

History of Agricultural Education and FFA in Kentucky

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Introduction

The history of Agricultural Education in Kentucky spans over 100 years and involves tens of thousands of individuals. Regretfully, there has been no consistent effort to maintain this history. Thankfully, various individuals have collected and preserved bits and pieces of that history through the decades. The State Supervisors have maintained teacher information cards that date back to 1917. The FFA Executive Secretaries have preserved and updated the State Convention minutes each year since 1930. Someone in the 1950's decided to preserve boxes of photos at the FFA Leadership Training Center. Charles Berry rescued the scrapbook of one of the very early Kentucky Ag Teachers from the dumpster. National Officer Julian Pierce's mother kept a scrapbook from his time in the Stamping Ground FFA at the end of the Great Depression....

When I became Executive Secretary in 2004, I became the keeper of the Convention minutes and through various projects and interactions, I also became the unofficial keeper of bits and pieces of the history. A lunch with James D. Maddox caused me to ask Charles Byers a question which resulted in a scribbled note in the history folder. A question about women in FFA led to a call to my predecessor Woody Cox in Montana. The suggestion of an FFA documentary led to a series of oral history interviews that eventually included the only living Kentucky New Farmers of America officer Rupert Seals.

For 15 years, these tidbits of history have lived in my brain and on random pieces of paper stuck in a folder. As I finally began the process of putting the various notes into a narrative form I realized how many holes were in the history. Some- but not all- of these have been filled in by digging through records, asking questions, and reviewing the oral histories.

It is acknowledged that this history is neither complete nor perfect. To the extent possible I have confirmed what was said in oral histories with what records could be found. In a few cases, memories from various individuals have disagreed with each other or with the written record. In these cases I have used by best judgement. Errors are likely and are totally the fault of the author.

In attempting to write a history, it is hard to get the narrative to flow. In the case of a few topics- New Farmers of America, the FFA Leadership Training Center, and the FFA Foundation, I found it was better to separate them into their own chapters. The history of each of these runs through decades and does not fit neatly into the narrative. Also, it was thought that future readers might only want to learn about certain topics and be able to find information more easily if these topics stood on their own.

Given the fact that compiling history has been no one's job, we are lucky to have as much information as we do. Given that our history involves thousands of people over the course of 11 decades it is a shame that we are missing so much. It is my sincere hope that reading this document will cause others to ask questions, dig through old photos, and go looking for missing pieces. I'm convinced that an attic somewhere contains a trunk filled with newspaper articles and old photos that would help us better understand our past. I hold out hope that a Kentucky NFA jacket still hangs in a closet in Lexington or Hopkinsville and that I'll live to see it displayed at the FFA Leadership Training Center.

I also hope that those reading this will do a good job of maintaining our present day history. We can do this by taking pictures, labeling those photos, preserving documents like banquet programs, and writing down our memories. We can ask questions of those who are older than us about what they remember. We can't ask questions of the first Vocational Agriculture Teachers but we can talk to the first female teachers and the first American Star Farmer. Remember that when Lawrence Bradford began keeping his scrapbook it wasn't history, it has his everyday life.

Finally, let us all remember that "if you don't have a future, your history doesn't matter." Reading and researching this history is a great thing to do, but let us put most of our energy into ensuring that our organization has a bright future so that others 100 years from now will have a reason to study our accomplishments.

Vocational Agriculture- The Early Years

With the passage of the Smith Hughes Act in 1917, federal funding was made available to support Vocational Agriculture classes in high schools and to provide state administration of these programs. The earliest record of Kentucky teachers of agriculture is for the 1917-1918 school year. These teachers are listed below.

Benton High School- Marshall County	O. L. Mullikin
Boone County High School	James A. Caywood
Daviess County High School	O. E. Baird
Greenville High School	Gordie Young
Maddoxtown High School- Fayette County	L. W. Taylor
Little Rock High School	C. T. Cook
Mayslick High School	G. E. Everett
Utica High School	Warren Peyton

Vocational Agriculture programs were added at many schools across the state throughout the early 1920's. The consolidated, county high school had not been thought up yet, so these early programs were in small, community high schools in places like Slaughters, Mayslick, and Wingo.

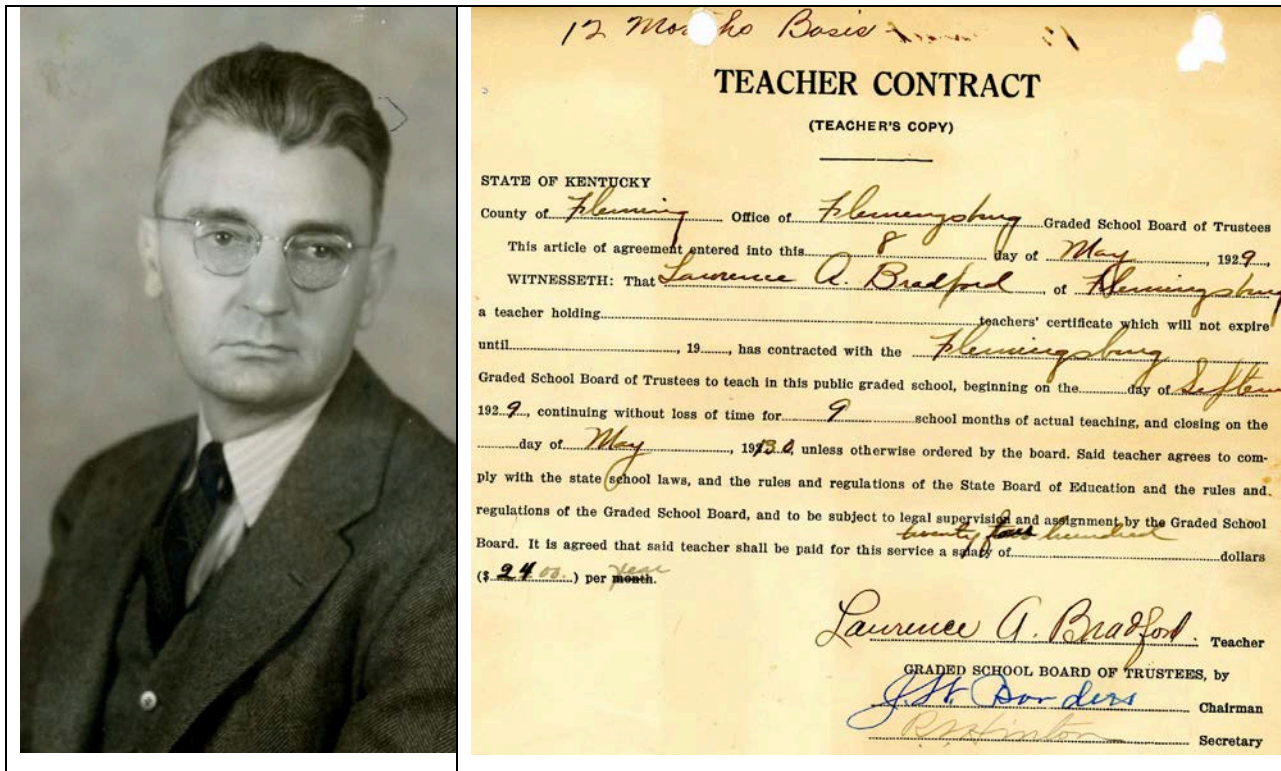
The first Vocational Agriculture teachers likely had degrees in agriculture and/or experience teaching other subjects. Many taught in one room schools part of the year and attended college the other part of the year in order to earn their degrees.



Some of the earliest Kentucky Vocational Agriculture Teachers- Front Row L-R- Dr. Ralph Woods, Steve Wilson, Wendall Howard, and J. P. (Jack) Truitt. Back row L-R- Ted Chambers, M. M. Botto, M. L. Archer, Glenvar Brown, Royce Simmons, Unknown

The first formal teacher training program in Kentucky was established on February 1, 1924. Carsie Hammonds left his job at Bremen in Muhlenberg County to begin the program. (The University of Kentucky had offered Agricultural Education courses as early as 1914, but these had been taught by other staff members.) Hammonds had a grand total of four and a half years teaching experience at the time having taught at Wingo in Graves County prior to moving to Bremen. Hammonds completed graduate work at Cornell in 1928 and went on to be the head of the Agricultural Education Department at UK. Dr. Hammonds served Kentucky Agricultural Education for 43 years before his retirement in 1964.

In 1922 Lawrence A. Bradford was hired to teach agriculture at Flemingsburg High School. Mr. Bradford kept a scrapbook of his time at Flemingsburg which contains a treasure trove of information about the early days of Vocational Agriculture. For the 1929-1930 school year Mr. Bradford made the whopping sum of \$2400 per year! Mr. Bradford taught at Flemingsburg until 1935. He eventually earned a PhD and finished his career teaching in the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture.



Left Flemingsburg teacher Lawrence A. Bradford. Right- Bradford's teaching contract for 1929-30

The 1920's were a time of change on the American farm and the early Vocational Agriculture teachers worked to prepare young men for success in the rapidly changing industry. Much of their attention was focused on improved practices such as fertilization, hybrid seeds, and improved livestock breeding practices. Experience programs were part of agricultural education from the beginning with early teachers using demonstration plots and variety trials to prove the value of modern farming practices. It is recalled that in many cases the father planted his crops the traditional way and the son planted his the modern way. At the end of the season they compared results and in most cases the father adopted the new methods the next year.

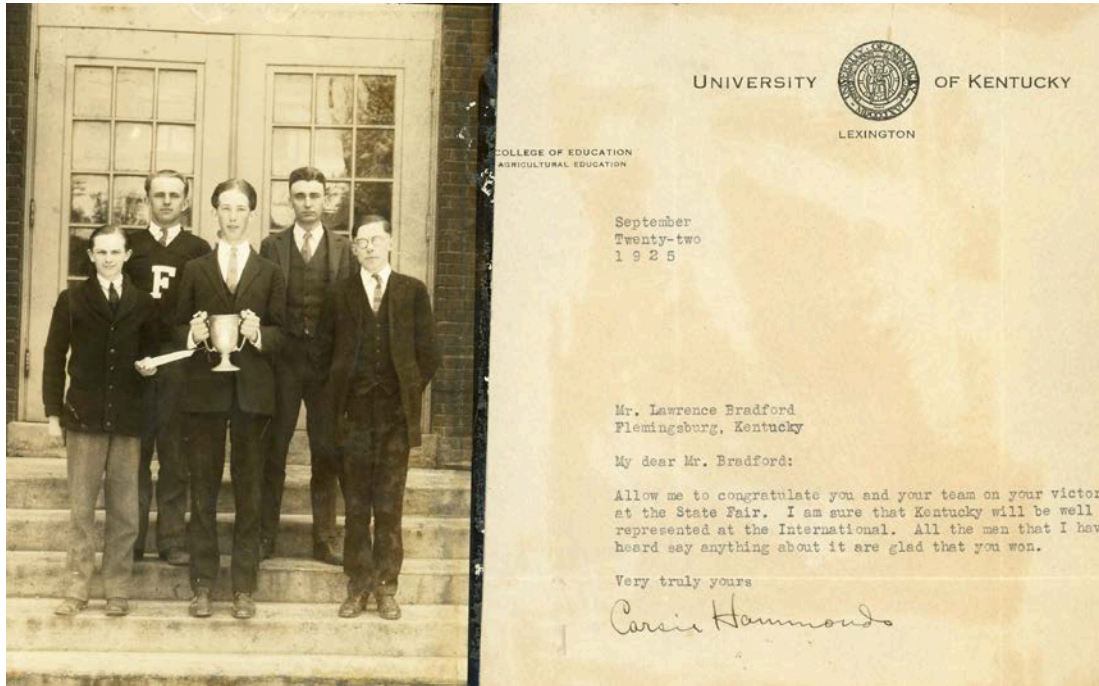


"Practice Farming"- from the beginning, Agricultural Education students learned by doing.



"Registered Jerseys bought for farming programs"- early Vocational Agriculture Teachers focused much effort on improving livestock genetics for local farmers.

The need for competitions for Vocational Agriculture students became apparent very early. By 1924 vocational agriculture contests were being held at the Kentucky State Fair. The earliest contests held were stock shows followed by livestock judging contests. Tobacco shows and sales with Vocational Agriculture divisions began to grow in popularity during the 1920's as well.



This photo from the Lawrence Bradford Scrapbook shows the state winning Livestock Judging Team from the 1925 Kentucky State Fair with a letter of congratulations from Dr. Carsie Hammond.

The Development of FFA

Throughout the 1920's vocational agriculture students across the country began to form future farmer clubs. Henry Groseclose and others established the Future Farmers of Virginia in 1925 and other states followed suit soon after.

