

Charles Henry Hartley



Charles Henry (Uncle Charlie) Hartley was one of the pioneers in the overall development of the cooperative Extension Program and especially the 4-H programs in West Virginia.

Graduated from West Virginia Wesleyan College in 1909, Mr. Hartley taught at Beaver High School in Bluefield. He was elected to the West Virginia House of Delegates in 1912 where he was the leader in supporting and getting passed an Act that gave increased support in establishing and defining the work in Agriculture, Horticulture, and Home Economics Extension. He became affiliated with the College of Agriculture, West Virginia University, in 1913 as Assistant Director of Extension. He was instrumental in organizing and directing the Farmer's Institute program which was the

original program for taking agricultural education direct to the West Virginia rural community. The number of Farmer's Institutes held throughout the State increased from 116 in 1914, with a total attendance of 53,735 to 144 in 1916.

In early 1921, Mr. Hartley and William H. Kendrick, State 4-H Club Agent, journeyed to the old boyhood home of "Stonewall" Jackson to survey the land as a potential site for a contemplated West Virginia rural youth training school. They recommended that the State 4-H Camp be located at Jackson's Mill and both men were a dynamic force in development of the State 4-H camp.

In 1923, the State Legislature passed an act creating the State Bureau of Agriculture, to consist of the Commissioner of Agriculture and the Director of the Agriculture Extension Service of West Virginia University. In 1925, to better coordinate the work, arrangements were made for Mr. Hartley to serve half time as Assistant Commissioner and half time as Assistant Director of Extension. This arrangement continued through 1932.

In 1933, Mr. Hartley was named State 4-H Club Agent and, in 1937, following the death of Mr. Kendrick, he was named Director of the State 4-H Camp and he continued in this position until 1951. He was a good financial manager and each year made some improvements to the Camp. He once said, "Jackson's Mill will start to die when it ceases to grow." Each year, under his leadership, Jackson's Mill did grow.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1949 honored Mr. Hartley with its Superior Service Award for "outstanding educational vision and steadfast adherence to an ideal of rural leadership." After his retirement, he was awarded an honor designated for retired state and national leaders who had served 25 years or more, which was presented during the 1953 National 4-H Club Conference in Washington, D.C.

He was active in the Drummond Chapel Methodist Church at Morgantown where he served as Sunday School Superintendent for the greater part of his active life. He was named Methodist Layman of the Year in West Virginia in 1960.