

Storying Outdoor Youth Education: A Historical Narrative of the Louisiana 4-H Camping Movement

Adam M. O'Malley¹ and Richie Roberts²

Abstract

Perhaps one of the most formalized ways that 4-H has fostered agricultural innovation and practical education has been through their outdoor youth education program, more commonly known as 4-H Camp. Although 4-H Camps were first created for local clubs, camping events soon expanded to the state and national levels. In fact, three years after establishing the first 4-H Camp, more than 1,700 had emerged across the U.S., with attendance surpassing 100,000 youth. Because of its positive outcomes, the 4-H Camping movement has become celebrated as a novel technique to motivate youth to engage in agrarian concepts. Despite this, little work has been done to document the historical origins and evolution of the camping movement. Therefore, a need emerged to describe the actors, forces, and events that led to the prevalence of 4-H Camping in Louisiana. Through our analysis of the data, four themes emerged: (1) early foundations, (2) facility infrastructure development, (3) impact and organizational changes, and (4) the evolution of programmatic delivery. When considered together, the themes knit together the story of the Louisiana 4-H Camp. A key implication from this investigation was the need for greater advocacy efforts among 4-H leaders and agents. For example, the Louisiana 4-H Camp had to navigate multiple barriers throughout history, such as a lack of funding and staff. However, through individual and collective advocacy efforts, the 4-H camp secured vital resources to support 4-H members' needs. Going forward, researchers should explore how fundraising and donors for 4-H camps could be better leveraged and sustained over time. This should include exploring strategies to inform legislators, policymakers, and citizens about the impacts that 4-H camps can have on youth and the state of Louisiana.

Keywords: 4-H; historical research; camping; residential camping

Introduction and Review of Literature

During the 1700s, nearly 85% of the U.S. employed population was engaged in the agricultural industry (Seevers & Graham, 2012). Therefore, issues such as land disposition, international trade, slave labor, and the demand for improved products were acute for the majority of U.S. citizens. The unique circumstances during this period led to the need for increased youth leadership and the development of greater agricultural literacy (Hillison & Bryant, 2001). In response to this need, agricultural societies emerged on the coattails of a growing scientific community and began to target agricultural-based issues and problems (Stimson & Lathrop, 1942). For example, in 1785, Benjamin Franklin founded the first U.S. agricultural society in Philadelphia to promote agrarian knowledge and address the concerns of rural populations (Ellsworth, 1968). The same year, the South Carolina Agricultural Society in Charleston became the first to establish an experimental farm that explored practical solutions to common crop pests and diseases (Stimson & Lathrop, 1942).

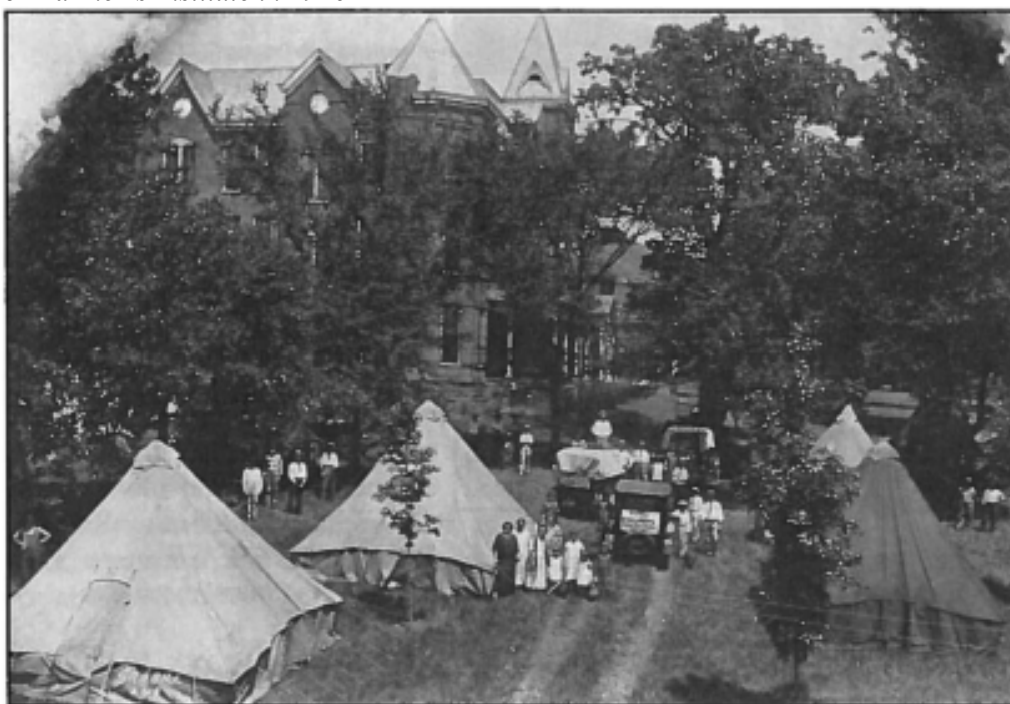
¹Adam M. O'Malley is the State 4-H Program Coordinator for the Grant Walker 4-H Educational Center at Louisiana State University AgCenter, 3000 Highway 8, Pollock, LA, 71467; aomalley@agcenter.lsu.edu

