

Creed of the Order of Links

"I believe in the power and value of all 4-H club work.

I believe in the usefulness of club work to the home,
community and country.

I believe in continuing the training of my Head, Heart, Hands and
Health as I take up the responsibilities of mature citizenship.

I believe, with their ideals and principles, the Links will give aid
and guidance to Junior 4-H club members.

I believe the Links will further and strengthen the 4-H club
members.

I believe the Links will further and strengthen
4-H club work

I am, therefore, willing to devote my effort for the
fulfillment of these ideals. "

Follow the Gleam

"....And we who would serve the King
And loyally him obey,
In the consecrate silence know
That the challenge still holds today,
Follow, follow, follow the gleam,
Standards of worth o'er all the earth,
Follow, follow, follow the gleam
Of the light that shall bring the dawn."

--- From "Follow the Gleam"

Sussex County



Order of the Links

History of Links in Delaware

Adding a Strong Link Strengthens the Chain

The first 4-H club work was organized in Kent County in 1914. Dewey Sapp was the first 4-H club member in Delaware. The first 4-H club short course was held at the University of Delaware during the Christmas holiday in 1917.

Delaware's first state 4-H Leader was H.T. Ruhl, who was appointed in 1914 and served for one year. He was succeeded by Theodore Martin who served from 1918 to 1921. He, in turn, was succeeded by A.D. Cobb, former County Agent in Kent County, who is remembered by 4-H club members and leaders of that time as "Dad Cobb."

In 1927, when 4-H work in Delaware was only 13 years old, Dad Cobb, who was still the State 4-H Leader, realized the fact that when 4-H'ers become too old for 4-H work, they had no place to display their leadership qualities. Most of them either got married or started farming and let it go at that.

Dad Cobb had the opportunity to see older 4-H organizations at work at the Eastern States Exposition at Springfield, Massachusetts. Maryland had organized an older 4-H organization called the All-Stars and other states had organized similar groups under a variety of names. These people had been selected on a basis of personality and character rather than on achievements. The functions of these organizations consisted mostly of play, and not of training.

Dad Cobb got many ideas from the other state organizations and saw a chance for a similar set-up here in Delaware.

He saw that there was a lack of leadership in rural people as a whole.

At that time, the Extension Service consisted of only the three county agents, Mr. Cobb, and an extension poultryman.

In 1926-27, an organization was formed and named 'The Order of Link in the 4-H Club Chain in Delaware.' Members were selected on the basis of good 4-H membership.

Dad Cobb decided that each county could bring in two 4-H members per year and could nominate one former 4-H club member a year. By this method, either new Link members would be added each year—two members from each county, and two former members at large.

Dewey Sapp, having been the first 4-H member in Delaware, was called the 'Ring in the Wall' to which the other 'Links' were attached. The idea was that the chain would grow longer each year.

The first members were selected by the county agents and Dad Cobb. At the initiation ceremony each year, to be held at the short course, it would be the custom to sing "Follow the Gleam." This was to be the official link song.

In 1931, a convention was called in the Old State House in Dover to write a Link Constitution. At this time, there were about 40 Link members.

The constitution provided for state officers—a president, secretary, treasurer, and historian. It also provided for a County Link Association in each

county, with the president of each of these county chapters to act also as vice-presidents in the state organizations.

The State Link organization continued to operate under this constitution until 1965 when it was revised to better fit the needs of the organization. For at this time not only were the Links an active state organization, but each county was active as a separate organization, and this called for different guidelines of operation.

It was under this revised constitution that the Links would operate for the next decade. The revisions maintained the criteria for the Link selection as: leadership, character, cooperation, achievement, and community service. Selections would be made by Link members and local leaders in each county.

As time progressed, county Link organizations became more and more active as the state organization became somewhat less active. Each county's membership was built up so as to provide a working basis for their programs and for all practical purposes the State Link Organization had little to do.

In 1976 the state organization underwent a re-organization, as the constitution was once again revised and the position of historian was eliminated. At this time, it was decided that the State Link Organization should continue to function and provide the county 4-H councils with assistance in running statewide events; such as, Fun Day and the Christmas Dinner-Dance.

The Order of Link has done much toward promoting rural leadership, better 4-H club work, and provided opportunities for leadership in many areas. No other organization in Delaware has done so much in advancing leadership in and among 4-H youth.

There is little financial reward or honor that goes with working with this organization. The real reward is the satisfaction one may gain from seeing his efforts help someone, somewhere, to become a more understanding citizen and a better leader for this, 'The Greatest Nation in the World.'

Link Nominations

Qualifications

1. Age 18 or graduated from high school with at least five years of club work.
2. An all-around top 4-H'er or leader.
3. The four individuals receiving the most votes will be inducted to represent the four H's.
4. A paragraph must be submitted describing the nominee's 4-H qualifications and how he or she might strengthen the program.
5. The Links will vote at the last meeting before the Achievement Banquet by secret ballot. The qualifications of each nominee will be read before voting takes place.
6. The Link organization is an active organization made of distinguished 4-H alumni; thus, consideration should be given when names are nominated.