

**CONNECTICUT 20TH CENTURY AGRICULTURAL HISTORY PROJECT
ORAL HISTORIES**

Interviewer: Luane J. Lange, CANR, Extension

Name of Person Interviewed: Mr. Al Gray, Extension Educator, CANR, UCONN
(Retired), Interview #3

Date of Interview: March 24, 2000

Draft #: R-1 January 27, 2020

Transcriber: Charter Oak Scanning, Adam Smith, Machine

Contract Firm: Charter Oak Scanning

Interviewee Address:
Albert B. Gray
131 Route 87
Columbia CT 06237
860-228-3465

LL: ...doing a repeat visit with Al Gray about his life and his recollections of his work as a 4-H agent. So, why don't you just go ahead?

AG: Okay. This is Al Gray. In 1949, while I was studying in college, there was an opportunity to apply to be a part-time 4-H agent in Tolland County and still be a student at the University. Having an automobile and being encouraged to apply, I did so and was hired to take on the job. In Tolland County at the time, 4-H clubs were primarily agricultural and homemaking clubs. My responsibility was to assist and work with the agricultural clubs, and five of them were all members with an adult leader that composed the club. The main projects that these clubs had were their animal projects like dairy, poultry. These were the local clubs in a town. There was a county faun and sheep club and also a county Unintelligible club. In the early 50's, we were successful in organizing a horse project club in the town of Somers. This was probably the first horse club in Connecticut or at least one of the first as this was a new project for our young folks in Connecticut. Then we had also garden projects. The local clubs, the meetings were held either after school or evenings, and members off and leaders called. A standard requirement of the clubs with five or more members, we were expected to have a set of officers which included a president, a vice-president, a secretary, a treasurer if moneys were collected or handled, and a news reporter. At that particular time, the daily newspapers were from out of the county in larger communities. However, the papers did have a local reporter who was interested in writing up the activities of these organizations. There was a minimum number of meetings that the clubs would be held each year. However, at the present time, I don't recall what it was. The club was expected to plan a program of educational meetings, of education for each meeting, which might be taught by the leader or by members with assigned topics. It may also include demonstrations either by the leader or demonstrations by the members themselves. Demonstrations was one of the phases for each program that we encouraged the members to do to learn information or skill and to be able to present that information to our other club members, or at a 4-H event. The 4-H members at that time, their age was 10 to 21 years, but that soon changed to nine to 18 years. The members were expected to select a project and to join a club. However,

we did welcome individuals as members if there was no club for them to join in the area. Each year, the members were expected to complete an enrollment card and the member was given a project record book which was how they could record accomplishments, the expenses and receipts of their project. We also provided them with a project manual that gave information about the projects, handling projects that would be care of, feeding, management. It could be something like a dairy or a beef animal or a sheep, how to prepare it for show at fairs. The 4-H agent position required a college degree in agriculture or in economics. Some facts about Tolland County at the time, it was this small county, the smallest in the state, 13 towns, and the population in 1949 was approximately 26,000 persons. It had one small city, Rockville, with a population between 5,000 to 8,000. The county had two high schools, one in Rockville and one in Stafford Springs, and a junior high in Somers. The Rockville high school had a vocational agriculture program and the young folks from Vernon, Tolland, Ellington, Somers, Stafford, or Union could attend that program. The town of Union, the high school in Union also had a variety of programs and the students from the seven towns could attend that program if they wanted to participate and have opportunities. The Rockville high school accepted students from the town of Vernon, Tolland, Ellington, and the Somers juniors and seniors. In the southern part of the county, the students from Wellington, Mansfield, Columbia, Andover, Hebron, and the southern half of Coventry attended the high school in Union which was in Unintelligible. The students from the town of Bolton and the northern half of Coventry attended high school in Manchester, Connecticut, which was in a different county. Unintelligible was also in a different county. Stafford Springs had its own high school and accepted students from Stafford and Union. High schools later were built as the population within the county increased in the towns of Somers, Wellington, Coventry, Bolton, Mansfield, Hebron, and a new one in Vernon replaced the Rockville high school. The 4-H agents, some of the responsibilities when I started working at the county was to promote the 4-H program, and the 4-H programmers carried out pretty much within county borders to locate adults to serve as 4-H leaders, to orient and give guidance to these adults, to attend 4-H meetings about once a year, and when feasible, to visit 4-H members to see their projects. This was mainly the animal projects, beef, dairy, and then poultry, and during the summer months, the garden projects. However, as time went on and being a small county with a small budget with financial restrictions on the travel account, visits to members were not often fitted into the program. The agent also gave leadership guidance to 4-H town and county 4-H advisory committees, which included helping plan and supervise the county or town 4-H events. Some of the major programs were the fall achievement program, giving guidance to the 4-H teams who were planning and managing the county 4-H fair, planning and conducting county project programs such as egg judging at schools, instrument judging program, dairy judging tours, sheep shearing school. These were carried out with the assistance of the livestock specialist and the poultry Unintelligible specialist. Also, the agents worked with town 4-H committees that organized 4-H clubs, planning and conducting the local events which would include spring rallies, town 4-H fairs, town 4-H achievement programs. Two agents in the county cooperated in planning and conducting county events. We consulted with the chairman of the county 4-H committee chairman before each meeting that was held monthly. With the chairman, we planned and talked over the agendas. The agents planned the county 4-H achievement program, and at the time selected and presented the county pins for outstanding projects appropriately to the deserving 4-H members. We held and conducted leader training programs, also educational programs for members as they fitted in the programs such as officer training sessions. Agents wrote articles for the county 4-H newsletter and we participated in statewide conferences and training moves. In 1952, we started a 4-H camp program. Right after that autumn, boys and girls attended the state 4-H short course at the University of Connecticut, and the few who wanted to go to 4-H fair on the available places who might not be able to obtain Unintelligible counties. The first camp program we had was for three weeks and we rented the facility at the New London 4-H camp in Franklin. In 1955, the camp program was moved to the Union County camp site in Unintelligible where the facilities were much improved. Let's move on.

