

National 4-H Hall of Fame 2008

Montana



Augusta Dillman Evans **First Montana State 4-H Leader**

Born: Gilberton, PA

Nominated by: Montana 4-H

Major 4-H Accomplishments:

Hired by Illinois Extension in 1911 to organize Boys & Girls Clubs - 3 years of experience in Illinois in rural Extension and in rural school improvement work. Served as the first full-time state 4-H program leader for Montana from 1914-1916. Traveled throughout Montana promoting and organizing 4-H corn clubs, canning clubs and corset-cover making clubs. Enrolled approximately 2,700 youth annually in Montana 4-H programs.

Biography:

In 1911 Illinois Extension hired Augusta Evans to organize Boys & Girls Clubs. She came to Montana as state 4-H leader from 1914-16. Evans spoke at numerous events promoting 4-H work. She organized clubs, gave canning demonstrations, spoke to rural teachers and women's clubs and prepared Montana delegates for the 1914 National Conference of Club Leaders in Chicago. According to F.S. Cooley's 1924 history of MSU Extension, "she organized with whirlwind speed and by mid-1915 club enrollment was 2,939. Clubs participated in the State Fair in Helena, at the Western Montana Fair in Missoula, and in a new and important annual Corn Fair in Miles City. The first regional 4-H Club Fair was held in Wibaux in November 1915."

Evans traveled across the state stimulating interest in 4-H corn clubs, canning clubs and corset-cover making clubs. In 1915 she traveled a total of 18,827 miles promoting and organizing 4-H clubs. She was paid \$1,100 annually, and she spent \$935.64 on travel alone. During the year, she organized 119 corn clubs, 119 potato clubs, 25 home garden clubs and 175 canning clubs. She had enrolled 2,689 youth - nearly 1200 in canning clubs. She held 79 demonstration meetings reaching over 1,300 people through canning demonstrations. Four county agents, four county superintendents of schools, 14 teachers, and 26 housewives and farmers reported active 4-H work. Evans lived to the age of 85.

Quote:

After 18 months of work, Evans began to find strategies for growing 4-H in Montana. Her February 1916 monthly report reads: "I have found short course lectures especially with stereoptican a means of laying club work before parents in the counties where I intend to work with county agriculturalists and county superintendents of schools. These parents would not come to schools in December or January and did not get the right explanation from their children concerning club work. I plan, also, a canning bee and play festival and enlist the interest of the men to bring in the women and children. I have secured fine interest in this way and make everybody feel as it were a family proposition."