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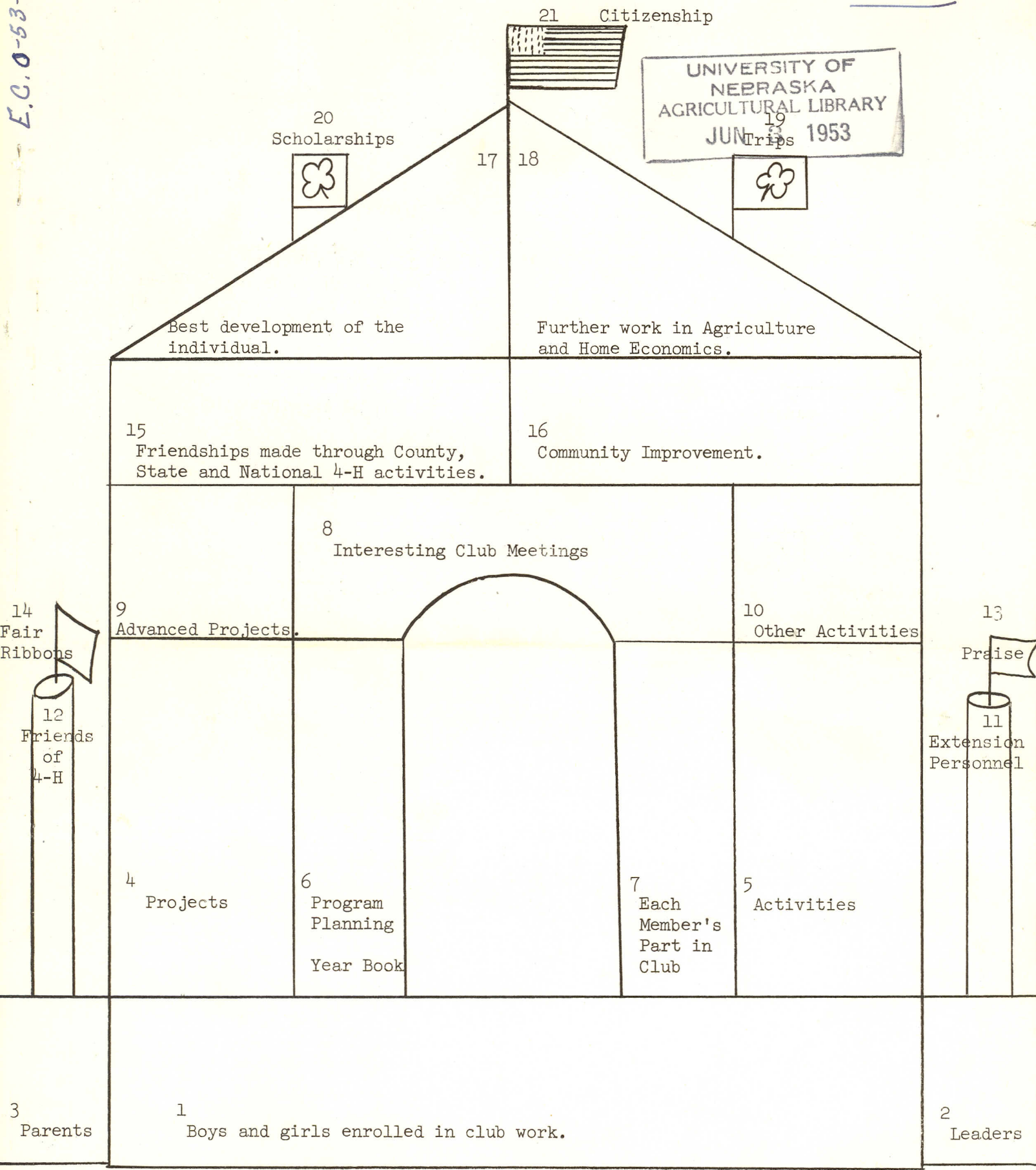
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Building A 4-H Program

Nebraska
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK
IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS
U. of N. Agr. College and U. S. Dept of Agr. Cooperating
W. V. Lambert, Director, Lincoln

BUILDING A 4-H PROGRAM

Elaine Skucius
(Talk given at District 4-H Leader Training Meetings)

Building a club program can be like building a castle.