LL: Okay, yes. Do you think as you went through those years - how many years were you altogether?

AG: About three years.

LL: Okay. So, what were some of the biggest changes you saw in the direction of the program?

AG: One of the changes that did come about in later years was the trend was away from the localized trust to - Unintelligible in the state was to go into the schools where they had a program. However, in this county, the advisory committee folks didn't warm up to that Laughter idea and it wasn't one of the areas that I encouraged. However, the poultry specialist at the time did have an incubation program that was planned to be used in schools and they were successful in a couple of schools using that program. So, that was carried out pretty much by the teachers.

LL: During regular school time or as an afterschool activity?

AG: That was during school time. This was one of the bold moves Laughter as I saw it. It didn't provide some of what I thought of or think of as in-depth classes of the 4-H program such as learning the democratic procedures of being an officer, and individual demonstrations, and these sort of things. One of the school projects that we had and was successful in some towns was the "talking bike." Through the specialists at the ag engineering program at UConn, each county was encouraged to acquire a bicycle and the ag engineering department fitted it up with a mic and a speaker so that the bicycle could be put on stage, and somebody offstage talking through a mic, and the voice came from the bicycle, and the principles of riding a bike safely were at least made known through the audience. This program was carried out in several towns. I must say that early on in the 4-H program, the 4-H work was done in the school. When I started to work in the county, in one town, there was a tour in school. One of the teachers had her class participate in a health project, and she had been doing this for quite a number of years. That continued in that school through all the years. The school was closed and the students were transferred to a consolidated regional school. So we did have school programs when I worked in the county.

LL: Were there any other changes in direction as to how the parents participated whenever kids came home?

AG: In the early 60s or in the mid-60s I should put it that way, when the minorities - what is the proper word for that - we were encouraged to...

LL: Diversify?

AG: To bring minorities into the program. However, Tolland County was very -

LL: Affirmative action. Laughter

AG: Affirmative action, that's the word I was trying to - thank you. When affirmative action came about, we were told that we had to have some in our program. However, the only minorities that we were aware of were a few in Rockville and they weren't many. We didn't know how to reach them Laughter to bring them into the program. There were minorities at the Mansfield training school which was still Unintelligible at the time and we were encouraged to try to bring this 4-H work there, which we did. We talked with some people in the organization but after several talks, it was found that it just didn't seem to fit in during that particular framework or setup, so no further efforts were made for that one.

LL: So if you had the clubs at home, were there many individual members back then?

AG: In the areas we did have them but it really wasn't too encouraged. We didn't discourage them but we didn't overly encourage them because we felt that the benefits of participating in the group

atmosphere far outweighed what a person might do individually. The individual program would depend upon parental advice and support, which we couldn't always help out. If the parents were 4-H alumni, then they knew what to expect and they were more apt to incorporate and see that their members or their boys and girls did read the 4-H requirements and participate in the various activities locally, or countywide, or even statewide.