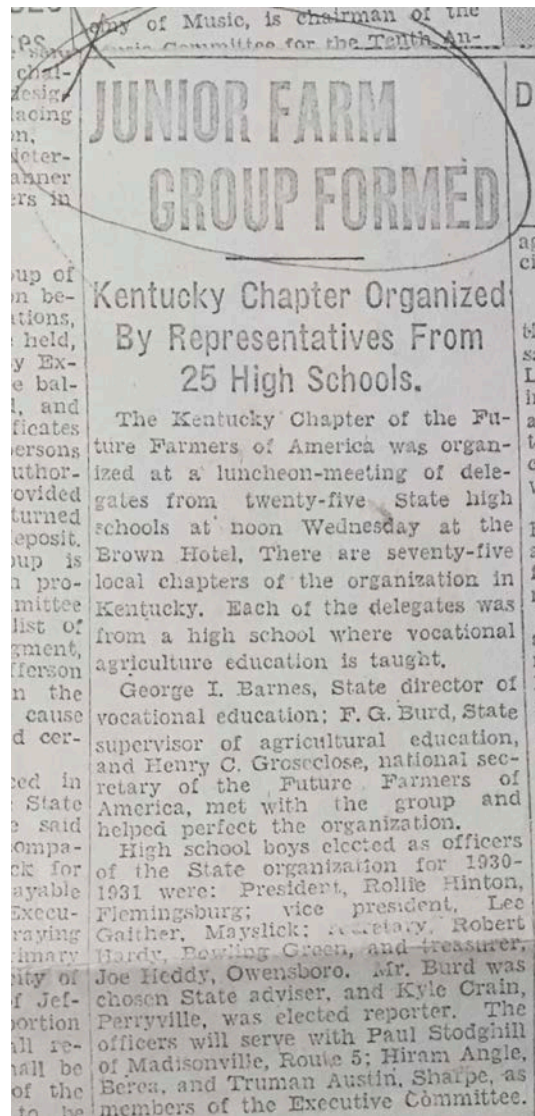
The earliest record we have of a future farmer group in Kentucky is in Fleming County and comes through the pages of Mr. Lawrence Bradford's scrapbook. "In the spring of that year (1928) need arose for a farm surveyor's level for use in connection with terracing. There being none in the county, the boys organized themselves into a society, borrowed \$20 from Peoples Bank on their own resources, and bought the farm level." The boys listed as being involved were Russell Daulton, Milburn Cooper, Lovell Evans, Clarence Carpenter, Harry Peck, Rollie Hinton, Chester Kissick, Harlan Kissick, and Louis Perkins. It is also recorded that Flemingsburg held a father son banquet on November 14, 1929.

<p>Members of the Agricultural Classes</p> <table border="0"> <tr><td>Woodroe Bishop</td><td>1933</td><td>Olen McKenzie</td><td>1933</td></tr> <tr><td>Charles Browning</td><td>1932</td><td>Newton Porter</td><td>1933</td></tr> <tr><td>Everett Bush</td><td>1932</td><td>Leslie Rawlings</td><td>1932</td></tr> <tr><td>Clyde Campbell</td><td>1932</td><td>Kelly Rawlings</td><td>1932</td></tr> <tr><td>Carl Branch</td><td>1933</td><td>James Saunders</td><td>1933</td></tr> <tr><td>Elmer Christman</td><td>1933</td><td>Thomas Strode</td><td>1933</td></tr> <tr><td>Eugene Dickens</td><td>1933</td><td>Kenneth Ward</td><td>1932</td></tr> <tr><td>Argie Davis</td><td>1933</td><td>Clemmie Vice</td><td>1932</td></tr> <tr><td>Frank Allen Davis</td><td>1933</td><td>Isaac Weddle</td><td>1932</td></tr> <tr><td>Evan Evans</td><td>1933</td><td>Lamoine Wilson</td><td>1932</td></tr> <tr><td>Noel Frederiek</td><td>1932</td><td>Raymond Conway</td><td>1931</td></tr> <tr><td>Wilson Farris</td><td>1933</td><td>Russell Daulton</td><td>1930</td></tr> <tr><td>Garr Farris</td><td>1933</td><td>Howard Daulton</td><td>1931</td></tr> <tr><td>Early Farris</td><td>1933</td><td>Davis Foxworthy</td><td>1931</td></tr> <tr><td>Hargis Foxworthy</td><td>1932</td><td>Lovell Evans</td><td>1930</td></tr> <tr><td>Theodore Hall</td><td>1933</td><td>John Reynolds Glascock</td><td>1931</td></tr> <tr><td>Fred Hamilton</td><td>1933</td><td>Russell Dorsey</td><td>1930</td></tr> <tr><td>Wilbur Hurst</td><td>1932</td><td>Rollie Hinton</td><td>1930</td></tr> <tr><td>Stone James</td><td>1932</td><td>Eugene Davis</td><td>1930</td></tr> <tr><td>Sterling Kissick</td><td>1933</td><td>Wilson Snetz</td><td>1931</td></tr> <tr><td>Carlin Meadows</td><td>1933</td><td>Garr Jackson</td><td>1931</td></tr> <tr><td>William Muse</td><td>1933</td><td>Clifton Campbell</td><td>1931</td></tr> </table>		Woodroe Bishop	1933	Olen McKenzie	1933	Charles Browning	1932	Newton Porter	1933	Everett Bush	1932	Leslie Rawlings	1932	Clyde Campbell	1932	Kelly Rawlings	1932	Carl Branch	1933	James Saunders	1933	Elmer Christman	1933	Thomas Strode	1933	Eugene Dickens	1933	Kenneth Ward	1932	Argie Davis	1933	Clemmie Vice	1932	Frank Allen Davis	1933	Isaac Weddle	1932	Evan Evans	1933	Lamoine Wilson	1932	Noel Frederiek	1932	Raymond Conway	1931	Wilson Farris	1933	Russell Daulton	1930	Garr Farris	1933	Howard Daulton	1931	Early Farris	1933	Davis Foxworthy	1931	Hargis Foxworthy	1932	Lovell Evans	1930	Theodore Hall	1933	John Reynolds Glascock	1931	Fred Hamilton	1933	Russell Dorsey	1930	Wilbur Hurst	1932	Rollie Hinton	1930	Stone James	1932	Eugene Davis	1930	Sterling Kissick	1933	Wilson Snetz	1931	Carlin Meadows	1933	Garr Jackson	1931	William Muse	1933	Clifton Campbell	1931	<p>PROGRAM The Second Annual Father and Son Banquet of the FUTURE FARMER SOCIETY of the DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE of the FLEMINGSBURG HIGH SCHOOL</p> <p>THURSDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 14 ONE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED TWENTY-NINE</p> <p>Officers ROLLIE HINTON, Pres. HOWARD DAULTON, V. Pres. GARR JACKSON, Sec'y-Treas. RUSSELL DAULTON, Editor News Letter</p>
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<p>INVOCATION Rev. E. B. Bourland DINNER The P. S. Parent Teacher Association WELCOME ADDRESS Rollie Hinton, President DADS' QUARTET W. D. Daulton, Nelson Davis Roscoe James, Harry Ward IF I WERE DAD Carlin Meadows OUR OFFICERS Rollie Hinton OUR BOYS Chesney Evans ENTERTAINMENT Howard Daulton, Ted Hall Eugene Davis, Davis Foxworthy John Glascock, Kenneth Ward, Sterling Kissick KENTUCKY'S FUTURE MEN G. Ivan Barnes, State Supervisor Vocational Education, Frankfort, Ky. SONGS Everyone ADJOURNMENT AND HANDSHAKINGS</p>	<p>Menu</p> <p>Turkey Cranberries Dressing Gravy Celery Scalloped Oysters Ham Creamed Peas Corn Pudding Candied Sweet Potatoes Fruit Salad Pickles Parker House Rolls Brick Cream Angel Cake Coffee Mint Candy</p>																																																																																									
<p>TOASTMASTER Rollie Hinton PIANIST Miss Edith Evans</p> <p>BANQUET COMMITTEE Lovell Evans, Raymond Conway Garr Jackson, Howard Daulton Stone James, Wilbur Hurst</p>																																																																																										

In November 1928 delegates met in Kansas City during the American Royal Livestock show to form the Future Farmers of America. For whatever reason, Kentucky was not among the states that sent delegates to that meeting. However, interest in forming an official Future Farmers of America Association in the state grew throughout 1929 and into the spring of 1930.

On April 16, 1930 delegates from 25 schools met at the Brown Hotel in Louisville to form the Kentucky Association of Future Farmers of America. Delegates in attendance heard speeches from G. Ivan Barnes, Director of Vocational Education, F. G. Burd, State Supervisor of Agricultural Education, and Henry C. Groseclose, National FFA Executive Secretary. Rollie Hinton from Flemingsburg was elected as the first State FFA President. State dues were set at 50 cents per member. The delegates adopted several objectives which included sponsoring a livestock judging contest at the State Fair, holding three summer Vocational Agriculture Schools, and sponsoring a state essay contest.

Unfortunately, no photo of the first Kentucky FFA Convention is known to exist. However, an article from the April 17, 1930 Louisville Courier Journal reported that a "Junior Farm Group Formed." According to the article, 75 local chapters were in existence at that time.



Kentucky FFA grew steadily during the 1930's, in spite of the Great Depression. Stock shows, judging contests, and tobacco shows remained popular but other contests were added as well. The delegates at the 1931 State Convention voted to enter the "National Oratorical Declamatory and Essay Contest" and to have as many entries as possible. The Program of Work for 1933-34 encouraged each chapter to have an entry in the Public Speaking Contest. By 1936, state contests included Public Speaking, Impromptu Speaking, Chapter Music, and Vocal Solo. Willie Cooper Coleman of Whitesville was the first winner of the Courier Journal Essay Contest in 1936 and received a grand prize of \$50. By 1938-39, the Program of Work encouraged each district to hold an FFA Day in March or April with contests in Public Speaking, Dairy Impromptu Speaking, Chapter Music, Vocal Solo, Opening and Closing Ceremonies, Parliamentary Procedure, and Enterprise Contests which were written tests.

The State Convention grew throughout the 1930s. At the 1936 Convention in Bowling Green 470 members "toured Mammoth Cave at a reduced rate." A newspaper clipping believed to be from 1937 states that 750 boys attended the State Convention. The Program of Work also mentioned cooperation with the State Fair Board for an exhibit of farm products produced by Vocational Agriculture students. FFA membership for 1933-34 was 1290. By 1938-39, the Program of Work listed a goal of 200 chapters and 5500 members.

John Reisz of Owensboro was elected as the first National FFA Officer from Kentucky at the 1934 National FFA Convention. When Reisz received his American Farmer Degree two years earlier, it was noted that he owned 3 dairy cows, 2 sows, 100 hens, 350 chicks, 11 sheep, and 1 mule colt. He also raised tobacco and was a full partner in the purchase of 72 acres of land with his father. While Reisz's project was exceptional, it was representative of the average Kentucky farm in the late 1930's. Tobacco was the main cash crop, while hay, corn, and small grains were grown for animal feed.

In 1936 State Superintendent of Public Instruction, H. W. Peters attended the State Convention and became the first person honored with the Honorary State FFA Degree. In 1937, Governor A. B. "Happy" Chandler and his wife attended the State Convention. Governor Chandler became the first Governor to receive the Honorary State Degree.

By 1936 there were 173 departments of Vocational Agriculture in the Commonwealth. Teachers were organized into districts. A list of districts and district chairmen from 1936 is below:

District	Number of Schools	Chair
Purchase	25	Tullus Chambers, Benton
Dawson Springs	24	R. E. Simons, Slaughters
Owensboro	24	W. R. Tabb, Hawesville
Bowling Green	20	M. M. Botto, Munfordville
Lexington	37	E. P. Hilton, Picadome
Berea	23	Feaster Wolford, Berea College
Morehead	20	Ernest Howton, Mayslick

The 1930's saw an increased emphasis on modern farming methods and technology within agricultural education classrooms and the FFA. As farms became more and more mechanized, it fell to Vocational Agriculture Teachers to teach their boys how to service and maintain modern farm equipment. Tasks as simple as changing the oil in a tractor were new to fathers and sons. As the New Deal began to bring electricity to rural communities, Vocational Agriculture Teachers were some of the first to teach farmers how to utilize electrical power in the home and on the farm.



This photo titled "Farm Shop Class" is likely from the late 1920's or early 1930's and shows young men servicing horse drawn mowing machines. Although tractors appeared on Kentucky farms as early as 1910, many farms used horses through World War II.

In 1937, the Kentucky FFA Leadership Training Center (LTC) was established in Hardinsburg. (See detailed information on the establishment and development of the LTC below.)

