

# Illinois life sampled on 4-H exchange trip

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"I have always been enthusiastic about exchange programs. There is so much to get acquainted with and there is a world of difference among areas of this country," says Mrs. Harold Fry, Stevens R1, as she discusses her feelings about her 4-H club's exchange trip which took place this past Summer.

Exchange trips are not new to Lancaster County, but the trip arranged by the Brickerville Community 4-H Club is unique in that it was planned and carried out by one club, and not on a county-wide basis as other exchange trips are.

Furthermore, this trip, which took club members to Kendall County, Illinois, represents just one phase in an exchange program with that county which dates back to 1958 when 4-H'ers first traveled here. Kendall County, Illinois, represents just one phase in an exchange program with that county which dates back to 1958 when 4-H'ers first traveled here. Kendall County is located 43 miles southwest of Chicago, and according to Mrs. Fry, leader for the Brickerville Club, that county "has a meritorious record of exchanges." Each year, she explained, the county engages in two exchange trips - one involving travel to another county and another where they host incoming exchange 4-H'ers.

On August 7, a group of nine 4-H'ers and seven adults traveled by Amtrak train to Chicago where they were picked up by their hosts. Four of the 4-H'ers discussed the trip recently, and all were enthusiastic.

Anne Willworth, Ephrata, president of the club, admitted to being a little apprehensive about making the trip and staying with host families, but she said it was an interesting experience.

Anne was hosted by a farm family which raised pigs, cows and chickens. "There were eight children in the family," Anne said, "It was like one great big slumber party. It was fun, and good to learn about other people. Basically they are the same."

While there were many visits to local historical sites and a one-day trip to Chicago, the local 4-H'ers did get in on a little work in their host homes. Anne had the experiences of helping to slaughter 30 chickens. She said her job was to help clean out the gizzards, adding, "I didn't eat chicken for two weeks after we did that."

Dwight Graybill, Stevens R1, was one of two boys to make the trip. He lived with an electrician, with six children. He said, "It was fun to see what the people in Illinois do." Dwight's mother, Mary Jane (Mrs. Donald) Graybill, was a hostess to the first group which came to Lancaster County, and participated as a guest on the first exchange trip there.

Sharon Steffy, Ephrata, lived in town with a family which managed a grocery store. Sharon said the Illinois hosts "thought we talked funny." But she and Anne agreed that people there had a midwest accent totally different from here.

Mrs. Haskell Royer, Stevens R1, served as a chaperone for the trip and was the mother of one of the 4-H'ers who made the trip. She said, "I think it's a shame they don't do more of these exchange trips." She too was apprehensive, but said her experience in Illinois was a happy one. She lived on a 1200 acre hog farm, where their main crops were soybeans and corn. Mrs. Royer said, "They were terrific. I hosted my host family's daughter here last year. I really enjoyed living on a farm."

James Bollinger, Stevens R1, lived in town and made the discovery that what goes on in his Lancaster County home is universal - brothers and sisters fight everywhere. "That made me feel good," he said. He mentioned that his host brothers "did a lot of working on engines and fixing up cars."

The landscape in Illinois was much flatter than here, and Jim remarked that the 4-H'er he hosted last Summer talked about the "mountains" near his Stevens farm. He said he felt the exchange trip was "worthwhile."

One of the reasons for the successful exchange program is an eighty-year-old man named Charles Lett, a veteran 4-H leader who plans and works closely with the exchange. Although suffering from a physical handicap, Lett is not slowed, and shows great enthusiasm for showing visitors a good time.

Mrs. Fry notes that she has been out to Kendall county on three exchange trips and several times went as a private guest. "They are like family, and they take a personal interest in us."

The trip to Chicago was fascinating for the local youth. They visited the Mercantile Exchange, where they witnessed gold and "pig bellies" being sold. They also traveled to the top of the Sears Building, but could not enjoy the five mile visibility because of smog. There was a boat ride on Lake Michigan and a visit to the Museum of Science and Industry. Perhaps the crowning touch to their Chicago visit was having lunch at an exclusive MacDonald's in the Water Tower Place shopping mall. Anne said, "It was really neat, but more expensive than MacDonald's here."

An unexpected twist for the local youth came when they were warned by their hosts not to go anywhere in Chicago unaccompanied, including into the lavatories. "They were very adamant about it," Dorothy Fry said. "We were also told not to talk to strangers." Because of the forcefulness of the warning, Mrs. Fry said she felt the 4-H'ers were intimidated. However, no incidents occurred to make their visit anything short of a wonderful time.

Most members of the group agreed that the time there was not enough. Anne said, "We should have had more time." Sharon remarked, "Chicago was a lot bigger than I thought it would be. What we saw was interesting." Mrs. Royer said she found the people in Chicago to be a "lot dressier than I expected."

Mrs. Fry allowed as how life is "simpler" among the people visited. "They're not involved in as many activities. Our 4-H is more urbanized than there." Mrs.



Sharon Steffy and Anne Willworth are eager to talk over some of the experiences they shared this Summer on their trip to Illinois.



Dwight Graybill, left, and Jim Bollinger, take the time to locate their host families on the map.

Royer also commented on "the very simple way of living," something she found attractive.

The 4-H Clubs are organized somewhat differently, with community clubs being the dominant type of club. In the club, individual projects are carried out, but much of the work is done individually and not in project clubs. Mrs. Fry said, "They treat the younger ones different than the older ones. A leader visits them in their homes. The kids there are a little more independent." Anne said, "I think their 4-H is more organized. They had an Almost Anything Goes program."

Children bring their finished product to their 4-H Fair where it is judged. Dorothy added, "The judging is very rigid, and the competition is very stiff. All the people must accomplish something. Competition is very keen."

For those traveling on an exchange program from that county there is a selection process, and in most cases 4-H'ers are allowed only two exchange trips in their 4-H career. The bank in Plano, the largest town in the county, helps subsidize the exchange trips, according to Mrs. Fry, and 4-H'ers earn other money to meet necessary expenses. "They feel that if you have to pay you appreciate it more." Participants must be at least 15 years old to participate in the trips.

Mrs. Royer said one of the real advantages of the trip is that the local 4-H'ers got to know each other and the adults who went along much better. And the train ride, which was a first for most, offered an interesting experience. Amtrak officials were very courteous to the group and assisted them in finding proper accommodations.

Very enthusiastic about a local club having a 4-H exchange, Mrs. Fry said, "It keeps the people in one small area, and allows exchangees and hosts to get to know one another better."

This is the sixth formal exchange between the counties in their 20 years, and Mrs. Fry has accompanied the three that went to Illinois. She noted that 4-H groups traveling west have frequently stayed with Kendall County families.

In addition to those interviewed, others who traveled to Illinois were: Jean Hollinger, Stevens R1; Louise Martin, Stevens R1; Sue Eshleman, Brickerville; Jodi Wenger, Ephrata; Jane Royer, Stevens R1; Mrs. Vera Palm, and Ethel Purdue, Ephrata; Hilda Sipes, York; Mary Clark, Lititz and Harold Fry, Stevens R1.

When asked if they would consider going again, the youngsters were unanimous in saying they are ready to go. The train ride, the trip to Chicago and the family visits added up to an exciting adventure for the 16 who made the trip.



Three of the happy adults who accompanied the 4-H trip to Illinois were Mrs. Haskell Royer, Harold Fry, and Mrs. Harold Fry.

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