LL: Were there any changes in getting 4-H leaders and then how were they trained?

AG: I mentioned the town committee. What I think worked in the county, there were a couple of the town committees. Town committees consisted of adults in a town who were interested in the 4-H program. In one town, it was insisted that the adults should not be a volunteer 4-H leader. The feeling was that the leader was already contributing a good part of their time to the 4-H program in that the committee work which was to help find other leaders, find boys and girls to join the club, and to help get that club going, and the committees planned the town activities that were for them. The training of leaders, the two agents together would work out a program and encourage the leaders to come to it, or it might be if it was a project area, then they get to work with the particular specialist, whether it was livestock or poultry or vegetable, and set up a program which the specialist could be available to help with the leadership training.

LL: Was there much done at the time with the judging committees and going out to the Unintelligible specifically dealing with livestock and so on?

AG: We had what I considered a good dairy program with several clubs in the county in different towns. One of the activities was a dairy judging program. We would have a training session on identifying dairy breeds and an opportunity for the specialist to - this training session was held at a dairy farm and we'd set up a class of four individuals, and the livestock specialist would go over the principles of what to look for in selecting and judging the animals so that the members were exposed to what was expected of them. During the summer months, we had a dairy tour which for many years was to visit four farms in neighboring counties. These were arranged with the cooperation of someone from that county. We strove to go to cubic farms, and at each farm we would judge one or two classes and the scores were kept. From the results, we selected a county dairy judging team which later participated in a state dairy judging contest at the University of Connecticut. The highest scoring members there, regardless of which county they came from, were selected as the state dairy judging team and judged in the regional dairy judging contest at the Houston State Exposition competing with judging teams from the other neighboring states. As I was a member of the UConn livestock judging team when I was a student, I knew that experience wasn't too popular and being impartial, you would become a good judge. So, in Tolland County, we set it up to where to select that county team, it is the highest score of participation in two judging contests. This served as an incentive if they did a good job in the first year, they went to go and participate a second year. We did have success and some of the members were on the state judging team as a result of this.

LL: Did they go on and compete nationally? Was there a national competition at the time?

AG: I don't recall that there was at that time, plus these national events depended upon the moneys available and there was a limited amount of moneys for these national or regional programs.

LL: Did they go to a Chicago congress on some of the projects and the judging or did they have to go on their annual projects?

AG: The ones who went to a national 4-H-held congress was based on individual project work and many went as individuals, not as a team.

LL: Would you talk a little bit about the scope of the animal projects? For example, where did they get the animals from?

AG: Okay. I'm glad you brought that up because Laughter I thought of this after I made my notes. Laughter and I think it really should be brought out. In the dairy program, it was after World War II, the WTIC Radio which at the time was owned by Travelers Insurance Company, they had a farm reporter, Frank Atwood. Frank had previously worked for the University of Connecticut as the agricultural editor and the gentleman who planned and headed their agri society program. The University of Connecticut had this society program on WTIC for quite a number of years. WTIC hired Frank to be a farm reporter early in the morning, getting into the station, I don't know, 4:30 or 5:00, and had an hour and a half or two-hour program which was listened to by farmers Laughter throughout the listening audience up until 7:00. Well, after World War II, the manager of the radio station and Frank Atwood and the state 4-H leader, which was AJ Greenwich, discuss how the station could assist 4-H work. So, they set up a program with the WTIC calf program or heifer program where they offered loans to qualified boys and girls to receive a calf or a heifer of a purebred background that they would raise and eventually pay back the money at no interest. This continued as long as Frank Atwood was employed at the station or as long as WTIC owned the station. This was a real benefit for many boys and girls throughout the state and it did expand into the live program eventually. The program was set up with the five dairy breeding associations, the Holstein, the Jerseys, the Ayrshires, the Guernseys, and the Brown Swiss. Maybe I said four.

LL: It's five, yes.