A chapter contest was developed sometime in the early 1930's. This contest recognized chapters for their work on the local level and encouraged them to do more. The Stamping Ground Chapter in Scott County won the state chapter contest six times in the late 1930's. Stamping Ground won the National Chapter Contest in 1936, 1938, and 1939. A newspaper clipping from the Julian Pierce family gives a glimpse into the activities of the chapter. Among other things the boys from Stamping Ground helped raise \$15,000 to match the Works Progress Administration's contribution to build a municipal water supply system, constructed a farm shop building for the school, sponsored the local fair, and sponsored a home improvement contest. They also built a chapter house which included a meeting room, a modern kitchen, a game room, and a library. Finally, they took an annual bus trip across the country. One year, they traveled 5000 miles in 14 days at a cost of only \$30.50 per boy! The Stamping Ground advisor during these years was Ivan Jett.

Stamping Ground's community engagement was representative of other chapters across the state. Notes in the Program of Work mention chapters being involved with the American Automobile Association's work to improve roads, sponsorship of home and farm improvement contests, local farm tours, and work with local fairs and livestock improvement associations.

Community canneries began to pop up across the state in the late 1930's and early 1940's. Many of these were managed by the local agriculture teacher and FFA chapter. Local farmers and gardeners could bring their vegetables and produce to the cannery and process them using modern technology. This was easier and more efficient than canning the produce at home using wood cooking stoves. During the summer, canneries were busy places, with the Scott County Cannery turning out over 1000 cans per day during peak season prior to World War II. During the war, promotional campaigns encouraged citizens to grow as much of their food as possible in Victory Gardens. Much of this food was preserved through canneries. The cannery program thrived during the 1940's and early 1950's but began to wane in the late 1950's. Charles Wade began teaching at Scott County in 1960 and ran the last cannery in the state. It closed when he left in 1965.

Beginning in the 1930's the state Program of Work encouraged chapters to institute cooperative buying programs. By buying farm supplies in bulk, chapter members could secure these items at lower prices. In the spring of 1943, a Kentucky Future Farmer Cooperative was established with 132 chapters participating. In 1943 alone, the cooperative helped members purchase 2732 breeding ewes, 23 carloads of beef heifer calves, 5 carloads of steer calves, and 4 truckloads of dairy calves and did over \$125,000 in business. It is believed that the Cooperative disbanded around 1948.



Stock certificate for the Kentucky Future Farmers Cooperative from 1943. This certificate was for the Whitesburg FFA Chapter for \$10. The Cooperative helped FFA members secure livestock and other inputs at reduced rates.

The 1940's

Even as the United States sought to avoid involvement in World War II, the Roosevelt Administration began efforts to increase food production and manufacturing capacity. Even if the United States stayed out of the war, great amounts of food and supplies would be needed by allies in Europe. Vocational Agriculture teachers worked with County Agriculture Agents to show farmers better methods of crop and livestock production to increase outputs, however progress was slow. One newspaper clipping from early 1941 has the County Agent telling farmers that phosphate fertilizer is available for their pastures at no cost- they just have to come to the Extension Office to claim it. The tone of the article leads one to believe that he was having trouble giving it away.

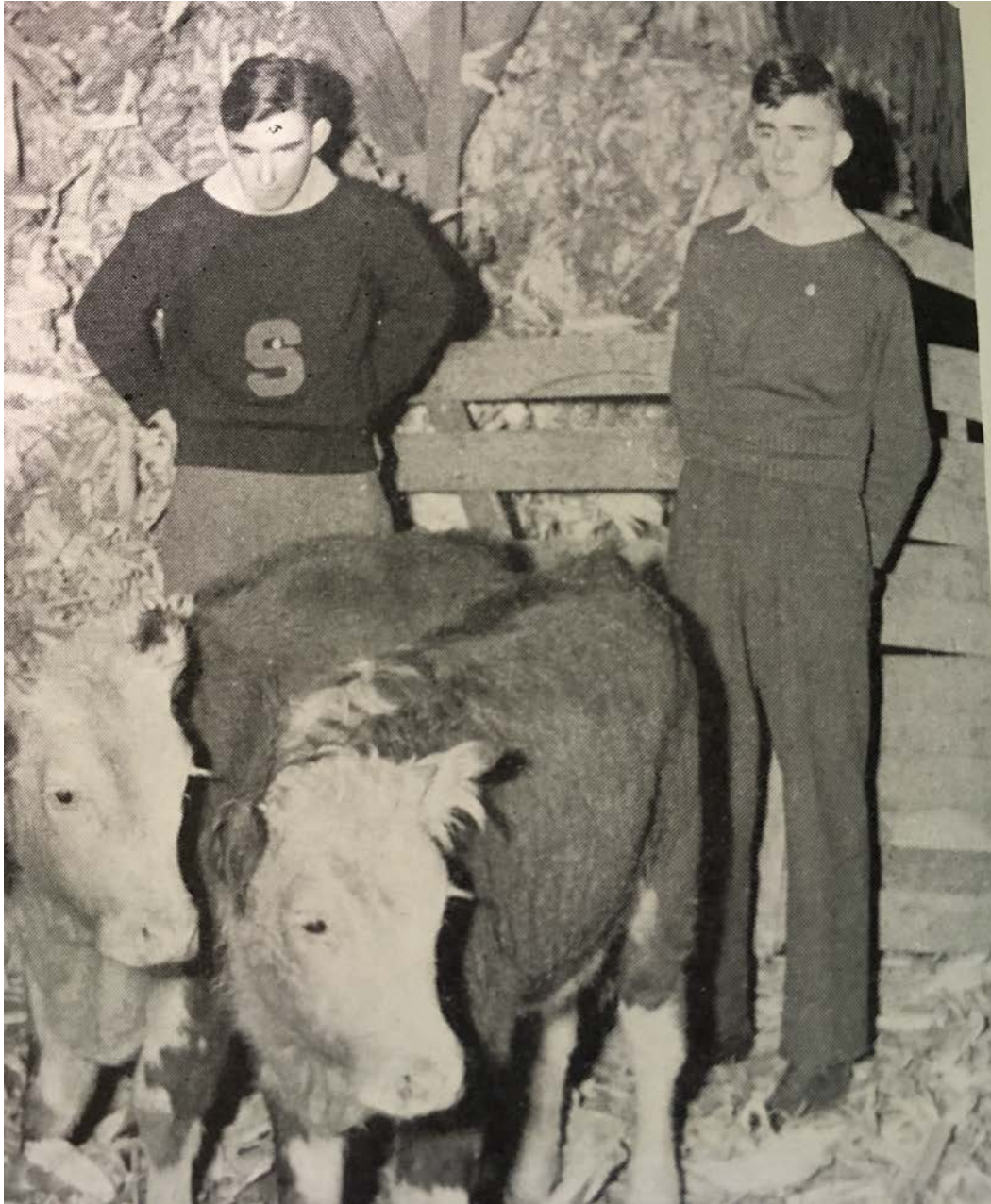
Once the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor in December 1941, the war effort began in earnest. FFA chapters helped in a variety of ways including scrap metal drives and selling war bonds. Many FFA members were drafted immediately following graduation from high school, while others dropped out of school to volunteer for service. Former National FFA Officer Roy Hunt of Brandenburg received his draft papers as soon as he walked off the stage from graduating from the University of Kentucky. Hunt went on to serve as a radar operator on the USS New Mexico and was in Tokyo Bay for the Japanese surrender in 1945. Three members of the 1942-43 State Officer team were unable to attend the 1943 State Convention because they had been inducted into military service, so a motion was passed to send each of them a telegram on behalf of the delegates at the Convention. Chapters were asked to limit attendance at the 1945 State Convention to delegates and those competing in state contests. State Treasurer Curtis Tucker had been inducted into the Army but was home on furlough and attended the 1945 State Convention to fulfill the duties of his office.

A number of Vocational Agriculture teachers were called into the armed services, while others stayed behind and continued leading the effort to improve agricultural production at home. As the war removed a significant portion of the farm labor force, machinery was used to fill the gap. "War Training Classes" were offered to help boys and adult farmers learn to operate and maintain modern farm machinery and implement better farming practices.



War Training Classes helped boys who were too young and men who were too old to fight learn to operate and maintain modern farm machinery. This photo is from Meade County in 1942.

The State Star Farmer Award was established in 1942. Mirroring the American Star Awards presented by the National FFA and sponsored by the Kansas City Star newspaper, this award recognized the State Degree recipient with the best farming program. The first recipient of the Kentucky FFA Star Farmer Award was Calvert Kelsey of Stamping Ground. Kelsey went on to serve in the United States Navy from 1944-46 and was a dentist in Frankfort for many years.



Kentucky's First State Star Farmer, Calvert Kelsey of the Stamping Ground Chapter (right), looking at cattle with advisor Ivan Jett.

The Postwar Era

The Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944, more commonly known as the GI Bill, established a series of programs designed to help soldiers returning to civilian life after the conclusion of World War II. Provisions included low interest loans for housing, college tuition payments, and vocational training. The bill also included funding for agricultural education for veteran farmers. These veteran farmer programs included both classroom and on farm instruction and were designed to help new farmers get established. Participants received free instruction at night as well as on farm visits by the teacher and were paid a small stipend for their participation.

Hugh Ramsey of Rockcastle County participated in what he referred to as "Farm School" during the late 1940's, while living on a small farm near Renfro Valley. At that time, he was farming with two horses and neither he nor his landlord owned a tractor. In addition to teaching farming techniques, the teacher, Bruce Mayhew, taught basic carpentry and machine operation. An army surplus Jeep was used for demonstrations as well. "They had a Jeep that had a special hitch on it. I remember them showing us how to plow with it. The idea was that we could all buy a surplus Jeep instead of a tractor. Of course it never caught on." Hugh received a set of tools as part of the program that he used throughout his life. His "Farm School" tool box and many of the original tools are still in possession of his family.

Although the greatest participation was in the years following World War II, veteran farmer programs continued for several decades, serving veterans of the Korean Conflict and the Vietnam War as late as the early 1980's.

Kentucky FFA established production awards (which eventually became proficiency contests) during the years following World War II. In 1947, awards included Beef Cattle, Dairying, Hogs, Poultry, Corn, Hay, Crops, Tobacco, Farm Shop, Pasture Improvement, Home Improvement, REA, and Fire Prevention. Sponsors included the Kroger Grocery and Baking Company, the L & N Railroad, Kentucky Stone, and Kentucky Farm Bureau. In 1947, the Louisville Courier Journal established a recognition for FFA members that became one of the top Kentucky FFA awards in the years to follow. The first winner was Randolph Cotton of the Versailles Chapter. The 1949 State Convention minutes mention that Miss Jackie Williams of Warsaw was selected Miss Kentucky FFA and presented with a bracelet. Miss Williams then presented a program that included ballet and tap dancing.

The 1950's saw great changes in the agricultural industry in Kentucky. The last horses were replaced by tractors, animal genetics improved dramatically, and crop yields were improved tremendously through the use of hybrid seed, fertilizers, and pesticides. Even as less young men remained on the farm, the need for agricultural education continued to grow.

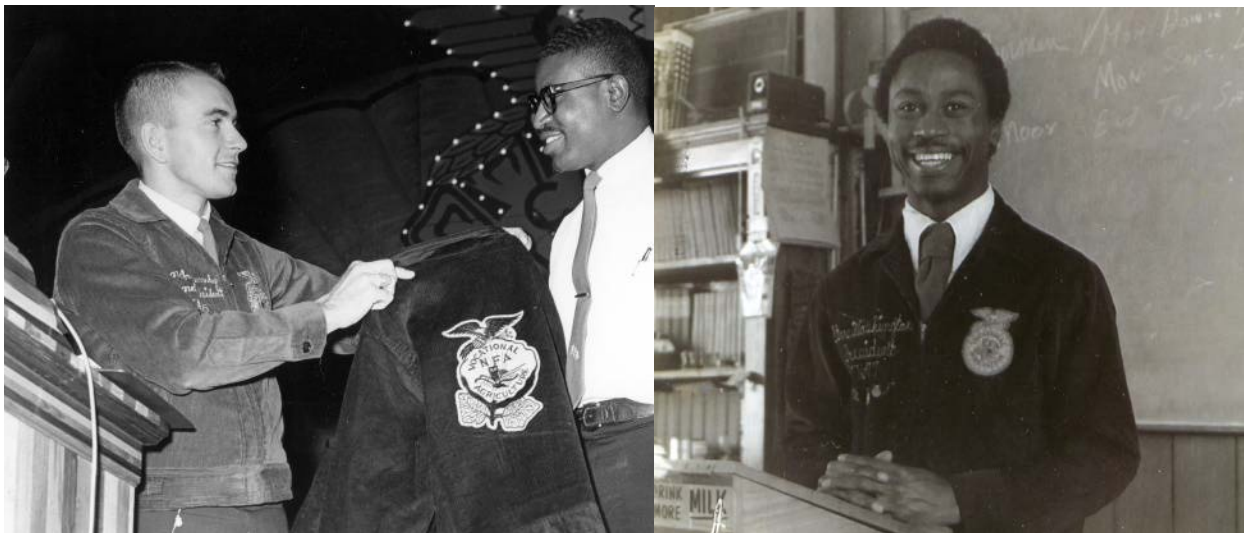
Agricultural education and FFA continued to grow and change to meet the needs of rural communities during this time. Electricity continued to move into rural areas and saw greater use on the farm as well as in the home. The FFA Leadership Training Center began offering a class in "Rural Electrification" to help boys learn how to properly install wiring and electrical components.