1. The foundation or the base of the 4-H program is the boys and girls who are enrolled in club work. Whether we are concerned with the five or twenty-five members enrolled in local clubs, the twenty-five thousand enrolled in club work in Nebraska, or the two million enrolled in club work in the nation, the program should always be based on the needs and interests of the boys and girls.

2 and 3. On either side of this foundation lending strength and support are the leaders and the parents. We must have club leaders in order to have a 4-H organization. Club leaders know they must have the interest, support and cooperation of parents if they are to have a strong organization. It takes both leaders and parents to balance and make a strong foundation. Leaders many times do not realize the influence they have on boys and girls. Their enthusiasm and attitude is reflected in club members.

Leaders serve a group in various ways. At the State Leader Training Meeting in Lincoln, Verne Varney, Assistant State Club Leader from Wisconsin, said leaders may serve by leading
by following
by thinking
by silence
by example
through consideration
through cooperation.

4. 4-H projects represent one wall in the 4-H program. Projects are the backbone of the program. In order to have good thick walls we need to have projects that fit the abilities and interests of club members. Young 4-H members should begin with learning projects, because 4-H members need to succeed in their club work. Perhaps they should take several learning projects before taking second or third year work. A club member's project wall should include a variety of projects.

5. The project wall is balanced by a wall which represents activities. Judging demonstrations, singing, recreation, tours, and picnics are all part of the 4-H program and need to be strong.

6. The doorway of our building is made up of three sections. The first represents program planning using club year books, planning a year round club program. 4-H club work should become a continuous program.

7. One section represents each club member's opportunity and responsibility in the club. Every club member contributes to the club and each member needs to

feel that he is important to the group. By serving as officers and committee chairmen, club members become important to the group and have an opportunity to develop leadership.

8. Conducting interesting club meetings is important to the doorway. A variety of methods and techniques should be used. Club meetings should be educational but they should also be fun.

It takes all three of these sections to make the doorway. If any one is left out the club program may fall, or it may stop growing and not build up to its highest possibilities.

If all three are strong, we have a wide open door to more activities and then:

9. We build our project wall higher. Club members complete learning and middle projects and go on to advanced projects.

10. As club members stay in 4-H work several years and become older, they add other activities--Timely Topic Speaking, Share the Fun, National 4-H Sunday, Health and Safety activities.

11. Along the base we add two pillars. One represents Extension Service, the county agents who are a part of the University and the USDA cooperate in making 4-H work available to you. The specialists and state staff and the 4-H staff in Washington, D. C., are all concerned with your 4-H program.

12. The other pillar represents friends of 4-H, people who are not directly connected with the 4-H program, but who see its value and purpose and give it their support. Sometimes this support is financial, sometimes moral.

13 and 14. The two flags that we put at the top of the pillars represent special activities in the 4-H program. Often 4-H members receive a special thrill from some phase of club work that may be the reason they remain club members. To very young club members, it may be a compliment from the club leader for doing an extra good job on one of the articles in the project or maybe a word of praise after giving their first demonstration. The flags may represent a trip to 4-H camp, ribbons, or prize money won by a club member.

15. We build our program higher to represent friendships made in 4-H club work. As boys and girls become older in the club program, their contacts reach out farther. They begin with the local club, but soon are participating in county, maybe even state and national activities. Boys and girls who write of their state and national trips often mention how much they value the friendships they have made. 4-H club work should build friendship locally, nationally, and even internationally.

16. The influence of 4-H club work should be felt in the community. A good 4-H club improves its community. Boys and girls should be community minded and able to see ways in which they could serve their community.

17. The peak of the program comes with the best development of the individual. At the base of the program we started with boys and girls. We hoped through 4-H work that we could help young people develop their abilities and talents.

18. The peak also represents further interest in agriculture and home economics. The interest may lead to advanced schooling. It may mean staying in the community and assuming places of leadership, perhaps becoming future 4-H leaders for other boys and girls.

19 and 20. Other flags represent trips, scholarships, and honors that have come to boys and girls through 4-H work. These are the awards and not the goals.

21. At the very top we place the American flag to represent citizenship. Our aim is always to make better citizens of the boys and girls in club work.

You see how building a club program is like building a castle. Beginning clubs are just starting on their building program. Build solidly as you go.