AG: Each one needed a representative and when one of them was selected to receive a calf, they could choose which group they want. It was up to the breed representative to contact the farms in the state to find out if they had a calf or a heifer that met the qualifications. It had to be from a group with good milk production and it had to be a minimum age. I can't remember exactly but it probably was over four months of age. It was beyond the period of time where there was any danger that the calf had diseases. One way that they could get these animals was that in the youth program, a dairy calf sale was held at the University of Connecticut and it was held in the Hicks Arena after it was completed. The animals would be brought in and the young folks that were approved for a loan could look over the animals and select the ones that they were interested in. When it came up for auction, they could bid on it knowing that they were backed up for \$200.00 or \$250.00, and anything beyond what the loans agreed to would come out of their own pocket or from their dad's pocket or however. Many boys and girls in both 4-H and other things did get good animals to raise. The initial idea was that these would be farm boys and girls and the animal, this good animal, could go into the regular dairy herd. However, some of the participants didn't have a dairy herd to put it in. Laughter Unintelligible a mature animal. They did sell them to someone else that usually had room to buy it.

LL: This was another event, wasn't it, at the end of the year when they had this auction? Didn't they judge them at the end? How did they finish their project and then show that they had been successful? They kept records to show their progress?

AG: Well, they kept their own records, yes.

LL: Then, was there a final time when they all brought them together to decide?

AG: No, they were all kept individually. However, these animals, the members were looking for a good show animal as well as a good producing animal, production animal, and they did a good job of preparing it to show it at the [Unintelligible]. Some did get the data but that was by being selected to

represent Connecticut at the Eastern States Fair in the 4-H dairy program. Connecticut had an allotment of the number of animals that they could send each year. The dairy livestock specialists would go through the pairs and choose the animals by different ages and they tried to represent all breeds if possible but Holstein would supply the Audio Gap institution, so they had to deliver an outstanding animal to be selected with the Holstein animal to go to the Eastern States dairy program. Some of the members were aware of this and they wanted that experience of going to Eastern State, so they would select one of the minor breeds such as an Ayrshire or Brown Swiss. We had several locals in this county who did that. They went to Eastern States two or three times with that animal and each time was a great experience for them.

LL: Now, during the animal project, they managed to track that, keep records, and they had to show it?

AG: Show it, and do the feeding of it and the whole care of it. Dealing with Unintelligible, or cleaning and trimming the hoofs and washing and grooming it, shining it. If they had horns, because some did back in those days, cleaning up the horns, polishing it and so forth, according to the breed requirements for that animal.

LL: Knowing that 4-H was doing this as a way to get adults to use the new techniques, did this follow through with the animal projects too? Did any of this rub off on to the homes where these kids lived?

AG: I couldn't say that it did. It might have but I can't say for sure because the county agent in this county was a dairy specializing person and there was a good dairy program in this county. So, the successful farmers were those that participated in the extension part. The DHIA, the Dairy Herd Improvement Association was also very active. I think there were three milk clusters in the county. So, a good number of these dairy farms were participating in that program which did lead to improved dairy production.

LL: Did any of these kids that didn't go for a loan to get their livestock, they could have gotten a calf in their herd, right?

AG: Right, they could have gotten one from their own herd. In Tolland County, in our county 4-H fair, we did not discriminate against a grade animal.

LL: A grade animal is what?

AG: Grade, G-R-A-D-E. That's a nonregistered crossbreed. In some of the counties, they were going for the registered purebred and then registered in the member's name. However, we did not require that. Some of the members with good grade animals at the county fair, they placed above those with the registered certification which was hard to swallow by some folks. We were looking at it from the standpoint of the way they're growing themselves and not because of maybe the more financial worth of the parents to get them the registered animal. However, to go to Eastern States, it had to be a registered animal in the members name. That was the qualification at the time. However, after I retired 27 years ago now, because of the decreasing numbers of young people on farms, a program was set up where an interested one adult could, say, rent an animal in agreement with a farm in the neighborhood. There were conditions to where they would have to spend so much time at the farm and caring for that animal and training it to participate in 4-H events in the county, state, or regional. Some of these, the program has changed so that some of these unregistered animals were permitted to be selected to go to Eastern States, as I understand it.

LL: Would the same kind of processes be for sheep and poultries then?