Desegregation, Consolidation, and Female Members

In 1954, the United States Supreme Court ruled in *Brown vs. Board of Education* that separate but equal schools for African American children was unconstitutional. Nothing about desegregation was easy, nor did the process happen overnight. Often the first black students to attend a white school were faced with protests and open hostility. In Sturgis, Kentucky, Governor A. B. “Happy” Chandler sent 200 state troopers and members of the National Guard to escort the first black students into school after a massive protest in 1956. (In 1957, Union County Schools were totally integrated without incident.) Many Kentucky counties had separate schools for black and white children that continued to operate until consolidated schools were built in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Even though consolidated, desegregated schools meant better opportunities for their children, many African American communities lost their identity with the closing of their schools. Decades of historical records and local heritage were thrown into dumpsters or left to mildew in abandoned school buildings. (See chapter on New Farmers of America for information on Kentucky’s involvement in NFA.)

Nationally, New Farmers of America (NFA) merged with FFA in 1965. Trigg County native Kenneth Kennedy was serving as National FFA President at the time and was part of the official ceremony marking the merger of the two organizations. By this time, most if not all, of Kentucky’s NFA chapters had already closed due to school desegregation. Hopkinsville Attucks High School was the last Kentucky school with an NFA chapter and it closed the year of the merger. (See separate NFA information below to learn more about NFA in Kentucky.)

In 1977, Steve Washington of the Adairville FFA Chapter in Logan County became the first African American to serve as a State FFA Officer in Kentucky, when he was elected State FFA President. According to State Executive Secretary Delmer Dalton, Washington was, “a dynamic individual who never forgot anyone he ever met.” Following FFA, he spent several years working in college admissions before passing away suddenly at the age of 38.



Left- National FFA President Kenneth Kennedy of Cadiz, Kentucky participating in the ceremony marking the merger of FFA and NFA at the 1965 National FFA Convention. Right- Steve Washington of Adairville served as the first African American State President of Kentucky FFA.

The 1960's were a decade of change in all parts of American life and these changes were felt in Kentucky as well. The consolidation of small, rural high schools into larger county schools began in the late 1950s and continued into the early 1980s. As the schools were consolidated in a county, two or three or four FFA chapters were merged into one at the new school. In most cases, this led to larger two and three teacher Agriculture programs with improved facilities and greater learning opportunities for students.

The 1960s also saw females officially admitted to Kentucky FFA membership. In the mid 1960's a few progressive teachers began to admit girls to Vocational Agriculture classes, however these girls were not allowed to officially join FFA. According to former Kentucky FFA Executive Secretary Robert Cox, Kentucky FFA accepted dues for female members as early as 1968, however girls were not given full membership rights.

At the 1969 State Convention, the delegates voted on whether or not to allow female members into the organization. The discussion was apparently a heated one as the minutes show that the motion was defeated, reconsidered, and then defeated again. (The vote was 140 in favor and 131 opposed, however, the motion needed a 2/3 vote to pass.) At the 1969 National FFA Convention, Kentucky had two delegates present to vote on the motion to allow female members. State President Lannie Harlow voted no because the Kentucky delegates had voted no. State Vice President Mike Richey voted yes because the vote had been so close at the State Convention. The delegates at the National Convention did vote to allow female membership and a new era in FFA began. (At the 1970 State FFA Convention, the State Convention delegates voted in favor of a motion to conform with National FFA and allow female membership in the Association.)

In the summer of 1970, Camp Director James D. Maddox allowed Robert "Woody" Cox to bring his wife and two or three girls from Bourbon County to the FFA Leadership Training Center. The number of girls enrolled in agricultural education courses climbed slowly but steadily through the 1970's and 1980's.

The first female teacher of agriculture in Kentucky was Terry Gray Bowlds who began work at Franklin County High School in the fall of 1976. Other early female teachers were Phyllis Case, Martha Butler, Brenda Oldfield, Kathy Noland, and Donna Remington. When Donna Remington began teaching in 1983, she walked into her first regional meeting that fall she was determined to watch and learn but not say anything. Regional Chair Leon Smiley looked at Donna, looked around the room, and said, "Well boys, it looks like we're integrated."



Brenda Oldfield (left) began her teaching career on a Native American reservation in Arizona. She was the first female agriculture teacher in Arizona and one of the first in Kentucky.

In 1979 Pam Brinkley of the North Hopkins FFA chapter was elected as the first female State Officer in Kentucky. Pam's father and FFA Executive Secretary Delmer Dalton worried about her safety traveling alone after dark. To pacify them, she traveled home from FFA banquets with a large stuffed animal buckled into her passenger seat.



Pam Brinkley of the North Hopkins FFA served as the first female State FFA Officer of Kentucky FFA in 1979-80. She paved the way for hundreds of female state officers over the 40 years since.

In 1989, Susan Smitson of Jessamine County was selected as the first female State FFA President in Kentucky. The following year, Amy Olt of Green County was selected as the first female State Star Farmer in Kentucky.



Left- Susan Smitson of Jessamine County served as the first female State President of Kentucky FFA in 1989-90. Right- Amy Olt of Green County was selected as the first female State Star Farmer in 1990.

Kentucky FFA Alumni

The Kentucky FFA Alumni was established during the 1971 State FFA Convention. The first President was Edward O’Nan of Sturgis. Mr. O’Nan was the father of then State President Dennis O’Nan and also one of the first 100 Lifetime Alumni members in the nation. Kentucky was one of the first 16 states in the nation to start an Alumni group. Edward O’Nan, Robert Kelley, and Woody Cox attended the organizational meeting for the National FFA Alumni in Chicago in the spring of 1972. The first three Alumni chapters were Caldwell County, Knox Central, and Morgan County. Mr. Petit from Caldwell County was an early promoter of FFA Alumni in the state.

Kentucky State Staff member Robert “Woody” Cox left Kentucky to become the Executive Director of the National FFA Alumni in 1976- a post he held until 1995. Linda Story of Apollo FFA Alumni served as a member and president of the National FFA Alumni Council in the late 1990’s. The FFA Alumni chapters at Scott County and Apollo were recognized nationally for their work in the 1990’s and 2000’s.

The Kentucky FFA Alumni Council has raised funds through the sale of T-shirts and a silent auction at the State FFA Convention. These funds have helped fund scholarships to the Kentucky FFA Leadership Training Center and the Washington Leadership Conference. Over the years FFA Alumni has worked to support local FFA chapters in a variety of ways. Alumni members have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to support FFA members, chaperoned trips, and advocated for Agricultural Education and FFA at all levels.



Left- Alumni members preparing food for an FFA event. Right- Linda Story of Apollo FFA Alumni in Owensboro served as President of the National FFA Alumni.

A Decade of Crisis and Change

The 1970s closed with the agricultural industry booming. Larger equipment, better genetics, and farm chemicals coupled with high demand for American agricultural commodities had led to great prosperity. The Russian Grain Embargo which began in 1980 ushered in the worst decade in agriculture since the Great Depression. Droughts- particularly those of 1980, 1983, and 1987- along with low prices for farm products led to a major farm crisis. Thousands of farms across the nation went bankrupt along with farm machinery giant International Harvester. Enrollment in Agricultural Education and membership in FFA took a major hit as many young people wanted little to do with what seemed like a doomed industry.

Leaders in Agricultural Education realized that in order to survive the focus of the program and the FFA had to become broader than just future farmers. A few teachers began to add horticulture classes and schools began to build greenhouses to attract new students. At the 1988 National FFA Convention, the name of the organization was officially changed from “Future Farmers of America” to the “National FFA Organization.” Other changes included the elimination of “Vocational Agriculture” on the FFA emblem in favor of “Agricultural Education.”

In 1988, Kentucky FFA added the Star in Agribusiness Award to recognize students who were involved in the agricultural industry but not actively farming. The first recipient was Gregory D. Walker of Green County.



Gregory Walker of Green County was named the first Kentucky State Star in Agribusiness in 1988.

In 1987, the Kentucky FFA Foundation was established to help raise support for Kentucky FFA members and programs. The original trustees of the Kentucky FFA Foundation were: Sam Lawson (Chairman), Damon Talley, Delmer Dalton, Scotty Baesler, Joe Wright, Jack Crowner, C. D. Bennett, Tom Stratton, Lawrence Hall, David Foster, Commissioner of Agriculture Butch Burnett, Ray Mackey, and Dr. Charles Byers. In the early years, the Foundation solicited funds from business and individuals, mainly to support awards at the State FFA Convention. Local chapters were encouraged to raise funds through a local fund drive and were recognized at the State Convention for their efforts.

1990-Present

In 1990, the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA), led to major changes across Kentucky education and Agricultural Education was no different. For decades, high schools had offered “Ag 1, Ag 2, Ag 3, and Ag 4” classes with a few innovative teachers adding horticulture, agriculture mechanics, and agribusiness courses to the mix. As part of KERA, these classes were replaced with approximately 30 options that could be offered by local schools at their discretion. These courses gave students many more options in preparing for careers and ranged from Nursery and Orchard Technology to Small Power Equipment. This transition to new course offerings was championed by Agricultural Education State Supervisor Rodney Kelly. While the transition to new course offerings was a challenge for teachers, it ultimately led to higher student enrollments and growth in FFA membership.

Horticulture classes gained in popularity during the 1990’s and many schools built greenhouses. School greenhouses attracted many students to agricultural education programs, provided a great opportunity for hands on learning, and had the added benefit of allowing the program to raise funds through plant sales.

In 1995, the Kentucky FFA Foundation began a highly successful toy tractor fundraiser. Scott County teacher Brenda Oldfield was instrumental in the effort to start and grow the tractor program in the first few years. Tractors were sold through Southern States stores and at the National Farm Machinery Show. The first collectible tractor was a Farmall Super MTA and it remains a valuable collector’s item today. Money from the tractor program eventually helped hire the first, full time Foundation Director in 2000.



The first Kentucky FFA Commemorative tractor was a Farmall Super MTA which was sold in Southern States stores beginning in the fall of 1995.

In 1999, the National FFA Convention moved to Louisville, after having been held in Kansas City since 1928. The Convention brought tens of thousands of visitors to the Kentucky Exposition Center and helped raise the profile of agricultural education and FFA within the state. The National Convention remained in Louisville through 2005.

In 2003, Richard Medley of Washington County was named the first State Star in Placement.



In 2006, Coty Back of Menifee County was elected to serve as National FFA Eastern Region Vice President in the first National Convention in Indianapolis. Back's election ended a 17 year drought in National Officers from the Kentucky Association.

In 2007, Nicholas Hardesty of Meade County was named the American Star Farmer. Hardesty was the first American Star from Kentucky.

In 2009, the State FFA Convention moved from Louisville to Lexington. The Convention had been held in Louisville since the late 1940's and at the Galt House all but one year since the hotel opened. The move to Lexington allowed the addition of the Kentucky FFA Agriscience Fair and the expansion of the convention career show.

Middle school agricultural education began to grow during the late 2000's. Early programs included New Haven Middle School in Nelson County, East Jessamine, West Jessamine, Kennedy Metro Middle School in Louisville, and Conkwright Middle School in Clark County. The first middle school state contests were held at the 2009 State Convention and included Quiz Bowl, Public Speaking, Extemporaneous Speaking, and Opening and Closing Ceremonies.

In 2011, Alex Meredith of Central Hardin was named the American Star in Agribusiness, becoming the first Kentucky student to be recognized with this honor.

In 2012, Joenelle Futrell of Daviess County was elected to serve as the National FFA Eastern Region Vice President. Futrell was the first female National FFA Officer from Kentucky. At the 2012 National Convention, Spencer County was recognized as the winner in the National Model of Excellence contest by National FFA, becoming the first chapter in the state to receive this honor.