² Richie Roberts is an Associate Professor of Agricultural Education in the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education and Evaluation at Louisiana State University, 131 J.C. Miller Hall, 110 LSU Union Square, Baton Rouge, LA 70803, roberts3@lsu.edu

By 1861, more than 900 distinct agricultural societies existed in the U.S. (Carrier, 1937). Many agricultural societies invested in publishing and promoting scientific knowledge to the public through publications, newspapers, and formal presentations (Croom, 2008). These early agricultural professionals assembled at centrally located farmer institutes to share knowledge and innovations, often through informal outdoor education (see Figure 1). The conferences allowed low-income farmers to socialize and exchange ideas by offering a low-cost alternative to formal education in the agricultural sciences (Seevers & Graham, 2012).

Figure 1

An Outdoor Farmer's Institute in 1916



Note.

Reprinted from *Education Through Cooperative Extension*, by B. Seevers & D. Graham, 2012, p. 27, Copyright by University of Arkansas Press.

After the reconstruction era, the foundations of the Cooperative Extension Service (CES) began to take root (Gordon & Schulz, 2020). Although agricultural societies had established a network to promote agriculture, change was slow among farmers who often saw little value in evolving their knowledge and practices that had been inherited over generations. This issue, coupled with problems feeding a growing population, resulted in a need to develop a network of colleges for the practical instruction of agriculture (Ramussen, 1989). In 1855, Michigan became the first to establish a state college of agriculture, following years of pressure from the Michigan Agricultural Society (Friedel, 2011). Many other states quickly followed suit, including Maryland and Pennsylvania. However, the CES experienced many struggles in its formative years, such as a lack of effective curriculum, qualified professionals, and adequate financial support (Warner & Christenson, 2019). In 1857, Vermont Representative Thomas Morrill presented the first version of a bill to Congress that would later lead to the creation of the land-grant university system (Friedel, 2011). Thereafter, many states sought to improve further their citizens' knowledge and skills about agricultural practices. As a result, the U.S. Congress passed the Smith-Lever Act (1914), which formalized

the CES and provided funding to diffuse knowledge about agriculture, home economics, and related subjects (Ramussen, 1989; Warner & Christenson, 2019).

Before the passage of the Smith-Lever Act (1914), many agricultural boys' and girls' clubs had been closely associated with the CES. In 1902, for example, A. B. Graham created a youth program in Clark County, Ohio, which is considered the official birth of the 4-H club movement in the United States (McCormick & McCormick, 1984). In their early formation, the clubs engaged members in experiential learning to test the soil pH for farmers in their local community (Graham, 1941). The youth also collected data from corn and flower test plots from seeds provided by Congressman Samuel Cox (Graham, 1941). This movement eventually became known as 4-H. Thereafter, the passage of the Smith-Lever Act "effectively nationalized 4-H" (National 4-H History Presentation Program, 2017, para. 6). The existing clubs were officially recognized as affiliate 4-H clubs by O.H. Benson, the Director of the Office of Farm Management at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (McCormick & McCormick, 1984, National 4-H Council, 2021). Benson had previously worked closely with Dr. Seaman Knapp in the southern U.S. in the early founding of the CES. Now the largest youth organization in the nation, with over 6.5 million active members, 4-H has grown tremendously since its early foundations in Clark County, Ohio (National 4-H Council, 2021; McCormick & McCormick, 1984).

Origins of Camping in 4-H

Perhaps one of the most formalized ways that 4-H has fostered agricultural innovation and practical education has been through their outdoor youth education program, more commonly known as 4-H Camp (McCormick & McCormick, 1984). The origins of 4-H camping have been traced to 1915, "when the first county camp for both boys and girls was conducted in Virginia" (Carter, 2006, p. 21). However, West Virginia created the first permanent campsite for youth in 1921. As such, camping has been central to the mission and operations of 4-H since its early beginnings. Each year, approximately 14 million youth and adults across the U.S. attend a summer camp program to explore new experiences, build confidence, and socialize with peers and supportive adults (American Camp Association, 2018). The majority of these youth attend overnight, residential summer camping programs, many away from home for the very first time.

Although 4-H Camps were first established for local clubs, camping events soon expanded to the state and national levels (Hoover et al., 2007). In fact, three years after the establishment of the first 4-H Camp, more than 1,700 had emerged across the U.S., with attendance surpassing 100,000 youth (Meadows, 1997). It is also critical to note that the National 4-H Conference, where youth 4-H officers from each state assembled at the nation's capital to discuss the organization's direction, first began as a camping program (National 4-H Conference History, 2012). Originally named the *National 4-H Club Camp*, youth officers camped in U.S. Army tents across the Washington Mall at the base of the Washington Monument at the inaugural camp in 1927 (Coreil & Tassin, 2008; National 4-H Conference History, 2012). At this event, 142 youth officers from 38 states attended, including five youth officers and two female sponsors from Louisiana (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Louisiana 4-H Youth officers posed in front of the Washington Memorial at the first National 4-H Club Camp in 1927.