AG: This county had a strong sheep program; probably the strongest in the state is where I think we were then. The leader on it was Don Hall and he was instrumental in helping me just as anyone who was invested in owning a land. I remember by the way, you didn't have to have a large area for the lamb. You could get a lamb in the spring and the farmers who had shelter for it could coop it up at night so it would be safe. You could raise it in your backyard. Lambs were not that expensive to get in the spring. However, it was better to purchase them after Easter than before Easter because of the - I can't think of the name of the term. Anyway, the Greek religious folks were after the early lambs for their special Easter programming so the lambs were at a higher Laughter price up until Easter than after Easter. These were readily available at a more reasonable price for the member and then they would grow it. Because they purchased their feed for it, they had to be careful about paying too much for a ram to begin with. In the fall, there was a state 4-H lamb on sale which was held at three locations. It usually is in the central part of the state and the members would bring their lambs in. They would be weighed and tagged and divided by weight classes, which as I recall were three classes. Then they were judged by a commercial judge or a personal judge, given the group award or a blue or a red or a white award. Then the animals were sold at auction and the buyers throughout the state, some of them representing packing facilities, or stores, or individuals. Of course, the national stores were a good buyer at these sales and there was a competition between some of the buyers to buy the champion lamb. Then after the sale, they were put in the pens and brought to the buyer. They had usually a greater interest with a slaughter facility for them to be slaughtered in the market and so forth. So, this was a good project for boys and girls because they could get the animal in the spring, have the care and use of it through the summer months, and then in the fall, the parents didn't have to be concerned about an animal on hand in the winter months. With the leader that we had here in this county, he saw through it that the members who participated in it advanced as appropriate for the project. Some of the members with experience - all the members wanted to start their own breeding plot, which they did. That presented different management kinds of procedures. One of them was to get the wool off the sheep in the spring. So, with the assistance of the livestock specialist, we held a sheep sheering school in the spring. There, what we would do is to find the individual who had some sheep to be shorn and set up this school at that place. This went on for a number of years and it was quite successful.

LL: Now, I've talked with Jenny Grant about the wool and what they did with the wool. So, I wonder why not to the Sheep Breeder's Association? You have a lot of spending.

AG: Yes, Jenny's husband, Don. Jenny did the program later because he was training in college and he was the shepherd at the University. So, he would have to worry about his members or the sheep sheering school because he couldn't do the training himself. He of course went out to trim the animal to fit it for show which is quite a technique in itself.

LL: What about the sheep? They have this thing with animals. What kind of transition when most of this Unintelligible the animal go off to become food? Did they have to include any of that in the scope of the animal project?

AG: Well, most of the members in the sheep program were not farmers.

LL: So, then how did they feel about their animal leaving, if you had kids?

AG: If it is the young girls, there were tears, a lot of them, the first sale we went to, but they soon got over it and they were back in the program the next year and with a strong desire that they were going to - if they had a red ribbon, that they were going to get a blue ribbon the next year. They had learned some

selection techniques so that they were more selective in who they bought their lamb from because some of the breeders, they had produced better animals than others. So, it is a learning experience for them.

LL: How did they start to buy their sheep? You mentioned that the cows and the cattle, they had to be registered. Did the sheep have to be registered?

AG: No, they didn't have to be registered.

LL: They could buy them at any place they wanted to?

AG: They could buy them at any place they wanted to and chances are they were basically grades.

LL: People who could refer them or so?

AG: Right, or if the breeder knew this particular person who was probably outside of the 4-H program who had some sheep and some lambs and the 4-H members who were in market could take their lambs off of their kids, the ones that didn't want to keep it themselves.

LL: Was there much crossover of people actually doing anything with the wool like learning to weave and learning to do any of that handicrafts?

AG: Not to my knowledge. The ones who had sheep and wool, they could bring it to the Connecticut Sheep Breeders Association and the wool pool, and be credited for it, but I don't believe it was really financially rewarding. I don't know how that happened.

LL: They did it - they still did it last year, so maybe they take it in instead of - yes.

AG: I don't know. Anyway, the sheep, we had the one sheep project and then we had - one of the towns, one had his own sheep program, sheep club, which from the office standpoint, we agreed to. However, this leader who had the county program was quite upset. Anyway, there was some resentment. I'm not sure Laughter if I should say feeling, and they did have washy parts through at one time in the county. That was one of the strong projects that we had. We also got involved with a pig project in this county through the cooperation of the Connecticut Swine Breeders Association and a pig farmer who had bulk shares who was willing to sell the - I forget my terminology here. Laughter

LL: Piglets. Laughter

AG: They had to be of a certain age, Laughter to the 4-H members. So, we would sign up members. These were individual projects. We had as many I think as 12 or 15 in that one year in the county. The program really did go on but the idea was that the project would coincide with the sheep project and that the litter of pigs would be sold at the one sale in the fall along with the lambs. That didn't really go too well. Laughter

LL: It's almost a reverse. I'm thinking when pork comes on the market, it comes in the spring, doesn't it? A lot of that, anyway.

