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Dwight Sanderson**

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# THE FARMER AND HIS COMMUNITY

BY

**DWIGHT SANDERSON**

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CORNELL UNIVERSITY



NEW YORK  
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## EDITOR'S PREFACE

In the "good old days" of early New England the people acted in communities. The original New England "towns" were true communities; that is, relatively small local groups of people, each group having its own institutions, like the church and the school, and largely managing its own affairs. Down through the years the town meeting has persisted, and even to-day the New England town is to a very large degree a small democracy. It does not, however, manage all its affairs in quite the same fashion that it did two hundred years ago.

When the Western tide of settlement set in, people frequently went West in groups and occasionally whole communities moved, but the general rule was settlement by families on "family size" farms. The unit of our rural civilization, therefore, became the farm family. There were, of course, neighborhoods, and much neighborhood life. The local schools were really neighborhood schools. Churches multiplied in number even beyond the need for them. When farmers began to associate themselves together as in the Grange, they recognized the need of a strong local group larger than the neighborhood. A subordinate Grange for example is a community organization. Experience gradually demonstrated that if farmers wished to coöperate they must coöperate in local groups. Strong nation-wide organizations are clearly of great importance, but they can have little strength unless they are made up of active local bodies. Gradually, the community idea has spread over the country, in some cases springing up almost spontaneously, until to-day there is a very widespread belief among the farmers, as well as among the special students of rural affairs, that the organization and development of the local rural communities is the main task in conserving our American agriculture and country life. It is interesting to note that what is true in America is proving also to be true in other countries. In fact, the farm village life in Europe and even in such countries as China is taking on new activities, and it is being recognized that the improvement of these small units of society is one of the great needs of the age.

Professor Sanderson, in this book, has attempted to indicate just what the community movement means to the farmers of America. He has brought to this task rather unusual preparation. In turn, a graduate of an agricultural college, a scientist of reputation, Director of an agricultural experiment station, Dean of a college of agriculture, he has had a wide, varied and successful experience in various states. He finally arrived at the conviction, however, that the most important field of work for him lay in dealing with the larger phases of country life, and he gave up administrative work for further preparation in the new field. In his position as Professor of Rural Organization in the College of Agriculture at Cornell University, he has been unusually successful, both as investigator and as teacher. He speaks as one who knows the farmers and not as an outsider, and also as a thorough student.

This book therefore is sent out with a good deal of confidence. It deals with one of the most important of the rural topics that can be discussed these days. It points out fundamental principles and indicates practical steps in applying principles.

KENYON L. BUTTERFIELD.

## FOREWORD

In recent years we have heard a great deal about the rural community and rural community organization. All sorts of organizations dealing with rural life discuss these topics at their

meetings, the agricultural press and the popular magazines encourage community development, and a number of books have recently appeared dealing with various phases of rural community life. The community idea is fairly well established as an essential of rural social organization.

One might gain the impression that the community is a new discovery or social invention were he to read only the current discussions. It is, however, a form of social organization as old as agriculture itself, but which was very largely neglected in the settlement of the larger part of the United States. This new emphasis on the community is, therefore, but the revival in a new form of a very ancient mode of human association. The community becomes essential because the conditions of rural life have changed and rural people are again being forced to act together in locality groups to meet the needs of their common life.

The author has attempted to define the rural community and to describe the new conditions which are determining its structure and shaping its functions, in the belief that an understanding of the nature of the rural community should aid those who are seeking to secure a better social adjustment of the countryside. It attempts to relate "The Farmer and His Community." The problems and methods of community organization have been discussed but incidentally, and the book is not designed as a handbook for community development. Its chief aim is to establish a point of view with regard to the rural community as an essential unit for rural social organization through a sociological analysis of the past history and present tendencies of the various forms of associations which seem necessary for a satisfying rural society. It is hoped that such an analysis presented in an untechnical manner may be of service to rural leaders who are working for the development of country life by giving them a better understanding of the nature of the community and therefore a firmer faith in its future and greater enthusiasm and loyalty in its service.

The present volume is a brief summary of a more extended study of the rural community, not only in this country but in other lands and in other times, which is now in preparation for publication.

DWIGHT SANDERSON.

CORNELL UNIVERSITY.  
MAY, 1922.

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# THE FARMER AND HIS COMMUNITY

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*The core of the community idea, then—as applied to rural life—is that we must make the community, as a unit, an entity, a thing, the point of departure of all our thinking about the rural problem, and, in its local application, the direct aim of all organized efforts for improvement or redirection. The building of real, local farm communities is perhaps the main task in erecting an adequate rural civilization. Here is the real goal of all rural effort, the inner kernel of a sane country-life movement, the moving slogan of the new campaign for rural progress that must be waged by the present generation.”—Kenyon L. Butterfield, in "The Farmer and the New Day."*

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## CHAPTER I

### THE RURAL COMMUNITY

No phase of the social progress of the Twentieth Century is more significant or promises a more far-reaching influence than the rediscovery of the *community* as a fundamental social unit, and the beginnings of community consciousness throughout the United States. I say the "rediscovery" of the community, for ever since men forsook hunting and grazing as the chief means of subsistence and settled down to a permanent agriculture they have lived in communities.

