon and the girls stayed in the nearby school gymnasium. Walter Bruns, born in 1923, remembers that most of the boys were between 12 and 16 years old and that they slept on bags of straw. He and his two brothers had three hogs at the fair, housed in the club building's south wing (Bruns). Even with the new 4-H building on line, more livestock was brought in to the fair that year than ever before, and some had to be put up in make-shift quarters outside the barn. Also, the total number of exhibits set a record (*Murray County Herald*, 9/10/36). Another informant, Vince Crowley, also remembers the fair that year, but he didn't stay in the octagon because the family had a Model T Ford and commuted. Crowley's project was a Percheron weanling stud colt (Crowley). The Colt Club was fairly new in the county, with 17 entered that year. Crowley also relates that breeding, breaking and selling horses was a major source of cash that "kept us farming" during the Depression.

While livestock project entries were shown and judged in the 4-H Club building, there were several other 4-H exhibits and demonstrations; namely home beautification, bread making, canning, conservation and thrift. There

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were 135 entries in the clothing project, and the various exhibits were located in other buildings on the grounds, including the Horticulture building, the only exhibition facility still extant from the period before 1936.

4-H Club activities for the year were celebrated again in November. The Slayton Civic and Commerce Association had purchased Murray County's reserve grand champion beef at the (State?) Junior Livestock Show, and it was barbecued at a feast enjoyed by over 800 Murraylanders (Annual Report of the County Extension Agent, 1936).

The WPA in Slayton

As noted above, a 4-H Club building had been in the works and money was being raised for several years by 1935 when an opportunity for funding became available through the Minnesota State Emergency Relief Administration (SERA). \$500 million had been appropriated to the Federal Relief Administration (FERA) for distribution to the states in 1933.*

The Works Progress Administration,** one of several agencies created to mitigate the effects of the Great Depression, was brought into being on May 6, 1935, and this agency took over the administration of ongoing projects of the SERA. In June 1935 a WPA Administrator was appointed for Minnesota.

The principal objective of the WPA was to alleviate unemployment by funding useful projects, mainly devoted to constructing buildings and public infrastructure but also via "service projects" that included such things as research and indexing public records, producing State histories and guidebooks, and funding art work, much of it to be placed in public buildings, many of which were also built as WPA or other New Deal agency projects. Among the criteria used for determining the eligibility of proposals were:

1. The projects should be useful.
2. They should be such that a considerable proportion of the money should be spent on wages for labor.
3. Funds allotted for each project should be actually and promptly spent and not held over until later years.
4. In all cases projects must be of a character to give preference to those on the relief rolls.

Projects could be sponsored by Federal or non-Federal government agencies including counties, cities, villages and townships, and as it turned out the vast majority were initiated by local governmental units. Projects could not, however, be sponsored by clubs, societies, churches or other private organizations, although such groups could unofficially work with sponsors in the origination of a project.

Since state and local governments were responsible for their relief programs, WPA employment relieved them to some extent of this burden. All the same, the primary incentive in applying for WPA funds was to improve local facilities and infrastructure.

Nationally the WPA paid out nearly \$8 billion during the eight years of its existence and about 8,500,000 persons were employed at one time or another during this period. In Minnesota \$750 million was spent, affecting 600,000

*The general contextual material outlined here is drawn from Rolf Anderson, "Federal Relief Construction in Minnesota, 1933-1941." Section E. Part V. The Works Progress Administration.

**Renamed the Works Projects Administration in 1939.

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people. 1,324 new public buildings were constructed, principally schools, city halls and community buildings. Athletic fields, parks and playgrounds were also either built or improved under the WPA. Typically the agency paid the labor costs and the sponsor paid for materials, equipment, tools and skilled labor and supervision.

The 4-H Club building conforms to these requirements. The County sponsored the project, contributing \$1,450, most of which having been raised by the 4-H clubs. The WPA paid out \$675 to hire 10 relief clients and a supervisor (National Archives and Records Administration. WPA Microfilmed Project Files, Minnesota, Box 597, Roll 542).