Note. Photograph used with permission from the Louisiana 4-H Camp Archives.

The American Camp Association (ACA) (2018) reported that more than 10 million youth attend camp yearly. These camps usually occur in outdoor spaces during the summer months by trained professional staff (Henderson et al., 2007). Camping usually evokes images of fun, enjoyable outdoor excursions that offer individuals the opportunity to form relationships and engage in other experiential learning opportunities (Henderson et al., 2007). Nevertheless, camping can also provide a powerful context that can elicit transformative learning for youth in which they mature regarding their decision-making, problem-solving, and ability to demonstrate respect for others (Thurber et al., 2007). Consequently, it is critical to situate the outcomes that youth have been reported to experience from participating in camping.

Outcomes of Youth Camping

Although leaders historically designed camps to promote leadership and relationship-building skills among students, some evidence suggests that camps can also improve their content knowledge (Brown et al., 2013, 2014). For example, Brown et al. (2013) reported that the content knowledge of youth who attended a residential summer camp increased twofold when comparing their scores on a pre-test and post-test assessment. However, it should be noted that a six-month deferred post-test revealed that students' long-term knowledge retention was negligible. Despite this, other research has demonstrated that participating in a residential summer camp program can increase youth leadership competency, positive character development, independent living skills, and citizenship (Garst et al., 2011; Garton et al., 2007; Hedrick et al., 2009). Additional evidence has also suggested that youth who have served as counselors at 4-H camps can also develop an increased interest in leadership and citizenship, a sense of teamwork, and positive feelings associated with contributing to a larger purpose (Brandt & Arnold, 2006; Carter, 2006; Garst & Johnson, 2005).

Meanwhile, other empirical evidence has focused on the outcomes of camping more broadly. For example, the ACA (2018) conducted a five-year study investigating the impacts of a summer camp experience. The results indicated that the camp environment provided a critical context for youth to develop relationship skills and improve students' content knowledge (ACA, 2018). Meanwhile, Wahle et al. (2019) found statistically significant and positive relationships regarding youth's participation in camping and their growth in communication, career, and personal dimensions. Because of its positive outcomes, the 4-H Camping movement has become celebrated as a novel technique to motivate youth to engage in agrarian concepts (Carter, 2006). According to the National 4-H History Preservation Program (2017), camping has remained one of the most powerful educational opportunities youth have engaged in over the past 100 years. Despite this, little work has been done to document the historical origins and evolution of the camping movement. Therefore, a need emerged to describe the actors, forces, and events that led to the prevalence of 4-H Camping in Louisiana.

Purpose

This historical narrative sought to describe the origins and evolution of the 4-H camping movement in Louisiana since its establishment in 1922. Because this investigation coincided with the 100th anniversary of the first permanent 4-H campsite (Carter, 2006), we intended to narrate how the organization used recreation and outdoor education to foster positive youth development. Through this investigation, we also hoped to create discourse about strategies that 4-H could use to ensure the program remains accessible and available to the youth in the future. As a result, this investigation aligned with *Priority 4: Meaningful, Engaged Learning in All Environments* of the American Association for Agricultural Education's National Research Agenda (Edgar et al., 2016).

Methods

We used a historical narrative approach to achieve the study's purpose (Salevouris & Furay, 2015). Investigators analyze the actors, events, and occurrences that shape a phenomenon when engaging in historical research. Therefore, a central assumption is that the historical record can be reconstructed through the collection of primary and secondary sources (Salevouris & Furay, 2015). In this investigation, we used the following sources of data to story the 4-H camping movement: (a) artifacts, (b) documents, (c) interviews with four leaders of the Louisiana 4-H camping program, and (d) photographs. We used internal and external criticism to ensure the sources were quality before including them in our analysis (McDowell, 2002).

Interview participants were purposefully selected based on their in-depth knowledge of the history of camping in Louisiana. Semi-structured and open-ended interview sessions were conducted via Microsoft Teams, recorded, and transcribed for analysis. Further, we conducted follow-up sessions to ensure the participants' perspectives were accurately captured. For example, each individual interviewed had previously held a leadership position associated with the Louisiana 4-H Camping program. It should also be noted that the Louisiana State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved this study with the intent of using participants' real names to preserve the historical record accurately. Table 1 provides an overview of each participant and their corresponding professional characteristics.

Table 1*Professional Characteristics of the Interview Participants*

Pseudonym	Years Served	Professional Role	Connection to Camp
Mrs. Christine Bergeron	10 years	Camp Director	Current Louisiana 4-H Camp Director who has heavily advocated for the expansion of the Louisiana 4-H Camp and the diversification of its programming efforts.
Dr. Paul Coreil	20 years	Former Louisiana CES Director	Working with Mr. Landreneau and Drs. Tassin and Coreil was responsible for much of the growth and development at The Louisiana 4-H Camp from 2001-2013.
Mr. Dwight Landreneau	26 years	Former Louisiana CES Associate Vice-Chancellor	Former Louisiana CES Associate Vice Chancellor who, together with Dr. Burke, facilitated many changes to the Louisiana 4-H Camping Program.
Dr. Mark Tassin	37 years	Former Louisiana 4-H Department Head	A former Louisiana 4-H Department Head, Dr. Tassin, conducted the field research informing much of the significant changes to the Louisiana 4-H Camp in 2006-2007.