In 2013, Chelsey Schlosnagle of the Collins FFA chapter was named the American Star in Agribusiness.



National Stars from Kentucky- left to right- Nicholas Hardesty- 2007 American Star Farmer, Alex Meredith- 2011 American Star in Agribusiness, Chelsey Schlosnagle- 2013 American Star in Agribusiness

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic forced the cancellation of various events around the world. The State FFA Convention was held virtually June 30-July 2, with contests happening in the weeks prior. The Leadership Training Center program was also held online with over 1500 students involved.



Several hundred FFA members competed in virtual contests during the 2020 State Convention. The Convention and many other activities were held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Kentucky FFA Leadership Training Center

The Kentucky FFA Leadership Training Center began as a dream of the Kentucky Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association (KVATA) soon after Kentucky FFA was formed. In 1936 many Civilian Conservation Corps camps were closing and several of these locations were considered. Sometime in the spring of 1937, the State Director of Vocational Education, Ralph H. Woods asked as many of the district chairmen as possible to join him in visiting the former CCC Camp near Hardinsburg in Breckinridge County. (CCC Camp PE63 was established in 1933 as a soil conservation camp and the group planted thousands of locust trees on private land in and around Breckinridge County. Locust trees were planted in gullies and on washed out hillsides to prevent soil erosion and to add nitrogen to the soil. The camp closed sometime in 1936.)



CCC Camp E63 ca. 1934

Those in attendance were unanimous in choosing this site and Dr. Woods paid \$26 for an option on the property. Dr. Woods, W. R. Tabb, E. P. Hilton, and S. S. Wilson signed a note and borrowed \$1750 from the Farmers Bank of Hardinsburg to complete the purchase on April 14, 1937. The note was paid off by assessing every chapter \$.50 per boy. The assessment was paid to the district chairman and then to the State Association. A total of \$2650 was raised. It is noted in a history of the Leadership Training Center that the local Vocational Agriculture Teacher J. P. Truitt led a drive to raise money in the Hardinsburg community to support the Camp. It is recalled that around \$800 was raised and that nearly every business in Hardinsburg gave something to the effort.

The existing CCC buildings on the property were given to the State Board of Education by the federal government. Jack Truitt, Vocational Agriculture Teacher in Hardinsburg, Paul Pace of the Farmers Bank of Hardinsburg, Henry Dehaven Moorman, Walter Moorman, and H. A. Ritchie were instrumental in convincing the government to give the buildings for this purpose. The following structures were donated at this time:

- 5 barracks- 20x112
- 1 garage- 26x22
- 1 recreation hall- 56x28
- 1 supply house- 32x20
- 1 latrine- 38x20
- 1 office and infirmary- 50x20
- 1 officers and foresters quarters- 100x28
- 1 mess hall-128x20



This photo shows a class on chapter organization and operation being held outside during the first years of the FFA Leadership Training Center. The buildings in the background are the original buildings which were constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps between 1933 and 1936.

It is believed that the first session of the FFA Leadership Training Center was held during the summer of 1938, however, a few boys probably spent time working to improve the facilities in the summer of 1937. The first few years were spent improving the property and facilities. One early camper, remembered spending a big part of the week clearing brush and cutting trees. Progress on improving the old facilities was slowed by lack of funds and the onset of World War II. Graves County native Lynwood Schrader attended the LTC for the first time in 1944. He recalled that the first item of business after arriving was to take your bed tick to the barn so that Slim Tivitt (long time LTC Maintenance Man) could fill it with straw.

Classes were designed to help boys become better leaders in their FFA chapters and ultimately their communities. Chapter Organization and Operation taught them how to plan and organize activities and events, set goals, and measure progress. Over time, classes in welding, rural electrification, and tractor driving were added to help prepare these young men for careers on the farm. Much time was spent meeting and networking with other boys from across the state to learn what they were doing on their farms and in their FFA chapters.

The FFA Leadership Training Center was not all about classes and learning. Film from the early days of FFA Camp show campers engaged in morning calisthenics and recreational activities such as boxing. A swimming pool was added in 1948 at a cost of \$40,000. The pool- still in use today- became the first swimming pool most of the farm boys ever saw.



The LTC swimming pool was the first pool that many farm boys ever swam in.

The old CCC barracks, kitchen, and bath house continued to be used through the 1940's but by 1950 they were beginning to show their age. In the early 1950's a dream was developed to replace the old CCC buildings with modern cottages and classrooms.

In 1953-54 State President Lawrence Hall led a capital campaign that raised over \$250,000. FFA chapters solicited funds from community members and the new buildings were paid for with thousands of 25 and 50 cent donations. Various companies also donated to the cause. The new facilities included a state of the art dining hall, administration building, classroom building, bathhouses, twenty cottages, a cook's cottage, and winter office building. The new facilities were dedicated on July 18, 1956.

Louisville attorney Robert Hensley, Breckinridge County farmer Walter Moorman, and Editor of the Kentucky Farmer Magazine J. O. Matlick were instrumental in the fund raising efforts. Moorman who had worked to aid the camp since the very beginning was honored by having his portrait hung in the Administration Building lobby.



State President Jerry Ringo (left) with Walter Moorman (center) at the dedication of the new Leadership Training Center facilities in 1956. Other two men are believed to be Robert Hensley and J. O. Matlick.



Top left: Each of the nine FFA districts raised \$2500 to build a modern cottage as part of the capital fund drive in 1953-1956. A total of 21 cottages were constructed to replace the outdated CCC barracks.

Top right: Seven classrooms were constructed to serve the needs of FFA members attending the Leadership Training Center. Morning classes taught the FFA boys how to serve as chapter officers, operate their FFA chapters efficiently, and implement modern practices on the farm.

Bottom left: Afternoons were reserved for athletic and swimming competitions. These boys are receiving instructions prior to a canoe race.

Bottom right: The canteen sold soft drinks, snacks, shirts, and chapter supplies. Notice the "FFA member lives here" signs for sale. These have become popular collector's items.



Throughout the next three decades, the FFA Leadership Training Center continued to thrive as FFA members from across the state came to receive leadership development training. In addition to hosting several weeks of FFA Camp each summer, the Leadership Training Center was the site of the Kentucky Vocational Agriculture Teachers Conference each summer and began hosting a camp for the Future Homemakers of America as well.

In the summer of 1970, Mr. Robert “Woody” Cox of Bourbon County FFA brought the first female FFA members to FFA Camp. Initially, only a small number of girls attended each week and they were housed in the “Cook’s Cottage” near the Dining Hall. The number of females attending the Leadership Training Center has grown steadily through the years and girls now make up over half the attendance at the LTC.

The Leadership Training Center was owned and operated by the Kentucky Vocational Agricultural Teachers Association through the early 1980’s.

Thanks to the efforts of State Senator Joe Wright, in the early 1990’s the Kentucky Legislature approved funding for a new administration building and dormitory facility. These buildings included a large auditorium, four classrooms, a small kitchen, office space for the LTC staff, and twelve climate controlled sleeping rooms. These buildings were dedicated on June 14, 1994 and allowed the facility to be used for events on a year round basis.



Left- state Senator Joe Wright cuts the ribbon to officially open the New Administration Building at the Leadership Training Center on June 14, 1994. Wright, a State Senator from Hardinsburg was instrumental in obtaining funding for the project. First Lady Elizabeth “Libby” Jones is also pictured. Right- LTC Center Director Dr. Peter B. Dreisbach during the dedication of the New Administration Building. “Dr. Pete” served as Center Director for over 25 years and oversaw a time of growth and progress at the Center.

As FFA Camp participation grew steadily from 1185 in 1994 to 1568 in 2008, it became apparent that the facility must be improved again. Thanks to the support of Kentucky Farm Bureau and the work of the Kentucky Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association, \$2 million was appropriated by the Kentucky General Assembly to renovate the dining hall. Governor Steve Beshear helped break ground for the renovation and expansion project in the summer of 2010 and First Lady Jane Beshear officially opened the dining hall in the summer of 2011.



First Lady Jane Beshear cuts the ribbon to officially open the newly renovated dining hall at the Leadership Training Center in June of 2011. Pictured left to right are Roger Thomas- Director of Governors Office of Agricultural Policy, Kendall Mallory- State FFA President, First Lady Jane Beshear, David S. Beck- Executive Vice President of Kentucky Farm Bureau.

Leadership Training Center Directors

The following individuals have served as directors of the FFA Leadership Training Center. In the early days, the director was one of the regional supervisors for Agricultural Education. It is believed that James Maddox was the first director to live on the property. Directors Cowan, Snodgrass, and Perry helped run the facility but a Frankfort based staff member attended each week during the summer to conduct the Camp program. Beginning with Dr. Pete Dreisbach, the LTC Directors have been Agricultural Education Consultants in the Kentucky Department of Education but based in Hardinsburg.

S. S. Wilson
M. M. Botto
W. C. Montgomery
James D. Maddox
Kenneth Cowan
H. M. Snodgrass
Early Perry
Dr. Peter B. Dreisbach- 1988-2015
Dr. Kristie B. Guffey- 2013-2016
Terry Shartzler- 2016-2019
Josh Mitcham- 2019-Present



Left- James D. and Jane Maddox served the Leadership Training Center from the late 1950's through the early 1970's. Mr. Maddox served as a regional supervisor for Vocational Agriculture and Mrs. Jane helped run the office. Maddox later served as FFA Executive Secretary and Director of Kentucky Young Farmers. Jane Maddox is remembered for her brownies which she served to many visitors over the years.

Right- Betty Hall Chambliss, Dr. Peter B. Dreisbach, and Brenda S. Bruington at the dedication of the Administration Building in 1994. "Mrs. Betty" was hired by Mr. Maddox and served as the LTC Secretary for many years. "Dr. Pete" led the Center through a time of growth and the first new construction in nearly 40 years. "Mrs. Brenda" has served as the Administrative Specialist for over 30 years. Each of these individuals served the LTC for over 25 years.

New Farmers of America

As FFA began to grow in the early 1930's many realized that African American students were missing out on this educational and leadership opportunity. The New Farmers of America was officially chartered in 1935 and provided leadership development opportunities for African American farm boys for the next 30 years.

Kentucky schools were segregated by state law until the 1950s and separate schools remained in some counties until the early 1960s. African American schools typically received lower levels of funding than white schools. African American teachers received up to 50% less pay as well as less training and support than their white counterparts. In spite of this, many African American schools provided their students with excellent educational opportunities and many students went on to achieve great things in life. Most counties had at least one elementary school for African American children but many did not have high schools. Those without African American high schools paid to send high school children to the Lincoln Institute which was a boarding school in Shelby County.

The first recorded African American Teacher of Agriculture in Kentucky was C. T. Cook at Little Rock High School in Bourbon County. Hopkinsville Attucks High School was the last to close in 1965. The longest serving African American teacher was Augustus Mack who began his career at Mt. Sterling in 1929-30 and then taught at Frederick Douglass High School in Fayette County from 1930-1961. Below is a list of teachers identified in the records as African American: Robert Bradshaw, Floyd Anderson, Robert Blytee, Charles Bonner, Claude Bradley, Matthew Brooks, W. J. Callery, Dan Carman, C. T. Cook, W. H. Craighead, John Emmett Creth, William Elster, John W. Freeman, John M. French, E. R. Henry, J. Roger Jones, Augusts Mack, Frank Orndorff, W. L. Shobe, George Simmuns, Claude Snorton, William Snorton, Herman Stovall, J. L. Watson, W. O. Whyte, Robert L. Wilson.

According to records available, the following segregated schools had Vocational Agriculture programs.

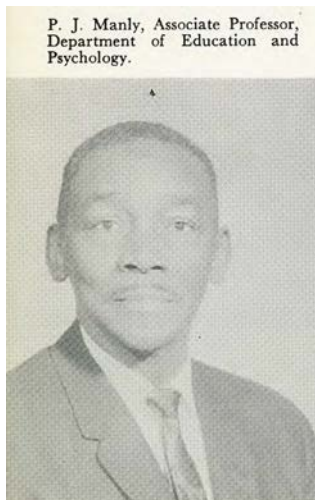
School	County	Years
Adairville	Logan County	1931-42
Hardinsburg Training School	Breckinridge County	1937-40
Elkton	Todd County	1942-44
Franklin County	Franklin County	1924-25
Frederick Douglass High School	Fayette County	1930-61
Georgetown/Ed Davis School	Scott County	1943-56
Hopkinsville Attucks	Christian County	1938-65
Horse Cave	Hart County	1942-46
LaGrange	Oldham County	1922-27
Lincoln High School	Simpson County	1946-53
Lincoln Institute	Shelby County (Boarding School)	1936 1953-70
Little Rock	Bourbon County	1917-34
Maddoxtown	Fayette County	1922-30
Maysville/John G. Fee	Mason County	1937-48 and 1953-56
Mt. Sterling/DuBois	Montgomery County	1922-64
Owensboro Western	Daviess County	1948-57
Paris Western	Bourbon County	1941-43
Richmond	Madison County	1940-56
Stanford- Lincoln	Lincoln County	1949-56

New Farmer of American was similar to FFA, with a few minor differences. The NFA emblem was based on a boll of cotton instead of a cross section of an ear of corn and NFA jackets were made from black corduroy instead of blue. The Treasurer was stationed at a photograph of the great African American scientist George Washington Carver.