In ancient and medieval Europe, in China and India, and among primitive agricultural peoples throughout the world, the village community is recognized as the primary local unit of society. In medieval France the rural "*communaute*" was the local unit of government and social administration. Its people met from time to time at the village church in regular assemblies at which they elected their local officers, approved their accounts, arranged for the support of the church, the school, and local improvements. In most of France and throughout much of Europe the farm homes are still clustered in villages, from which the farm lands radiate. There the village is primarily a place of residence, and with the lands belonging to it forms the community.

New England was settled in much the same manner, being divided into towns which still form the local units of government, and which for the most part are single communities, though here and there more than one center has sprung up within a town and secondary communities have developed. The New England town meeting has ever been lauded as the birthplace of representative democratic government in America, and in its original form it was a true community meeting, dealing not only with the political government, but considering all religious, educational, and social matters affecting the common life of the town.

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Although the New England tradition determined the form of local government in the areas settled by its people in the central and western states, the township was but an artificial town resulting from methods of the land surveys. The homesteader "took up" his land with but little thought of community relations. He traded at the nearest town; church was first held in the school-house and later churches were erected in the open country at convenient points; his children went to the district school; and his social life was chiefly in the neighboring homes. His life centered in the immediate neighborhood. As railroads covered the country, villages and town sprang up at frequent intervals, and gradually became the real centers of community life, but usually there was but little realization on the part of either village or farm people of their community interests. The farmer's attention was on the farm, the townsman's chief interest was his business, and not infrequently their interests were in conflict and they gave little thought to their real dependence on each other.

In the South the plantation system of the landed aristocracy, which as long as it existed was quite self-sufficient, gave little encouragement to community development. The county was the most important unit of local government and the "carpet-baggers'" efforts at establishing local townships were repudiated with the ending of their régime. Only in recent years have conditions

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throughout the South, largely the result of increased immigration and the breaking up of large plantations, favored the development of local communities.

In general, the American farmer has voted and taken his share in local politics and government, has attended his own church, has traded where most convenient or advantageous, has joined the nearest grange or lodge, and with his family has visited nearby friends and relatives and joined with them in social festivities; he has loyally supported these various interests, but until very recently, he has had little conception of the interrelations of these institutions in the life of the community or of the possible advantages of community development as such. But new wants and new problems have arisen which may only be met by the united action of all elements of both village and countryside. The automobile demands better roads and both farmer and businessman are interested to have them built so that the natural community centers may be most easily reached. Better schools, libraries, facilities for recreation and social life, organization for the improvement of agriculture and for the better marketing of farm products, are all community problems and force attention upon the community area to be served by these institutions. A consolidated school or a library cannot be maintained at every crossroads. Only by the support of all the people within a reasonable distance of a common center are better rural institutions possible.

The trend of events was thus bringing about a recognition of the place of the community in the life of rural people, when the Great War hastened this process by many years. Liberty Loan, Red Cross, and other war "drives" were organized by communities which vied with each other in raising their quotas. A new sense of the unity of the community was brought about by the common loyalty to its boys in the nation's service. Having created state and county councils of defense, national leaders came to appreciate that the primary unit for effective organization for war purposes must be the community, and President Wilson wrote to the State Councils of Defense urging the organization of community councils. Thousands of these had been organized when the Armistice was declared, and although most of them were not continued, the importance of the local community was given national recognition and attention was directed to the need of the better organization of local forces for community progress.

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What, then, is the rural community? Is it a real entity or is it merely an idea or an ideal? Where is it and how can we recognize it?

We are indebted to Professor C. J. Galpin, now in charge of the Farm Life Studies of the United States Department of Agriculture, for first developing a method for the location of the rural community. Professor Galpin<sup>[1]</sup> holds that the trading area tributary to any village is usually the chief factor in determining the community area. He determines the community area by starting from a business center and marking on a map those farm homes which trade mostly at that center. By drawing a line connecting those farm homes farthest from the center on all the roads radiating from it, the boundary of the trade area is described. In the same way the areas tributary to the church, the school, the bank, the milk station, the grange, etc., may be determined and mapped. The boundaries of these areas will be found to be by no means coincident, but it will usually be found that most of them center in one village or hamlet, and that the trade area is the most significant in determining the area tributary to this center. When the areas served by the chief institutions of adjacent centers are mapped, it is usually found that a composite line of the different boundary lines separating these centers will approximate the boundaries of the communities. A line which divides adjacent community areas so that most of the families either side of this line go most frequently to, or their chief interests are at, the center within that boundary, will be the boundary between the adjacent communities. Thus, from the standpoint of location, *a community is the local area tributary to the center of the common interests of its people.*<sup>[2]</sup>

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As indicated above the business center may usually be taken as the base point or community center, from which to determine the boundaries of the community. However, in the older parts of the country or in hilly or mountainous regions, the trade or business center is not always the same as the center of the chief social activities of the people, and may not be the chief factor in determining the community center. Not infrequently a church, school and grange hall located close together may form the nucleus of a community which does its business at a railroad station village some distance away, possibly over a range of hills. The chief trading points cannot, therefore, be arbitrarily assumed as the base points for determining community areas, but those points at which the more important of the common interests of the people find expression should be considered as community centers. It is not simply a question of where the people go most often, but of where their chief interests focus.