Reflexivity

The lead investigator was a doctoral student at Louisiana State University. He also serves as the program coordinator for the Louisiana 4-H Camp. In this role, he has overseen the curriculum development and educational delivery of programs for the residential 4-H camp during the summer months, in addition to facilitating field trips and specialty programs. He has also been responsible for hiring and evaluating camp instructors and staff. As a result, he was uniquely positioned to have access to historical artifacts and contacts that have shaped the programmatic delivery of the camping program over time. The second researcher was a faculty member at Louisiana State University and had experience as a historical researcher. Therefore, the second research was able to assist with data analysis. These experiences uniquely influenced how we approached the investigation, collected primary and secondary sources, and the procedures used to analyze the data.

Data Analysis

We used Corbin and Strauss' (2015) constant comparative method to analyze each data source. Using this approach, we analyzed the data through three distinct cycles of coding that resulted in the findings being "rooted in the original data themselves" (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 51). To begin this process, we organized the data chronologically and then engaged in open coding by which we coded the data line-by-line. Then, we used axial coding to scrutinize relationships among the open codes to reduce the data. This process resulted in the development of categories. In our final stage of analysis, we used selective coding to consider our categories in concert with the historical context (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). As a result of this process, four themes emerged that tell the story of the 4-H camping movement in Louisiana.

Rigor and Trustworthiness

To uphold quality in this investigation, we used Lincoln's and Guba's (1985) standards for rigor and trustworthiness: (1) confirmability, (2) dependability, (3) credibility, and (4) transferability. Confirmability, the first standard, requires researchers to be explicit about the influences that could have affected the study. Therefore, researchers should explain the methods in full, be open about biases, honest about their inferences, and connect their findings to existing literature. Therefore, we were descriptive about our research procedures, interview participants were chosen within the bounds of the study, biases were made known, and literature was linked to our findings. The second standard, dependability, refers to whether consistency was maintained throughout the research study. To achieve *dependability*, we performed an audit of our procedures to ensure our data collection and analysis were consistent and accurate. The third standard, credibility, represents whether the findings make sense within the context of the study. To achieve this, we triangulated our data sources and fully described our participant selection procedures. The final standard, transferability, speaks to whether the study's findings might be transferable to similar circumstances in different contexts. To achieve such, we were transparent about our procedures and the biases that influenced our interpretations.

Findings

Through our analysis of the data, four themes emerged: (1) early foundations, (2) facility infrastructure development, (3) impact and organizational changes, and (4) the evolution of programmatic delivery. When considered together, the themes knit together the story of the Louisiana 4-H Camp. It should be noted that approval was provided by Louisiana State University IRB to use participants' real names to preserve an accurate historical record.

Theme 1: Early Foundations

Louisiana Representative James B. Aswell convened an educational conference in 1904, during which the committee heavily discussed the concept of an improved agricultural education curriculum in the Louisiana public school system (Stimson & Lathrop, 1942). That same year, the state mandated that all Louisiana elementary schools provide agricultural education. Therefore, the Louisiana State Normal School, which would later become known as Louisiana State University, began offering an agriculture course designed specifically for high school teachers and principals. Accordingly, in 1905, Louisiana State University President Colonel T. D. Boyd announced that a two-year agriculture course would be offered (Stimson & Lathrop, 1942).

Then, Avoyelle's Parish Superintendent of Public Schools Victor Leander Roy established Louisiana's very first corn club in Moreauville in 1908 (Mitchell, 1959; Stimson & Lathrop, 1942). Over 250 boys attended the first meeting of the corn club (Benedict & Gautreaux, 2014). Only three years later, youth corn clubs could be found across the state, and other project clubs began to gain popularity prior to becoming affiliate 4-H Clubs.

By 1922, a wealthy landowner, Rufus Walker, donated his land in Pollock for use for the annual Louisiana 4-H Summer Camp (Cantrelle, 1986; Fiser & Coolman, 2004). Six years later, Walker then deeded this land for the use of 4-H Clubs in the area. Then, in 1936, the campgrounds were officially designated as *state lands* after the Louisiana State Government presented a formal petition to Louisiana State University – home to the CES system that oversaw the state 4-H program (Camp Grant Walker, 1941). This change was primarily strategic to make needed improvements to the 4-H Campgrounds to expand opportunities to youth throughout the state. For example, with government funding, construction of permanent structures began at the campgrounds, which had been prohibited previously. The Federal Works Progress Administration (WPA), created under President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, was primarily responsible for the construction of Camp Grant Walker (Works Progress Administration of Louisiana,

1941). Figure 2 depicts the capital improvements that occurred at the Louisiana 4-H Camp as a result of the WPA.