AG: A pig is ready for market at about five months.

LL: So it could go either way Crosstalk?

AG: Laughter As I remember it, if it's anything above 180 pounds even up to over 200, then they're pretty too fat. Laughter

LL: Are there any particular events with the 4-H youth that stick out in your mind, experiences with a particular project that stick out in your mind?

AG: Well, the horse project was one. I'm not a horse person Laughter per se but the horse program caught on. We had a number of horse clubs throughout the county. The first one we organized in Somers had I believe a number of members and several leaders, and the leaders were interested in their members becoming a drill team. So they set about and did form a drill team but they had all kinds of problems because they had to have a place to practice and the horses had to get used to each other. There was a big difference in shall we say the quality of the horse. The members without the financial means just had one that was available at the moneys they could pay but then somebody with more financial means had one with good breeding and more potential. They did have this successful and did have a drill team and they had their procedures that they would go through. They put together the semblance of a uniform and they were able to get the transportation of the horses to events, and they would put the drill on in several different places. In fact, when Unintelligible opened a stop-and-shop on his own which was in a store Laughter platform just like a slope in a hill, anyway, this Somers club was asked to come down and put on a drill which they did. So, these were a different kind of experience for those particular young farmers. They learned how to manage and train their animal particularly in the single events, the double events, whatever the routine was that the drill composed of. So, that was one activity. That club and others that were formed, they wanted to have their own horse shows with the amenities. Basically the horse club members were about 90% girls and a few boys. They had started with a Western style but that didn't last very long. They wanted to get a better animal to go into an English manner. The goal was to become a hunt rider which went jumping over jumps and other kinds of things. Anyway, the club that we had in the town of Vernon, after the agricultural center partly was purchased and they had facilities there, they used the space in the backlot for their horse ring. So, this club with permission of the ag center folks were able to set up a horse ring. It was used for horse shows at the county fair and also sponsored by the club and members from throughout the county or other counties could come in and participate in these classes which included both English and Western. With the interest in hunt classes, they set up a hunt course which was set up outside the ring. That was successful a number of years. Then when a space was available, they decided they needed a second ring, so a ring was built allowing for Western classes and English classes to go on at the same time.

LL: About when? I don't know if you said it. What year did this horse club start possibly?

AG: The horse club was in the early 50's and it was new for the state of Connecticut. I find it correct but the club was started and Somers was the first one in the state, even though other counties soon had come up that it became a strong program in Connecticut. The livestock specialist was also interested in horses which happened to be Dan Hill, by the way.

LL: Really?

AG: He did the beef, the sheep, swine, and horses, the whole caboodle. He set up meetings of the horse club leaders throughout the state and I saw to it that the information was made available to this county and encouraged members to go. They did go to these meetings, so this crossed the special information between counties on the horse program.

LL: Without going into names, are there particular leaders or kids -

AG: I could go into that regarding the horse program.

LL: Okay, go ahead.

AG: When the Unintelligible retired, the leaders in Connecticut added a horse specialist out of the university college ag staff who was interested in horse pageantry and who participated in horse pageantry regional programs. So, folks in this county who are interested saw many versions. So, with the advice and counsel of the 4-H leaders, each year in May, late May, we would have a horse judging school at a place in the county where we could get a class of four horses or two horses and bring in two. We had a person judge the classes and give their ratings which Unintelligible and so forth but that is they're given a chance to also reject or select Unintelligible. So, this was done a number of years and we had a horse training. There was a horse judging contest I think at the University of Connecticut. I can't recall how we selected the county team but there was a regional horse judging event at Eastern States as well and the state team was selected. Tolland County had members there that were successful in being a member of the state team and the regional team. I knew I called upon him many years to also assist in training younger members, so that was a very good experience for them.

LL: Okay, let's get back. Do you remember any of your leaders that stood out in your mind as the...?

AG: Yes, I could give you a good example. Laughter Have you heard of Foster Richards?

LL: Yes.