Left- Officers of the Frederick Douglass NFA Chapter in Fayette County. Future National NFA President Rupert Seals is at far left and it is believed that advisor Augustus Mack is at the far right. Notice the picture of George Washington Carver in the background. Right- National officers of the NFA in Washington, DC. National FFA President Rupert Seals is standing in the middle.

Details related to the establishment and organization of NFA in Kentucky have been lost to time, but it is clear that the organization was in place by the mid 1940's. Kentucky remained active in the national organization until NFA merged with FFA in 1965. Kentucky NFA was run by staff of Kentucky State University. Professor P. J. Manly is remembered as a longtime leader of the organization. The State Convention was held at Kentucky State University and activities included public speaking, judging contests, and educational training.



Left- Professor P. J. Manly supervised the African American teachers in the state and helped coordinate NFA activities for many years. Right- Jackson Hall at Kentucky State University.

Former members recall attending National NFA Conventions on the campus of various black land grant colleges throughout the south. Like the FFA Convention, these included judging and speaking contests as well as general sessions.

Four Kentucky NFA members served as National NFA Officers:

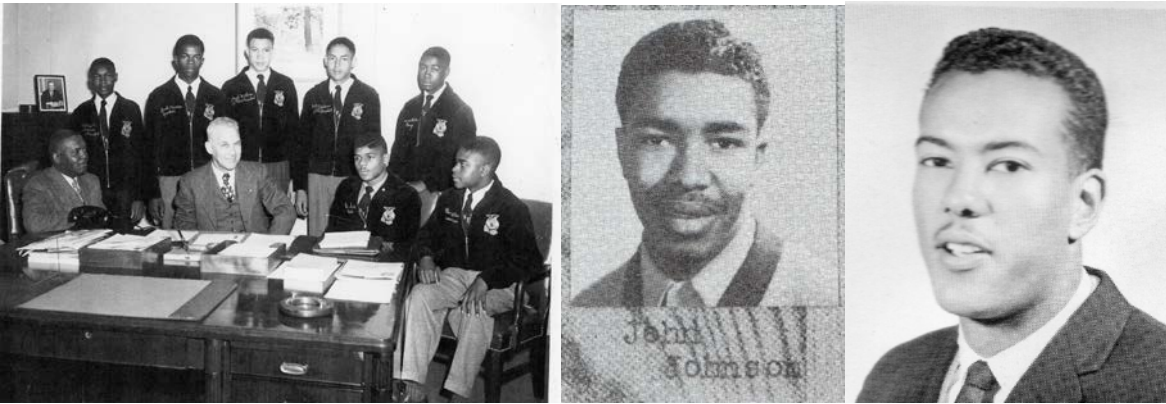
Rupert Seals- Douglass High School- Fayette County

National Secretary 1946-47 and National President 1948-49

John Johnson- Hopkinsville- National President 1952-53

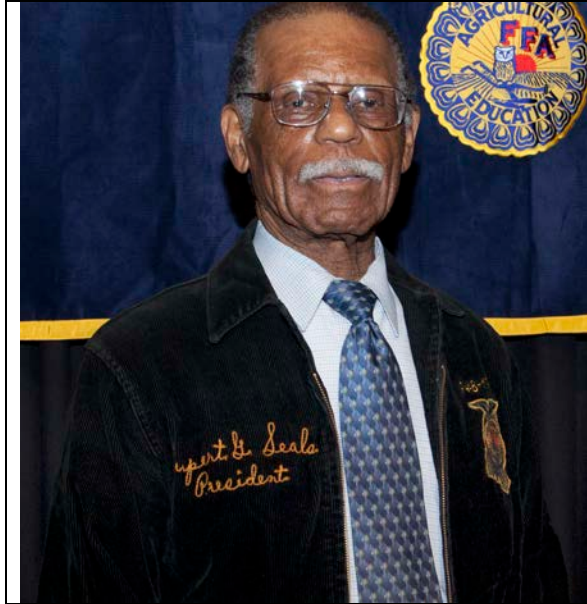
Robert Berry, Jr.- Mayslick High School- National Officer 1954-55

Harley Blane, Jr.- Hopkinsville- 1960-61



Three of Kentucky's NFA National Officers. Left- Rupert Seals with a group of NFA officers from across the country. Seals is seated second from right. Center- John Johnson of Hopkinsville. Right- Harley Blane, Jr. of Hopkinsville. (Johnson and Blane photos are courtesy of the Museum of Historic Hopkinsville and Christian County.) No photo has been found of Robert Berry, Jr.

Beginning in the late 1950's Kentucky's African American schools were merged with white schools. Desegregation was often accomplished only through force and with the help of the State Police and National Guard. As African American schools were closed, the New Farmers Chapters vanished. With the closing of these schools, much of the history of Kentucky New Farmers of America was lost.



NFA National President Dr. Rupert Seals attended the 2015 State FFA Convention. He is pictured above wearing his NFA jacket which he donated to Florida A & M University. It is the only NFA jacket worn by a Kentucky NFA member known to exist.

Kentucky FFA Foundation

In 1987, the Kentucky FFA Foundation was established to help raise support for Kentucky FFA members and programs. The original trustees of the Kentucky FFA Foundation were: Sam Lawson (Chairman), Damon Talley, Delmer Dalton, Scotty Baesler, Joe Wright, Jack Crowner, C. D. Bennett, Tom Stratton, Lawrence Hall, David Foster, Commissioner of Agriculture Butch Burnett, Ray Mackey, and Dr. Charles Byers. Damon Talley, a former FFA State President and practicing attorney, was instrumental in completing the legal documents necessary to form the FFA Foundation.

In the early years, the Foundation solicited funds from business and individuals, mainly to support awards at the State FFA Convention. Local chapters were encouraged to raise funds through a local fund drive and were recognized at the State Convention for their efforts.

In 1995, the Kentucky FFA Foundation began a highly successful toy tractor fundraiser. Scott County teacher Brenda Oldfield was instrumental in the effort to start and grow the tractor program in the first few years. Tractors were sold through Southern States stores and at the National Farm Machinery Show. The first collectible tractor was a Farmall Super MTA and it remains a valuable collector's item today. Money from the tractor program eventually helped hire the first, full time Foundation Director in 2000.

In 2000, the Kentucky FFA Foundation partnered with then Commissioner of Agriculture Billy Ray Smith to hire the Foundation's first fulltime director, Charity Williams. Williams served from 2000-2001 and was followed by Christi Marksby who served from 2001-2005. Billy Ray Smith served as director from 2005 until his retirement in 2013. Sheldon McKinney has served as director since 2013.



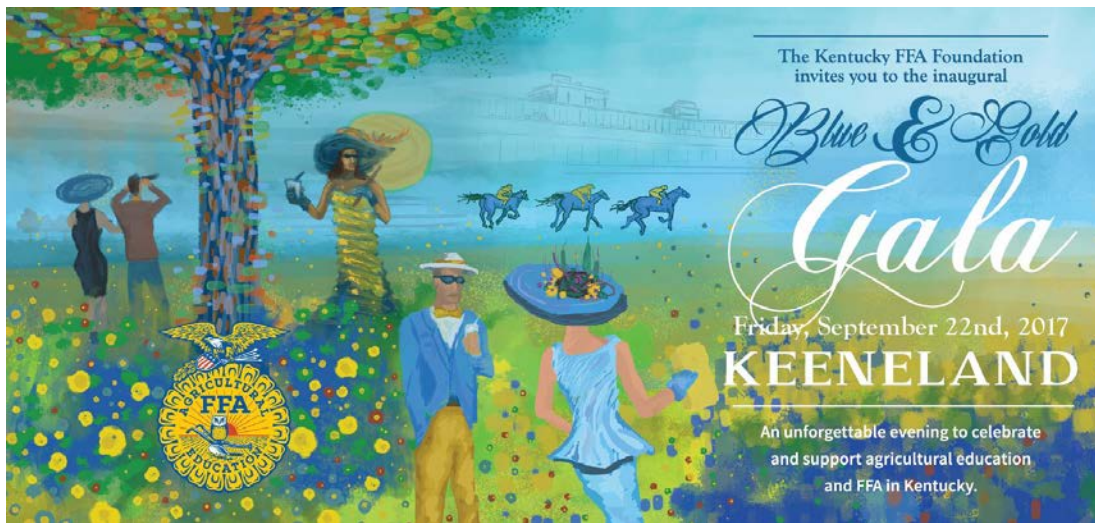
Left- Billy Ray Smith served as Commissioner of Agriculture from 1995-2003 and as FFA Foundation Director from 2005-2013. Right- Sheldon McKinney has served as FFA Foundation Director since 2013.

In 2002, the Kentucky FFA Foundation received a \$2 million grant from the Kentucky Agriculture Development Board. Dr. Tony Brannon was responsible for writing the grant application. Commissioner of Agriculture Billy Ray Smith was instrumental in securing approval for this funding. The money was endowed with interest used to fund programs to diversify the agriculture industry or develop the leadership skills of FFA members.

In 2011, Commissioner of Agriculture James Comer revamped the Ag Tag Program which had begun under Commissioner Richie Farmer. This program allowed the owners of farm vehicles to make a voluntary \$10 donation during the licensing process. The proceeds were split three ways between Kentucky 4-H, Kentucky FFA, and the Kentucky Proud program.



In 2017, the FFA Foundation held its first Blue and Gold Gala at Keeneland. The Blue and Gold Gala has become a great tradition and has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to support FFA members since its inception.



Teacher Education in Kentucky

In the fall of 1914, the University of Kentucky added a course called Agricultural Education. It was taught by Charles D. Bohannon in the Department of Farm Economics. The 1914-1915 Course Catalogue explained why the new course was being offered, "The teaching of agriculture in elementary and high schools is making rapid advances both in the country at large and in Kentucky. The time is not far distant when this subject will be added to our public school system by legislative enactment. Teachers of this branch are in constant demand and at very attractive salaries. The courses here offered are designed to fit students for this new work."

On February 1, 1924. Carsie Hammonds left his job at Bremen in Muhlenberg County to begin work at the University of Kentucky. It is believed that he was the first staff member whose time was dedicated solely to preparing Vocational Agriculture teachers. Hammonds had a total of four and a half years teaching experience at the time having taught agriculture at Wingo in Graves County prior to moving to Bremen. Hammonds completed graduate work at Cornell in 1928 and went on to be the head of the Agricultural Education Department at UK. Dr. Hammonds served Kentucky Agricultural Education for 43 years before his retirement in 1964.

Eastern Kentucky University and Western Kentucky University were established to train teachers in 1906. Morehead State University and Murray State University were established in 1922 to serve as teacher training institutions in the far eastern and western ends of the state. Each of these schools developed agriculture programs and established farms for teaching and research purposes. Berea College had a strong presence in the eastern part of the state and also had an agriculture program and farm.

Kentucky State University provided training for African American teachers prior to school desegregation in the 1960's. Professor P. J. Manley was the longtime teacher educator at Kentucky State and helped coordinate the work of New Farmers of America. When Manley traveled with Dr. Harold Binkley of UK to visit teachers, they had to eat lunch at different restaurants because of segregation laws that were then in place.

Each university in the state has provided invaluable support to Agricultural Education and FFA throughout the years by hosting contests, leadership conferences, and other events. University faculty and staff have coordinated contests and events and provided various forms of support to teachers in their area

Until the late 1960's, the only institution able to certify Vocational Agriculture Teachers was the University of Kentucky. Students from Berea, Eastern, Morehead, Murray, and Western completed undergraduate coursework at their respective schools and then completed teaching methods and student teaching at the University of Kentucky. In 1967-1968, Murray State became the first regional institution to certify Vocational Agriculture Teachers. Western and Morehead soon followed. EKV began certifying teachers in 2004.

The teacher educators at the various institutions met with the State Staff in Agricultural Education as part of the "Joint State Staff" several times each year to discuss various issues and initiatives. Much good work came out of these meetings including coordination of curriculum projects and professional development for teachers.