Figure 2

Improvements to Louisiana 4-H Camp the WPA after being Designated as State Lands



Note. Photographs used with permission from the Louisiana 4-H Camp Archives. ¹Leveed banks of Big Creek (Bottom-Left), ²Residential cabins (Top-Left), ³An open-air, stone amphitheater (Bottom-Right), ⁴A gravelled roadway (Top-Right).

Theme 2: Facility Infrastructure Development

Following the initial improvements by the WPA, little documented evidence existed of additional capital improvements until the 1970s, except for the construction of “a new cinderblock dining hall” (Dr. Mark Tassin). According to former Louisiana State University Associate Vice-Chancellor Mr. Dwight Landreneau, in the 1970s, a pool and several new, larger bunkhouses were added to the grounds to replace the original cabins. By 1981, Dr. Tassin reported they had “construct[ed] 11 new bunkhouses.” For several decades, Dr. Mark Tassin served as the Louisiana 4-H Department Head and oversaw camp operations. He reported that in 1986 construction had been completed for a new, larger multipurpose building that also provided a cafeteria and dining facility for youth. At this time, a large, open-air pavilion was also constructed on the west side of the camp.

Camp Director Christine Bergeron also reported that in 1997, the Louisiana Sheriff’s Association “donated and installed a new air conditioning unit” for the bunkhouses. Then, in 2007, Louisiana 4-H purchased the neighboring Girl Scouts Camp Site, Camp Windywood, after it had declared bankruptcy. Several small buildings were demolished and a new environmental education building, shooting sports

facility, shotgun and rifle ranges, and pond were all completed by 2012. Then, later that year, Roy O. Martin donated \$500,000 to construct a multipurpose building for the camp to have a centralized location for its nearly 600 temporary residents each week during 4-H Summer Camp. The multipurpose building has been the latest capital improvement to the facility.

Theme 3: Impact and Organizational Changes

Over its nearly 100-year history, the Louisiana 4-H Camp has experienced many changes. However, the individuals interviewed reported that the camp had an overwhelmingly positive impact on Louisiana youth. For example, when reflecting on his experiences, Dr. Paul Coreil, who served as the Louisiana State University Vice-Chancellor and Director of the CES from 2001 to 2013, recalled his time as a camper in the 1960s. He explained: “everybody wanted to be in 4-H; the camp was highly attractive to us.” He added: “being independent of your parents and learning about things that you could do with hands-on, experiential learning, [it] helped build confidence, responsibility, and practical life skills...” Mrs. Bergeron affirmed that this perspective remained, explaining that “It is often that when individuals I meet around the state, and they find out that I am the Camp Director at the Louisiana 4-H Camp, they cannot wait to tell me their stories about their time spent at camp during their youth.” After the campgrounds sustained significant storm damage in 2020, Bergeron added, “we had several individuals and organizations reach out to donate resources towards our recovery simply because of the impact camp has made on their lives or their children.” Meanwhile, Mr. Landreneau explained that the camp “provided a forum for youth to develop communication and interpersonal skills.” He expanded: “...” [you] saw other kids their same age, their peers, and experienced leadership skills. And I think that’s contagious. I think that is what camp was all about.”

The camping program evolved considerably regarding its staffing and organizational structure. For example, before 2001, Dr. Tassin explained: “there was no permanent camp director.” Therefore, during this period, the camp largely stood idle in the off-season, with Louisiana 4-H personnel managing the summer camp operations. “The programming was all on agents... we had almost 100 kids in a class, so you weren’t doing anything but talking at them,” explained Dr. Tassin. Similarly, Dr. Coreil agreed that at that point, it was time to make changes at camp, noting its unique context for education. He explained: “They went to school for nine months in the classroom, and now they’re ready to cut loose, but you can also teach them a lot there.” Therefore, a semi-permanent camp director was hired in the late 1990s to reside on-site during the summer months to provide a more consistent managerial presence before the position was made permanent in 2001. Dr. Tassin recounted: “I went to four or five states and looked at their camping programs, and we made a major revamp.” These changes in 2007, according to Dr. Tassin, included employing seasonal summer staff, subject-matter specialists, pedagogical specialists, reducing the 4-H member to educator ratios, and establishing a revolving account to consistently facilitate capital improvements.

As a result, Dr. Tassin reported that “Louisiana 4-H Camp started to be able to build some funds, and some foundation to be able to do some things at camp, not only in hiring, but in facilities and management...expanding staff, and then utilizing camp for other types of activities outside of extension.” For example, the camp employed a more robust maintenance department, an on-site housekeeper, an administrative coordinator, and a full-time 4-H program coordinator to continue programming into what was traditionally the off-season. The Louisiana 4-H Camp also began hiring approximately 20 camp staff members, six educational instructors, a full cafeteria staff, and an on-site nurse during the summer session. The Louisiana 4-H Camp was then able to begin hosting professional development sessions for extension agents and agricultural education teachers. It also began serving as a venue for weddings, reunions, and other community events. Dr. Coreil concluded: “It’s a much more structured and more focused experience now...it’s a more high-quality camp, with qualified instructors that better align with the overall goal and mission of 4-H.”

