Breathing life into history using accurate period clothing, accoutrements, and heritage skills with story telling based on real-life accounts from the youth’s chosen time period in order to experience the sights, sounds, tastes, smells, and textures of the past!
Living History is truly a traditional 4-H project because it is hands-on and encourages you to investigate and live a part from the past. Think of yourself as an HIS—History Scene Investigator. YOU touch the past through 4-H, bringing history to life!

Time Period
This is the first step of the project. It is best to choose a time period that is no more than a decade (10 years). The time period of your choosing may even be much shorter, such as “a day in the life of.” You may also choose a week, month, or year. What time period will you choose? Anything is possible...from ancient times to astronauts!

Persona
This is the character you’ve chosen from the past and the life story you’ll tell. You can be a son, daughter, or neighbor of someone famous or someone older than yourself. Their life story becomes a part of yours.

Period Clothing & “Stuff”
These are items which you make, buy, or borrow that will give your persona (character) the right look.

Heritage Skills
These are the hands-on crafts and tasks used by your character from your chosen time period. How might these items be part of your skills?

Some examples of historical personas...

Charles Lindbergh flew across the Atlantic Ocean—solo and nonstop.

Amelia Earhart did what Lindbergh did. She later disappeared trying to be the first woman to fly around the world.

The Minuteman were the “rapid response force” of the American Revolution. These men, many of them farmers, “answered the call” without delay. With their gun, powder horn and bag, in the field as they plowed, they were ready when called.

Read all about it! In the early 1900’s, there was a newspaper boy on the corner of major city intersections. What does the image tell about him? What was he wearing? What did he do? How much history did he know?

Rosie the Riveter wasn’t just one woman, she was many women who helped manufacture the supplies needed during World War II. What did she wear to work? What tools or items did she use? How did “Rosie” change the American way of life?

Putting all the pieces together:

Getting Started: Use this checklist to help you get started in your Living History project.

- Select a time period that interests you.
- Choose a person or event of interest. (Persona.)
- Select period clothing and items (the “stuff”) that will help you get the right look. Select a trade or job from the time period.
- Know or learn your strengths. Work with your strengths to build your project. Strengths could include: reading, sharing with others, drawing, writing stories, making items with your hands, etc.
- Write your own goals and objectives to guide you through your project.
- Talk with a Certified Living History Instructor to help guide you through your project.

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