It would be nearly impossible to list everyone who has served as Teacher Educator in Kentucky throughout the years, not to mention dozens of faculty members who worked with Ag Education students but were not directly in the program. Below is a fairly complete list.

<p>Eastern Kentucky University Dr. Danny Britt Mr. Cris Scudder Dr. Mike McDermott</p> <p>Morehead State University Dr. Joe Bendixon Dr. Mike McDermott Dr. Adam Kantrovich</p>	<p>University of Kentucky Dr. Carsie Hammonds Dr. Harold Binkley Dr. Herbert Bruce Mr. Floyd Cox Dr. Bill Bingham Dr. George Luster Dr. Carl Lamar Dr. Charles Byers</p>
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<p>Dr. Joyce Stubbs Dr. Steve Stubbs</p> <p>Murray State University</p> <p>Mr. William Cherry Dr. Lloyd Jacks Dr. Eldon Heathcott Dr. Tony Brannon Dr. Jay Morgan Dr. Andy Baker Dr. Brian Parr Dr. Kimberly Bellah</p>	<p>Dr. Rodney Tulloch Dr. Maynard Iverson Dr. Harry Boone Dr. Ron Powell Dr. Shane Robinson Dr. Robin Peiter Horstmier Mr. Dexter Knight Dr. Tracy Kitchel Dr. Bryan Hains Dr. Stacy Vincent Dr. Rebekah Epps</p> <p>Western Kentucky University</p> <p>Dr. Ted Zimmer Dr. Jim McGuire Dr. David Coffey Dr. Jack Rudolph Dr. Pete Dreisbach Dr. John Kessell Dr. Thomas Kingery</p>
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State Staff Members in Agricultural Education

State FFA Advisors



G. Ivan Barnes

Barnes served as the State Director for Vocational Education and the State Director of Agricultural Education. He was involved with Agricultural Education in the state as early as 1920 and was involved in the establishment of Kentucky FFA in 1930.



F. G. Burd- 1931-1937

F. G. Burd taught agriculture at Hardyville High School from 1920-1921 and at Bedford from 1921-1924. It is believed that he served on the State Staff from 1924-1931. He served as State FFA Advisor from 1931-1937.



Ralph H. Woods- 1938-1945

Dr. Ralph Woods taught agricultural education at LaCenter High School from 1922-1926. He worked at the University of Kentucky from 1930-1936 and was on State Staff from 1936-1945. In 1946 he became President of Murray State University where he served until 1968.



E. P. Hilton- 1946-1959

E. P. Hilton was a native of Greenup County and a first cousin to famous author Jesse Stewart. He began his career teaching in one room schools in Greenup County before becoming an agriculture teacher. HiltonHe taught at Science Hill 1929-1932, Mayslick 1932-1936, Picadome 1936-1939, and LaFayette 1939-1940. He joined the State Staff in 1940 and served as State FFA Advisor from 1946-1959.



M. M. Botto- 1960-1967

M. M. Botto was a native of Boston in Nelson County and played ~~baseball~~, basketball, and football as a student for Coach Ed Diddle at Western Kentucky University. When asked who was the best man who ever played for him, Ed Diddle said “the best man who ever played for me wasn’t the best player. But the best man was Maynard Botto.” He taught agriculture at Munfordville High School from 1924-1946, and also coached basketball. He became a member of the State Staff in 1946. He served as State FFA Advisor from 1960-1967.



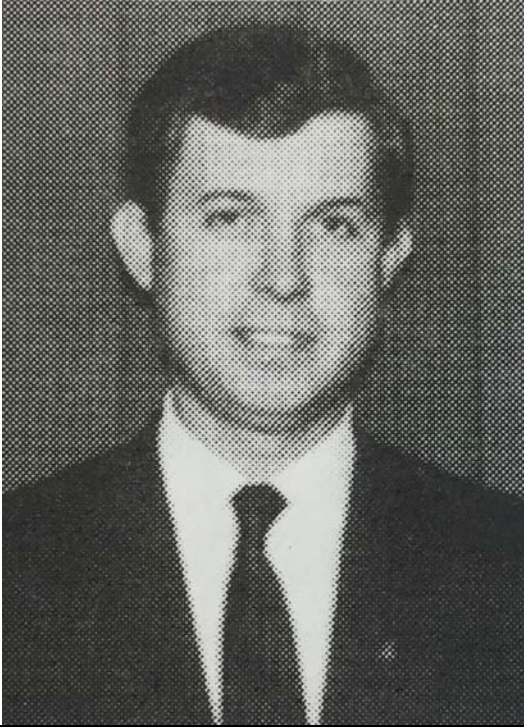
W. C. Montgomery- 1968- 1971

Warren C. "Jerry" Montgomery began his career at Monticello High School in 1930. He taught at Monticello from 1930-1932, at Whitesburg from 1934-1939, at Stamping Ground from 1939-1946. He served on State Staff from 1946-1948. He was the FFA Executive Secretary from 1948-1968 and State FFA Advisor from 1968-1971.



Robert L. Kelley- 1972-1984

Robert L. Kelley taught at Munfordville High School from 1947-1955. He served on the State Staff from 1955-1961, served as Executive Secretary from 1961-67, and as State FFA Advisor from 1967-1985. It is remembered that each time Mr. Kelley spoke to Ag Teachers, he began with the statement, "Men, we are at a crossroads....."



Rodney D. Kelly- 1985-1990

Rodney Kelly grew up in Scott County on his family's diversified farm. He graduated from the University of Kentucky and taught agriculture at Scott County from 1974-1977. He served on the State Staff from 1977-1985 and then as the State FFA Advisor from 1985-1990. Kelly was instrumental in the establishment of the Kentucky FFA Foundation and the changes to Agricultural Education as a result of the Kentucky Education Reform Act.



Delmer L. Dalton- 1991-2000

Delmer Dalton grew up in the Science Hill community of Pulaski County and attended Eubank High School. He farmed for a couple of years following graduation before his high school Ag Teacher convinced him to enroll at the University of Kentucky. He taught agriculture at Bryan Station High School prior to joining the State Staff. Dalton served as Executive Secretary from 1977-1990 and as State Advisor from 1991-2000.



Charles Curtis "Curt" Lucas- 2000-2011

Curt Lucas grew up in the Middleburg community of Casey County. He attended Casey County High School and graduated from Western Kentucky University. He worked in the agriculture industry for a few years following graduation. He taught at Boone County High School from 1982-1992. He became FFA Executive Secretary in the spring of 1993 and served in that role until the fall of 2000. He served as State FFA Advisor from 2000 until his retirement in 2011.



Brandon K. Davis- 2011-Present

Brandon K. Davis was an FFA member in Green County and served as the State FFA Sentinel in 2000-2001. He graduated from Western Kentucky University in 2004. He taught agriculture at John Hardin High School from 2005-2011 when he became State FFA Advisor. Davis served as the 2018-2019 President of the National Association of Supervisors of Agricultural Education.

FFA Executive Secretaries



W. R. "Roy" Tabb- 1941-1945

W. R. Tabb was a native of Grayson County. He taught agriculture at Frenchburg High School from 1926-1928 and at Beechmont (Hancock County) from 1928-1937. He worked at the University of Kentucky from 1937-1956. He was on the staff at UK during the time he served as Executive Secretary. Mr. Tabb was involved in the establishment of the Leadership Training Center.



Stephen S. Wilson- 1946-1947

S. S. Wilson was a native of Grayson County. He taught agriculture at Caneyville High School from 1926-1938 and at Pleasureville from 1938-1946. He served as Executive Secretary in 1946 and 1947. He served on the State Staff until 1953.



W. C. Montgomery- 1948-1960

Warren C. "Jerry" Montgomery began his career at Monticello High School in 1930. He taught at Monticello from 1930-1932, at Whitesburg from 1934-1939, at Stamping Ground from 1939-1946. He served on State Staff from 1946-1948. He was the FFA Executive Secretary from 1948-1968 and State FFA Advisor from 1968-1971.



Robert L. Kelley, Sr.- 1961-1967

Robert L. Kelley taught at Munfordville High School from 1947-1955. He served on the State Staff from 1955-1961, served as Executive Secretary from 1961-67, and as State FFA Advisor from 1967-1985.



James D. Maddox- 1968-1971

James D. Maddox taught agriculture at Butler High School in Caldwell County from 1948-1954. In 1954 he became a regional supervisor for Agricultural Education and the Director of the FFA Leadership Training Center. He served as FFA Executive Secretary from 1968-1971. He later served as director of the Kentucky Young Farmers and Assistant Director of Agricultural Education prior to his retirement in 1984.



Robert W. "Woody" Cox- 1972-1975

A native of Bourbon County, Robert "Woody" Cox graduated from the University of Kentucky. He taught agriculture at Madison Central from 1968-1970 and at Bourbon County from 1970-1971. He served as Executive Secretary from 1972-1975. He left Kentucky to serve as director of the National FFA Alumni Association for many years.



Delmer L. Dalton- 1977-1992

Delmer Dalton grew up in the Science Hill community of Pulaski County and attended Eubank High School. He farmed for a couple of years following graduation before his high school Ag Teacher convinced him to enroll at the University of Kentucky. He taught agriculture at Bryan Station High School prior to joining the State Staff. Dalton served as Executive Secretary from 1977-1990 and as State Advisor from 1991-2000. During his tenure, Kentucky FFA had many firsts: first African American State President, first female State Officer, and first female State President.



Charles Curtis "Curt" Lucas- 1993-2000

Curt Lucas grew up in the Middleburg community of Casey County. He attended Casey County High School and graduated from Western Kentucky University. He worked in the agriculture industry for a few years following graduation. He taught at Boone County High School from 1982-1992. He became FFA Executive Secretary in the spring of 1993 and served in that role until the fall of 2000. He served as State FFA Advisor from 2000 until his retirement in 2011.



Dexter Knight- 2001-2004

Dexter Knight is a native of Jessamine County. He graduated from the University of Kentucky and taught agriculture at Jessamine County High School from 1987-1998 and West Jessamine from 1999-2001. He served as the Kentucky FFA Executive Secretary from 2001-2004. He has since served as a lecturer at the University of Kentucky and as Principal of the Jessamine Career and Technology Center.



Matt Chaliff- 2004-Present

Matt Chaliff graduated from Rockcastle County High School and served as the 1997-1998 Kentucky River State Vice President. He graduated from the University of Kentucky and taught agriculture at Taylor County High School from 2000-2004. He began his tenure as Executive Secretary in September 2004.

National FFA and NFA Officers from Kentucky

John Reisz- 1934-1935



John Reisz is third from left (wearing glasses.)

John Reisz (pronounced Reeze) of Owensboro served as the first National FFA Officer from Kentucky in 1934-35. He graduated from LaSalle University in 1942. Mr. Reisz was a long-time employee of Modern Welding Company and retired as President and CEO. He was very active in his church and community and served on numerous boards and committees. He was president of the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, chairman of the board of Brescia College, vice president of the National Association of Manufacturers, and a director of Owensboro National Bank. He was also a Certified Public Accountant. He was an active member of Our Lady of Lourdes Church. He and his wife Margaret had 10 children. Mr. Reisz died in 2012 at the age of 96.

Julian Pierce- 1936-37



Julian Pierce grew up on the family farm near Stamping Ground in Scott County. He was an active member of the Stamping Ground FFA Chapter where his advisor was Ivan Jett. Mr. Pierce served as National FFA First Vice President in 1936-37. He attended the University of Kentucky where he earned a degree in agriculture in 1940. He taught agriculture at Bath County from 1940-42 and at Great Crossings in Scott County from 1942-47. In 1947 he stopped teaching to farm fulltime. His 300+ acre farm included tobacco and Limousine cattle. Mr. Pierce was active in the community and received the Scott County Pioneer Award. He and his wife Hilma Claxon Pierce had one daughter Camille Singer. Grandson Jeff Jennings was a Scott County FFA member and is an attorney in Lexington. Mr. Pierce died in June 1995.

Roy H. Hunt- 1940-41



Roy Hunt is seated at right.

Roy H. Hunt of Brandenburg served as State President in 1939-40 and as a National FFA Officer in 1940-41. He grew up on a family farm in Meade County that eventually became part of Fort Knox. His father ran a country store and sold Case farm implements. During high school, Mr. Hunt would often drive a load of grain or hogs to Louisville before going to school. Mr. Hunt earned a degree in Agriculture from the University of Kentucky. As he walked off stage from graduating, his sister handed him his draft papers to enter World War II. He served as a radar operator on the USS New Mexico and was in Tokyo Bay for the Japanese surrender. Mr. Hunt worked briefly for the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture before moving home to take over the Case equipment dealership. He built Hunt Tractor Company into one of the largest Case dealers in the country prior to his retirement. Mr. Hunt resides in Louisville where he remains active in his church.