Theme 4: The Evolution of Programmatic Delivery

The Louisiana 4-H Camp primarily focused on recreational opportunities coupled with outdoor education that featured basic agricultural and environmental concepts in its early days. However, because of limited funds and time, the effectiveness of the curriculum and educational approach varied considerably. Despite this, all four participants in this investigation articulated that the educational and recreational programming of the Louisiana 4-H Camp improved considerably after hiring a permanent camp director. According to Dr. Coreil, its impact expanded after the camp's curriculum became more focused. On this point, Mr. Landreneau maintained: "We have such low [educational] achievement, and illiteracy is high [in Louisiana], poverty is high...I think that made camp even more important to be part of the solution." He continued: "We just became a professional education organization that was much more structured because of the needs of Louisiana" (Mr. Landreneau).

Meanwhile, Mr. Landreneau suggested that the staff at the Louisiana 4-H Camp have continued to make positive improvements: "Now, the [4-H Camp Staff] are structured; they have a good curriculum. I think they do a good job of getting instructors, training the instructors, and utilizing the junior leaders in the whole process. Dr. Tassin added that the growing popularity of the Louisiana 4-H Shooting Sports Program, and the ability to offer hunter education training at the camp, had also increased the visibility and awareness of the camp in recent years. Now, Louisiana 4-H boasts one of the nation's largest state camping programs, serving nearly 5,000 youth and adults every summer (LSU AgCenter, 2019). However, according to current Louisiana 4-H Camp Director Christine Bergeron, "We are completely at capacity. Each summer, there are approximately 2,000 children placed on a waiting list." As a result, the need for more capital improvements and staff has continued to persist. The Louisiana 4-H Youth Development Program has been providing hands-on, high-quality residential summer camping programs for the state's youth for nearly 100 years (Louisiana State University, 2020). Focusing on experiential learning, leadership development, and positive character development, the Louisiana 4-H Camp hosts over 3,500 youth each summer (Osbourne, 2019).

Conclusions, Discussion, Implications, and Recommendations

This investigation described the origins and evolution of the 4-H camping movement in Louisiana. The primary and secondary data used in this study demonstrated how the Louisiana 4-H Camp evolved regarding facility infrastructure, impact, and programmatic delivery. For example, the Louisiana 4-H Camp had many capital improvements over time (Cantrelle, 1986; Fiser & Coolman, 2004). We conclude that by designating the camp as *state lands*, this move opened up opportunities to seek state and federal assistance (Camp Grant Walker, 1941). We recommend that 4-H camps in other states that have struggled to have the funding needed to make capital improvements explore whether a similar approach might be appropriate in their context. During this process, we also recommend that as campground sites and additions are constructed, leaders should carefully consider the required space, technology, and equipment to facilitate quality learning in response to 21st century needs regarding fiber, food, and other natural resources. All 4-H program leaders responsible for camp oversight should also profoundly consider the facility's historical uses. For example, with the rise of nutrition issues and food deserts in the U.S., perhaps 4-H camps could better teach affected communities and students about how to produce safe and nutritious food effectively.

Participants in this historical narrative articulated an overwhelmingly positive portrayal of the Louisiana 4-H Camping movement. Case in point, multiple participants, articulated how the camp helped advance 4-H members' agricultural knowledge, leadership, and interpersonal skills. Despite this, we recommend that future research examine the outcomes that the 4-H camp has had on members more systematically. A limitation of this study was that the participants were leaders of the Louisiana 4-H Camp at different points in time. As a result, they may have had a biased perspective of the outcomes that 4-H members experienced. If one of the primary goals of 4-H camp has been to influence students' personal development, then outcomes and factors influencing such should be evaluated every year at the conclusion

of each camp session. This longitudinal data could provide a more detailed and accurate analysis of the impacts of a residential summer camp experience on youth.

Future research should also explore campers' content knowledge acquisition during camp and through a deferred post-test assessment (Brown et al., 2013, 2014). Previous research has evaluated the educational value of camp (Brandt & Arnold, 2006; Carter, 2006; Garst & Johnson, 2005), but greater attention should be placed on describing the affective and psychomotor outcomes that 4-H camp may have on students. Because 4-H camping has remained a fixture over the past 100 years across the U.S., we also recommend that a national study be conducted to identify the most common outcomes experienced by 4-H members. These results could further inform 4-H camps regarding how to tailor their programming to better meet the needs of students' varying learning styles, motivations, attitudes, and other factors. Future research should also explore how these factors influence campers' perceptions of camp. For example, researchers should compare if the outcomes reported in this investigation could be transferrable to 4-H camps in other states. Camp planners and organizations like the American Camping Association should also create learning standards and establish benchmarks to measure students' successful learning more purposefully moving forward.

Although robust evidence (Garst et al., 2011; Garton et al., 2007; Hedrick et al., 2009) has been advanced on the impacts of the camp experience on youth counselors after serving, there is a dearth of research evaluating the impacts of counselors on campers' outcomes. Therefore, future research should examine the ways in which camp counselors influence camper outcomes. Practitioners should also carefully consider implementing additional training with an increased emphasis on supporting campers during camp, the benefits experienced by campers, and how counselors can support these experiences.