The 4-H Club building meets pertinent registration requirements listed in the Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Federal Relief Construction in Minnesota, 1933-1941" for social and recreational facilities in that it represents "a significant contribution to the community by providing a new and modern facility which offered programs, amenities, recreational activities, or community services which were previously unavailable. . ." (Section F, 27-28). It also meets the historic integrity standards for such projects.

Other WPA projects in Slayton include sidewalk construction, work on the courthouse, and a new grandstand on the fairgrounds (Steffen, *Murray County Herald*, 9/12/35). The grandstand was built in 1937 for a total cost of \$20,000, of which the County paid \$7,500 (*Murray County Herald*, 12/23/37). This remains in use but lacks historic integrity.

Summary of Significance

The 4-H Club building represents the importance and growth of the 4-H movement in Murray County. At the time of its construction, club membership reached a peak that held at least until 1950. Even though it was completed in 1936, the effort to bring it into being reached back almost a decade, to the mid-1920s, a period of maximum growth in 4-H activity and membership locally.

The history of 4-H cannot be separated from that of the Agricultural Extension Service or research and outreach efforts at the University of Minnesota, especially the farm campus in St. Paul and Agricultural Experiment Stations. They all shared the objectives of enhancing the quality of life in the countryside and finding ways to make farming more efficient, productive and profitable. It can be said that they succeeded all too well except for profitability, and farmers continue leaving the land, at present because of overproduction and low profitability. This is indeed ironic, but there is no irony regarding the well-documented positive contributions of 4-H club work to the many individuals involved, in personal growth, responsibility, leadership, and self-esteem.

The vital energy developed via 4-H club work in Murray County is documented in the building itself. Nearly half the money spent on its construction was raised by local 4-H club members, and the remarkable design of the building demonstrates a creative approach to solving the needs it was built to serve. As a result, the Round Barn was and remains a source of community pride, especially since it was realized during a period of serious economic depression.

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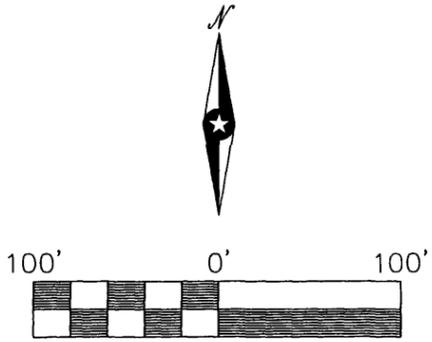
VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property is a rectangular parcel that includes part of Lot 4 and part of Lot 5 in the Northwest Quarter of the Southwest Quarter of Section 15, Township 106 North, Range 41 West in the City of Slayton described and located as follows: Commencing at the southwest corner of Lot 6 of the Southeast Quarter of the Southwest Quarter of Section 15, Township 106 North, Range 41 West; thence easterly along the south line of said Lot 43.80 feet; thence north 823.62 feet to the Point of Beginning; thence west 120.29 feet; thence south 124.77 feet; thence east 120.29 feet; thence north 124.77 feet to the Point of Beginning.

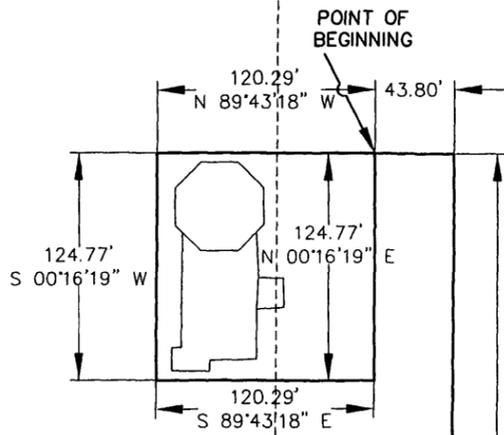
BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary includes all the land historically occupied by the nominated property.

Figure 2



LOT 4
OF THE NE 1/4 OF THE SW 1/4



LOT 5
OF THE NE 1/4 OF THE SW 1/4

LOT 7
OF THE SE 1/4 OF THE SW 1/4

SOUTHWEST
CORNER OF
LOT 6

N 89°43'18" W
98.00'

S 00°16'19" W
823.62'
45.00'

LOT 6
OF THE SE 1/4 OF THE SW 1/4