Paul Smart- 1946-47



Paul Smart grew up on a farm in Woodford County where he raised sheep, cattle, hogs, corn, and tobacco. He showed cattle, sheep, and hogs and one of his sows produced the Grand Champion barrow at the 1946 State Fair. Smart was a member of the Versailles FFA chapter and his advisor was C. O. Neal. He was the State President in 1943-44 and was chosen as the American Star Farmer for the Central Region in 1946. Smart served as the National Third Vice President in 1946-47. He served in the United States Army during the Korean Conflict. Upon returning from the Army he was the farm broadcaster for WVLK radio for several years. He was a director of Woodford County Farm Bureau and active in the Woodford County Fair as well as the Cleveland Home in Versailles. After retiring from farming in 1983 he worked for the Woodford Bank. He and his wife Rea had one daughter Janelle Smart. Janelle has one daughter Letitia Marshall. Smart died in 1994.

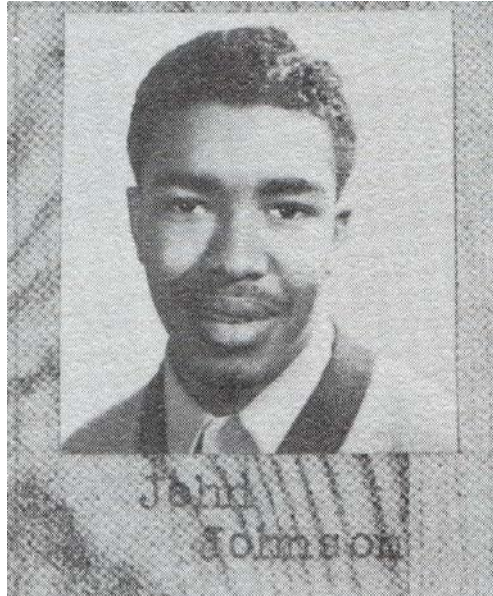
Rupert Grant Seals- 1946-47 and 1948-49



Rupert Seals is shown second from left with officers of the Frederick Douglass NFA Chapter in Fayette County. Advisor Augustus Mack is at the far right.

Rupert Grant Seals served as the National Secretary for the New Farmers of America in 1946-47 and National President in 1948-49. Seals attended Frederick Douglass High School in Lexington where his teacher of agriculture was Augustus Mack. As an NFA Officer, Seals had the opportunity to travel to a number of colleges in the south. He received a Bachelor's Degree from Florida A & M University, his masters from the University of Kentucky, and completed a PhD at Washington State University. He taught at each of these universities as well as Tennessee State University, Iowa State University, and the University of Nevada. Dr. Seals has received numerous honors including being inducted into the George Washington Carver Public Service Hall of Fame at Tuskegee University and being named a Distinguished Graduate of Washington State University. Dr. Seals lives with his wife in Reno, Nevada where he is a columnist for the Reno Gazette-Journal.

John Johnson- 1952-53



John Johnson from an Attucks High School Yearbook. Photo courtesy of Museum of Historic Hopkinsville and Christian County.

John Johnson of Hopkinsville served as the National President for NFA in 1952-53. Mr. Johnson is deceased and no additional information about him has been located.

Robert Berry, Jr.- 1954-55

Robert Berry, Jr. of Mayslick served as National NFA Officer in 194-55. He is deceased and no additional information about him has been located.

Jerry Ringo- 1956-57



Jerry Ringo grew up on a small farm in Menifee County. Ringo was an active breeder of Poland China hogs. Ringo served as State FFA President in 1954-55 and was elected to National FFA Office in 1956. As a student at the University of Kentucky, Ringo became the publisher of a weekly paper in Frenchburg, the Kentucky Mountain Journal. He was very active in the Democratic party and was the youth chairman for Governor A. B. "Happy" Chandler. Ringo had Rheumatic fever as a teenager and sustained permanent damage to his heart. He died at the age of 26. FFA members of his era remember him fondly and say, "If he had lived, Jerry Ringo would have been Governor." Interestingly enough he was on the same National Officer team as Jerry Litton of Missouri who was also a rising political star when he died in a plane crash the night he was elected to the United States Senate.

Howard Downing- 1957-58



Howard Downing is pictured in the center of the front row.

Howard Downing grew up on the family farm in Jessamine County High School. His teacher of agriculture was Harlan Veal, who Downing credits for much of his success. After serving as State President in 1956-57, Downing was elected the first National FFA President from Kentucky in 1957. Downing attended the University of Kentucky and earned a law degree. He continues to serve as an attorney in Jessamine County and spent many years as the attorney for the Jessamine County Board of Education.

Dr. Harley Harold Blane, Jr.- 1960-61



Harley Blane from the Attucks High School Year Book. Photo courtesy of the Museum of Historic Hopkinsville and Christian County

Harley Blane, Jr. was born May 4, 1944 in Christian County. He attended Hopkinsville Attucks High School where his teacher of agriculture was Claude Snorton, Jr. Following high school he became a veterinarian. He was a member of the Kirkpatrick Street Church of Christ. He died in 1996 and is buried in the Cave Springs Cemetery in Christian County. He has two children Harley and Angela.

Kenneth Kennedy- 1964-65



Kenneth Kennedy of Cadiz served as National FFA President in 1964-65. Kennedy grew up on the family farm in Trigg County raising tobacco, cattle, and row crops. He attended the University of Kentucky and earned a law degree. He served as an attorney in Cadiz for many years and was the city attorney.

Steve Meredith- 1984-85



Steve Meredith grew up on a family farm in Hardin County. He was a member of the West Hardin FFA where his FFA advisors were Hezzie Williams and Joe Edd Johnson. Meredith served as State FFA President in 1983-84 and then was elected National FFA President in November 1984. Following his time as a National Officer, he attended the University of Kentucky where he earned a degree in Ag Economics. He previously worked for the Governor's Office of Agriculture Policy and the Kentucky Finance Cabinet. He farms, and runs a greenhouse business in Elizabethtown. His son Alex was named the American Star In Agribusiness in 2011- the first Kentucky member to be honored with this award.

Brad Chambliss- 1988-89



Brad Chambliss is seated center.

Brad Chambliss grew up raising Hereford cattle on a farm in Breckinridge County. His father Dr. Bob Chambliss was a State FFA Officer in 1956-57. He was a member of the Breckinridge County FFA where his advisors were Leon Smiley, Pat Henderson, Tom Macy, and Ron Gibson. He served as State FFA President in 1986-87 and as a National FFA Officer in 1988-89. Chambliss attended the University of Kentucky and earned a degree in Animal Science. Following graduation, he raised Hereford cattle full time for several years. He worked as a mortgage broker for 14 years and is currently working as a mortgage banker in Elizabethtown. He continues to farm part time and is very active in the Severance Valley Baptist Church. He and his wife Carla have four sons- Clay, Clint, Caleb, and Cooper.

Coty Back- 2006-07



Coty Back of Menifee County served as the National Eastern Region Vice President in 2006-2007. Back attended Menifee County High School where his advisors were Orbin Rudd, Gary Hale, and Tim Adams. He served as the State FFA Vice President in 2004-05. Back completed a degree in Agriculture Business with a minor in Communications from Western Kentucky University. He previously served as the National Officer Coordinator and National Convention Arena Manager for the National FFA Organization and currently (2020) works for Neogen Corporation.

Joenelle Futrell- 2012-13



Joenelle Futrell of Daviess County served as the National Eastern Region Vice President in 2012-2013. Futrell's FFA Advisors were Jason Smith, Chad Askins, and Craig Howard. She served as the 2010-2011 State Vice President. Futrell completed degrees from the University of Florida and Oklahoma State University. She served as a facilitator for the National Leadership Conference for State Officers and the Washington Leadership Conference. She currently (2020) serves as the State FFA Officer Manager for the Oregon FFA Association.

Ruth Ann Myers- 2014-15



Ruth Ann Myers of Boyle County FFA served as the 2014-2015 National Eastern Region Vice President. She is the daughter of Joe and Toni Myers. Her father Joe was a State FFA Officer in 1981-82. Myers attended Boyle County High School where her advisors were Toni Myers and Matthew Whitaker. Her SAE involved showing hogs, working with cattle, and agricultural education. She completed a degree in Agricultural Education from the University of Kentucky and currently (2020) teaches middle school agriculture at Leestown Middle School in Fayette County.

Gracie Furnish- 2017-2018



Gracie Furnish of Harrison County served as the 2017-2018 National Eastern Region Vice President. She is the daughter of Brian and Amy Furnish of Cynthiana. Her FFA Advisors were Savannah Robin, Erin Butler, and Chris Thompson. Her SAE involved work on her family's diversified farm where she helped with cattle, hay, tobacco, and hemp production. Furnish served as the 2016-2017 State Secretary for Kentucky FFA. She is currently (2020) completing a degree in Agricultural Education at the University of Kentucky.

Acknowledgements

A history that spans over 100 years could not be completed by any one person. Many friends have contributed to this document and it simply would not have been possible without their input.

Dr. Pete Dreisbach fueled my interest in FFA history during a visit to the Kentucky FFA Archives in the summer of 1997. Dr. Pete had a way of making history come alive and I've spent the 20+ years since trying to dig deeper and find out more.

Dr. Charles Byers was one of my professors at the University of Kentucky and is a gifted story teller. Dr. Byers also has a wonderful memory and has been a good listener his entire life. While his memories of Kentucky FFA go back to the 1950's he knew Harold Binkley, Carsie Hammonds, Ralph Woods, and others who went back to the early days of Agricultural Education in Kentucky. Dr. Byers has answered dozens of questions, suggested edits, and been invaluable in pointing me to other sources of information. Dr. Byers and Brenda Oldfield also helped film video interviews with a number of past FFA and NFA members which have been invaluable in developing this document.

Dr. Charles Wade served on the State Staff in the 1960's and went on to serve in various roles in education in Kentucky during his career. Dr. Wade has also been a great source of information and has answered many questions, scanned through photos to identify people, and pointed out other people to talk to- usually over a lunch at Cracker Barrel.

Delmer Dalton served on the State Staff for nearly 25 years. His memory of people and events is phenomenal and he never hesitated to answer a question or provide background information. Like Charles Byers and Charles Wade, his memory goes back further than his years because he listened to people like Jim Maddox talk about the old days.

Robert "Woody" Cox served as Kentucky FFA Executive Secretary in the early 70's. While he has been gone from Kentucky longer than I have been alive, he has graciously given of his time to share information about females in FFA and the establishment of FFA Alumni.

Dr. Rupert Grant Seals answered a phone call from someone he had never heard of and agreed to travel halfway across the country to talk about his time in New Farmers of America. His brother Alvin Seals helped locate most of the NFA photos that are included in this document. Meeting the Seals brothers and hearing their stories has been one of the highlights of my career.

The Museum of Historic Hopkinsville and Christian County helped locate photos of NFA from the old Attucks High School yearbooks in their collection. Photos of John Johnson and Harley Blane are from their collection.

State FFA Advisor Brandon Davis has helped dig through musty records at the FFA Leadership Training Center and teacher service records in Frankfort. Thanks to his efforts, teacher records dating back to 1917 are digitized and searchable making the search for historical information easier for future generations.

Several relatives of past National FFA Officers invited me into their homes and allowed me to copy photos and records. Paula Smart and Camille Singer- daughters of Paul Smart and Julian Pierce

respectively- made me feel like family and their stories made me wish I had gotten to know their fathers in real life. Jerry Ringo's cousin Nancy invited me into her home and shared her memories of her cousin who died much too young.

Retired Fleming County agriculture teacher Charles Berry dug Lawrence Bradford's scrapbook out of the dumpster many years ago. Mr. Berry was kind enough to share the scrapbook with me and also took me to meet Rollie Hinton's surviving children.

During her time as an FFA Intern, Jenna Harrod Burke scanned and cataloged thousands of historical photos. Thanks to her efforts, these are now digitally preserved and available for anyone to search and use.

Mrs. Brenda Bruington has served the FFA Leadership Training Center for nearly 3 decades. She has looked up dates, searched for photos, and helped track down leads.

Many others have contributed to this work. Ag teachers have told stories from "the old days", past State Officers have shared memories of their time in FFA, and descendants of past staff members have graciously shared photos and memories. Other unnamed and unremembered individuals have made this possible. Whether they filed photos in the 1950's or carefully updated the minutes book each year after State Convention, all of them have played a crucial role.

As hard as I've tried to thank everyone, I'm sure that I have overlooked someone who played a role in this project or in the history of Kentucky FFA. I apologize for any oversights and hope you'll forgive me.

Matt Chaliff
January 2021