A key implication from this investigation was the need for advocacy among 4-H leaders and agents. For example, the Louisiana 4-H Camp had to navigate multiple barriers throughout history, such as a lack of funding and staff. However, through individual and collective advocacy efforts, the 4-H camp secured vital resources to support 4-H members' needs better. Additionally, the impact of the 4-H camp on the citizens of Louisiana has continued to expand as evidenced by the growth in private and corporate donors whose families have experienced the benefits of Camp Grant Walker. Despite this progress, researchers should continue to explore how fundraising and donors to 4-H camps could be better leveraged and sustained over time. This should include exploring strategies to inform legislators, policymakers, and citizens about the impacts that 4-H camp can have on youth and the state of Louisiana.

Moving forward, we recommend that Louisiana 4-H agents and camp staff receive professional development to learn better how to advocate for the camp with key decision-makers. These opportunities should allow participants to explore ways to feature and communicate the impacts that 4-H camp can have on youth and the general public, including strategies involving social media, newspapers, media releases, and other proven communication strategies. We also recommend that future research examine effective advocacy efforts that other state 4-H camps have successfully used to secure funding to advance their programming. By gaining more visibility for 4-H camps through advocacy, perhaps this youth development program can be sustained for future generations. Accordingly, we recommend that a national task force be created to develop national learning standards for 4-H camps. This task force could also create 4-H campground and facility guidelines to ensure quality facilities can be created and maintained throughout the U.S.

References

- American Camp Association (2018). *5-year camp impact study*. Author.
<https://www.acacamps.org/resource-library/research/camp-impact-study>

- Benedict, L. & Gautreaux, C. (2014, Spring). 4-H museum offers trip down memory lane. *Louisiana Agriculture Magazine*, 57(2), 42.
<https://www.lsuagcenter.com/~media/system/8/4/a/0/84a0a39e3167cd30522a9de2846c79b6/spring2014.pdf>
- Brandt, J. & Arnold, M. E. (2006). Looking back, the impact of the 4-H camp counselor experience on youth development: A survey of counselor alumni. *Journal of Extension*, 44(6), 1-6. <https://www-joe-org.libezp.lib.lsu.edu/joe/2006december/rb1.php>
- Brown, N. R. & Terry Jr., R. (2013). The effects of group leader learning style on student knowledge gain in a leadership camp setting: A repeated-measures experiment. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 54(2), 44-56. <http://doi.org/10.032/jae.2013/02044>
- Brown, N. R., Terry Jr., R., & Kelsey, K. D. (2014). Examining camper learning outcomes and knowledge retention at Oklahoma FFA leadership camp. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 55(1), 8-23. <http://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2014.01008>
- Burnett, M. F. & Hebert, L. (2000). The educational value of 4-H activities as perceived by Louisiana 4-H agents. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 41(1), 49-59. <https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2000.01049>
- Carrier, L. (1937). The United States agricultural society, 1852-1860: Its relation to the origin of the United States Department of Agriculture and the land grant colleges. *Agricultural History*, 11(4), 278-288. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3739485>
- Camp Grant Walker. (1941). *Camp Grant Walker, Grant Parish*. Author.
- Cantrelle, R. (1986, July 11). Landmark sites gifts from Pollock family. *Town Talk*.
<https://www.newspapers.com/clip/16770647/walker-landmark-gift-jul-1986/>
- Carter, D. N. (2006). Factors related to the developmental experiences of youth serving as Louisiana 4-H camp counselors [Master's thesis, Louisiana State University].
http://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_dissertations/3536
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2015). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Coreil, P. & Tassin, M. (2008, Summer). Louisiana 4-H celebrates 100 years in 2008. *Louisiana Agriculture Magazine*, 51(3), 7-8.
- Croom, B. D. (2008). The development of the integrated three-component model of agricultural education. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 49(1), 110-120.
<https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2008/01110>
- Edgar, D. W., Retallick, M. S., & Jones, D. (2016). Research priority 4: Meaningful, engaged learning in all environments. In T. G. Roberts, A. Harder, & M. T. Brashears (Eds.), *American Association for Agricultural Education national research agenda: 2016-2020* (pp. 37-40). Department of Agricultural Education and Communication, University of Florida.
- Ellsworth, L. F. (1968). The Philadelphia society for the promotion of agriculture and agricultural reform, 1785-1793. *Agricultural History*, 42(3), 189-200. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3741696>
- Fiser, S. & Coolman, D. (2004). *LSU AgCenter's Grant Walker 4-H educational center plans expansion*. Louisiana State University.

