

National 4-H Hall of Fame 2006

Louisiana



Walter C. Abbott **State 4-H Agent 1919-1949**

Home: Hope Villa, LA

Nominated by: Louisiana 4-H

Major 4-H Efforts:

Began 4-H work in parishes in 1910, became a district agent, then state 4-H agent from 1919-1949. Created a plan in 1920 setting minimum requirements for clubs and organized an advisory council. In 1922 developed a self-financing program to support 4-H educational trips. Attended the first National 4-H Club Congress in Chicago in 1922. Introduced 4-H camping in LA in 1923. During WWII, Abbott led the campaign by LA 4-H members that sold \$3.5 million in war bonds to build a Liberty Ship named "Floyd W. Spencer" to honor an active rural youth worker.

Biography:

In 1910 W.C. Abbott began organizing girls' tomato and boys' corn clubs. He became a district agent, then state 4-H agent from 1919-1949. Under Abbott, membership grew to 60,000 with such new projects as bees, orchards, forestry, poultry, corn, cotton, pigs and beef calf clubs. Abbott created a plan in 1920 setting club minimum requirements for clubs and organized an advisory council of club members, agents, school superintendents and local leaders. In 1922 Abbott began recruiting sponsors and developed a self-financing program to support 4-H educational trips. He enjoyed attending 4-H trips with members, including National 4-H Club Camp in DC.

Abbott attended the first National 4-H Club Congress in Chicago in 1922. In 1923 he introduced 4-H camping in LA. He oversaw the first state 4-H camp - Camp Grant Walker - in 1935. Late in his career, he organized the Junior Leadership Camp and wildlife and forestry camps that exist today. During WWII, Abbott led the campaign by LA 4-H members that sold \$3.5 million in war bonds to build a Liberty Ship. The ship was named "Floyd W. Spencer" to honor an active rural youth worker. Abbott had seven children who were in 4-H, two becoming extension agents, and 24 grandchildren in 4-H. He is fondly remembered in Louisiana as "Mr. 4-H."

Quote:

On his retirement after 40 years of service, W.C. Abbott stated that the opportunity to become good citizens is the richest reward of 4-H club participation. According to H.C. Sanders, Director of the LA Extension Service, his youthful viewpoint, enthusiasm and ability to work with young people spread all over the state and contributed immeasurably to the success of 4-H club members. Mr. Abbott felt that 4-H club participation was valuable in teaching improved farm and home practices, but it added the value of being organized as to character building for all boys and girls who participated in the 4-H program.