AG: Okay. Foster Richards was a dairy farmer in Mansfield with four daughters. The older daughter wasn't interested in animals but the three younger daughters were all interested in animals and had dairy projects. They were members of a combination dairy and poultry club in the town of Mansfield and their leader at that time I started with the county was an ag economist at the University of Connecticut staff. Within the first year, he left the University and went to North Carolina, so the club needed a new leader. I met with him before the original leader left and the members had Unintelligible chosen two parents to become leaders, one to handle the dairy and one to handle the poultry.

LL: The parents didn't know this yet?

AG: Yes, they knew it but they had reservations. They wanted to keep the club going and both of them said, "We don't know if we could do it." So, I encouraged them, "Yes, you can do it. You have to." So, this was one of the things that I endeavored to do, and the club was successful. In fact, Gene Whaples was a member of that club, so he was the result of that.

LL: Of the poultry or the dairy? Laughter

AG: The poultry.

LL: The poultry, okay.

AG: So you know the results if one of the poultry members eventually became the associate director of the University of Connecticut, so that gives you an idea of that. Anyway, the dairy leader, as I said -

LL: This was Foster Richards?

AG: Foster Richards the farmer. He had come from the state of Massachusetts and he had one or two years in an agricultural school at the College of Massachusetts, so he was a good Unintelligible. Anyway,

he found the dairy product and followed the guidelines that we suggested. Questions were raised and we answered them for him. In the town of Mansfield, within a year or so, a town committee was formed that were these adults who would help plan town activities, find members, find leaders. This would include leaders as well as other folks and the parents. The committee selected Foster to be its chairman. So this was a new role that we gave him guidance to as to how to chair a meeting, prepare an agenda, carry it out, and he was successful in doing so. We had a county 4-H committee in the county and its basic members came from the Farm Bureau Organization that sponsored extension. The Farm Bureau had three electors of their membership in each town. One was basically the agriculture, one for homemaking through 4-H. Foster Richards, as we fondly remember, was designated 4-H representing the 4-H advisory committee, so he would come to the meetings. Within a couple of years, he was asked to be chairman, which he accepted and he did a good job. So, the Unintelligible and I worked with him, and advised him, and counseled him with this role. Not long after that, his political party asked him to run for school board, which he did and he was elected to the school board. Within a year or two, he was on subcommittees. When the town of Mansfield was planning where to locate another member school where they could build an expansion on the member school in this rural area or in a rural community, they selected a committee to analyze and come up with a plan, Foster was the chairman of that committee. When the committee gave its report and gave this this to the town, the president of the University of Connecticut was in the audience as well as a lot of other professors across the Unintelligible. Then he told me afterwards, he says, "The president was in the audience and all these professors. Should I take the report back?" I said, "There weren't any questions. They accepted it." So we felt relieved and satisfied with ourselves. Best of all, not long after that - well, it was shortly after that that the legislature in Connecticut was changed and they Unintelligible that every town had a representative and some of the early towns had two representatives. Mansfield had two representatives. Anyway, one of them retired with the name of Smith, and Foster was at the same political party so Foster was asked if he wanted to run for representative in Smith's place and he said yes. So he was elected as the town representative and continued to serve for 14 years as the town representative, and he managed the dairy farm at the same time. One of the things about Foster is that three of his daughters had dairy tasks and when those cows went into production, Foster credited those girls on how some of their money comes in, the milk money that they used for their college education or Unintelligible. They didn't go into his account which hindered his expanding his operation and so forth. He was told by other farmers that he was foolish for doing that but he was interested in his daughters' future. Well, after he retired and he came back here several times, he told me that his successes in his opinion all came through these different programs in the 4-H program. So, to me, that's one of the good accomplishments is that we not only train boys and girls but we also gave leadership training and experience to adults who were willing to participate in our program.

LL: Wonderful. Thank you very much for everything. Is there anything else you wanted to add? I don't know. I can't say how much tape we have left.

AG: Well, I don't know. Laughter

LL: You've done enough. Thank you very, very much.

AG: Well, I did mean to say, I mentioned about the conditions in the county when I started because I had a bearing on the 4-H program. In comparison to the other counties in the state which were larger populations, we didn't have the numbers for the large programs anyway or the finances to do the kinds of things that were done in the other counties. The county budget back in those days was less than \$20,000.00 and it came from \$5,000.00 from the county government, whatever the county could contribute, and state and federal moneys. So, we were always tied up for moneys. The county budget, there were county commissioners, I think there were three or four, which would form the state legislators

in the state, and the county senator was the chairman of that committee. They were mainly the ones who set up the county budget, which included...

(End of Interview)