- https://www.lsuagcenter.com/portals/communications/news/news_archive/2004/march/headline%20news/lsu-agcenters-grant-walker-4h-educational-center-plans-expansion
- Friedel, J. N. (2011). Where has vocational education gone? The impact of federal legislation on the expectations, design, and function of vocational education as reflected in the reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006. *American Educational History Journal*, 38(1), 37-53. <https://www.infoagepub.com/American-Educational-History-Journal-38>
- Garst, B. A. & Johnson, J. (2005). Adolescent leadership skill development through residential 4-H camp counseling. *Journal of Extension*, 43(5), 1-6. https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/parksrec_pubs/18/
- Garst, B. A., Brown, L. P., & Bialeschki, M. D. (2011). Youth development and the camp experience. *New Directions for Youth Development*, 130, 73-87. <https://doi.org/10.1002/yd.398>
- Garton, M. S., Miltenberger, M., & Pruett, B. (2007). Does 4-H camp influence life skill and leadership development? *Journal of Extension*, 45(4), 1-6. <https://archives.joe.org/joe/2007august/a4.php>
- Gordon, H. R. D. & Shultz, D. (2020). *The history and growth of career and technical education in America* (5th ed.). Waveland Press.
- Graham, A. B. (1941). Boys' and girls' agricultural clubs. *Agricultural History*, 15(2), 65-68. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3739651>
- Hedrick, J., Homan, G., & Dick, J. (2009). Exploring the positive impact of 4-h camp on youth: identifying differences based on a camper's gender, years of attendance, and age. *Journal of Extension*, 47(6), 1-6. https://www.joe.org/joe/2009december/pdf/JOE_v47_6a5.pdf
- Henderson, K. A., Scheuler-Whitaker, L. Bialeschki, M. D., Scanlin, M. M., & Thurber, C. A. (2007). Summer camp experiences: Parental perceptions of youth development outcomes. *Journal of Family Issues*, 28(8), 987-1007. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X07301428>
- Hillison, J. & Bryant, B. (2001). Agricultural societies as antecedents of the FFA. *Journal of Southern Agricultural Education Research*, 51(1), 102-113. <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.564.2022&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Hoover, T. S., Scholl, J. F., Dunigan, A. H., & Mamontova, N. (2007). A historical review of leadership development in the FFA and 4-H. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 48(3), 100-110. <http://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2007.03100>
- Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Sage Publications.
- McCormick, R. M. & McCormick, V. E. (1984). *A. B. Graham: Country schoolmaster and extension pioneer*. Cottonwood Publications.
- McDowell, W. H. (2002). *Historical research: A guide*. Pearson Education Limited.
- Meadows, R. R. (1997). History of Virginia's 4-H camping program: a case study on events leading to the development of the 4-H educational centers (Master's thesis, Virginia Tech University). <https://vttechworks.lib.vt.edu/handle/10919/30597>

- Mitchell, J. H. (1959). *Development of vocational agricultural education in Louisiana* [Doctoral dissertation, Louisiana State University].
https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1541&context=gradschool_disstheses
- Morrill Act of 1862, 7 U.S.C. § 321
- National 4-H Council. (2021). *4-H history*. <https://4-h.org/about/history/>
- National 4-H Conference History. (2012). 4-H history by state.
https://www.iowa4hfoundation.org/index.cfm/36964/4368/national_4h_conference_history
- National 4-H History Preservation Program. (2017). *4-H history in brief*. Author. https://4-hhistorypreservation.com/History/Hist_Nat/
- Osbourne, K. B. (2019, May 24). *4-H camp completes first week*. LSU AgCenter.
<https://www.lsuagcenter.com/profiles/rbogren/articles/page1558727590154>
- Ramussen, W. D. (1989). *University to the people: Seventy-five years of cooperative extension*. Iowa State University Press.
- Salevourious, M. J., & Furay, C. (2015). *The methods and skills of history: A practical guide* (4th ed.). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- SeEVERS, B., & GRAHAM, D. (2012). *Education through cooperative extension*. The University of Arkansas Press.
- Smith-Lever Act of 1914, 7 U.S.C. § 343
- LSU AgCenter. (2019). *2019 Louisiana 4-H annual report*. Author.
https://www.lsuagcenter.com/extranet/~media/system/f/d/5/5/fd556493915ed637aa9596807c0799b9/misc-39%202019%204h%20state%20report%20cms%207%2023%2019_anapdf.pdf
- LSU AgCenter. (2020). *2020 Louisiana 4-H annual report*. Author.
https://lsuagcenter.com/~media/system/6/3/7/6/6376720e8dcaf9165fe1d8ee0e044f72/misc39_2020la4hannualreportrev_rh0220jfoxpdf.pdf
- Stimson, R. W. & Lathrop, F. W. (1942). *History of agricultural education of less than college grade in the United States* (Bulletin No. 217). United States Government Printing Office.
- Thurber, C. A., Scanlin, M. M., Scheuler, L., & Henderson, K. A. (2007). Youth development outcomes of the camp experience: Evidence for multidimensional growth. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 36, 241-254. <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s10964-006-9142-6.pdf>
- Wahle, A., Owens, M. H., & Garst, B. A. (2019). Strengthening the 4-H essential elements of positive youth development at camp. *Journal of Extension*, 57(5), 1-6.
<https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1355&context=joe>
- Warner, P. D. & Christenson, J. A. (2019). *The cooperative extension service: A national assessment* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Works Progress Administration of Louisiana. (1938). State Library of Louisiana.
<https://louisianadigitallibrary.org/islandora/object/state-lwp%3A1011>