



Liberty Hyde Bailey (1858 - 1954)  
4-H & Extension Pioneer

Bailey helped redirect the educational aims of rural schools by using extension funds to write and distribute nature study leaflets starting in 1896. Junior Naturalist Clubs were formed across New York and other states. New York's nature study program was an instrumental part of the movement that became 4-H.

Bailey was born in 1858 and graduated from Michigan Agricultural College in 1882. He founded and was Dean of the Cornell University College of Agriculture and helped create the science of horticulture. He was a superb botanist, teacher, administrator, visionary, writer, poet, philosopher, and environmentalist.

Bailey's Nature Study movement counteracted the idea that learning must be about remote things and encouraged rural youth to accept the challenges of life around them. Bailey was selected by President Teddy Roosevelt to chair a National Commission on Country Life in 1908, and he authored the report that led to the Cooperative Extension system.

Hometown: South Haven,  
Michigan

Year Inducted: 2003

"There seems to be little personal life-motive in our education. The process produces passive or static results. The solution is to outgrow the sit-still and keep-still method of school work ..... to put children to work with tools and soils and plants and problems." (from the book *The Nature-Study Idea*, 1903)



Liberty Hyde Bailey in front of Morrill Hall, Cornell University (ca.1900).



Liberty Hyde Bailey at a picnic with Nature Study group (ca. 1900).