With this concept of a community it is obvious that the "center" of a community must be the base point for determining its area. It would seem that the community center is essential to the individuality of any community: The community "center" need not necessarily be at the geographical center of the community; indeed in many cases it is at or close to one of its boundaries, though in an open level country it will tend to approximate the center.

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The term "community center" is here used in a literal sense of being the center of the activities of the community. It should be distinguished from the "community-center idea" which refers to a building, whether it be a community house, school, church, or grange hall, as a "community center." Such a building in which the activities of the community are largely centered may be a community center in a very real sense, but in most cases these activities will be divided between church, school, grange hall, etc. No one of them can then be a center for the whole community, but taken together they constitute the center in which the chief interests of the community focus. Every community must necessarily have a more or less well defined community center; it may or

may not have some one building in which the chief activities of the community have their headquarters. Such buildings, of whatever nature, may well be called community houses or social centers.

Although attention has been directed to the area of the community, the community consists not of land or houses but of the people of this area. Its boundary merely gives a community identity, as does the roll of a company or the charter of a city. The community consists of the people within a local area; the land they occupy is but the physical basis of the community. The nature of the community will depend very largely upon whether its people live close together or at a distance. In the Rocky Mountain States many communities are but sparsely settled and may have a radius of forty or fifty miles and yet be true communities, while on the Atlantic seaboard a definite community with as many people may have a radius of not over a mile or two.

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Nor is the community a mere aggregation or association of the people of a given area. It is rather a corporate state of mind of those living in a local area, giving rise to their collective behavior. There cannot be a true community unless the people think and act together.

The term "neighborhood" is very frequently used as synonymous with "community," and should be definitely distinguished. In the sense in which these terms are now coming to be technically employed, the neighborhood consists of but a group of houses fairly near each other. Frequently a neighborhood grew up around some one center, as a school, store, church, mill, or blacksmith shop, which in the course of time may have been abandoned, but the homes remained clustered together. Or the neighborhood may be merely six to a dozen homes near together on the same road or near a corner. The school district of the one-room country school is commonly a neighborhood, but as there are no other interests which bind the people together it cannot be considered a community. Likewise people associate in churches, granges, etc., but church parishes overlap, and the constituency of any one of these associations is not necessarily a community. Only when several of the chief human interests find satisfaction in the organizations and institutions which serve a fairly definite common local area tributary to them, do we have a true community. In many cases the neighborhood, particularly the school district, forms a desirable unit for certain purposes of social organization, and, indeed, in many cases it may be necessary to develop the neighborhood as a social unit before its people will actively associate themselves in community activities, but the neighborhood cannot function in the same way as the larger community which brings people together in several of their chief interests. The community can support institutions impossible in the neighborhood, such as a grange, lodge, library, various stores, etc. The community is more or less self-sufficing. A community may include a variable number of neighborhoods. The community is the smallest geographical unit of organized association of the chief human activities.

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Bringing together these various considerations concerning the nature of the rural community we may say that *a rural community consists of the people in a local area tributary to the center of their common interests.*

Obviously the community thus defined has nothing to do with political areas or boundaries, for very commonly a community may lie in two or three townships or counties. That rural areas are actually divided into such communities and that the community is the primary unit of their social organization may best be tested by taking any given county or township and attempting to map its area into communities on the basis above described. In most of the northern and western states and throughout much of the South, most of the territory may be quite readily divided into communities. This has been demonstrated by the rural surveys of the Interchurch World Movement<sup>[3]</sup> and by the community maps made by County Farm Bureaus.

A very large part of the South, however, has no natural community centers and in such sections it will be found very difficult if not impossible to define community areas. The store may be at the railroad station, the church in the open country, and the district or consolidated school at still another point. Some people go to one store or church and others to another. Under such conditions, no real community exists. Usually, any form of social organization is more or less difficult under such conditions, for the people are divided into different groups for different purposes and there is nothing which makes united activities possible. It seems probable that only to the extent that certain centers of social and economic life come to be recognized by the people, and community life is developed around them, will the most effective and satisfying social organization be possible.

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Recognition of the community as the primary unit for purposes of rural organization has now become quite general. Several mid-western states have passed legislation permitting school districts to combine into community districts for the support of consolidated schools or high schools, irrespective of township or county boundaries. The present tendency in the centralization of rural schools seems to be in the direction of locating them at the natural community centers. Rural churches are coming into a new sense of responsibility to the community and the community church is increasingly advocated. The American Red Cross in planning its peace-time program is recognizing the importance of the rural community as the local unit for its work. The County Farm Bureaus, working in coöperation with the state colleges of agriculture and the United States Department of Agriculture, very soon discovered the value of the community as the local unit of their organization, and carry on their work through community committees or community clubs. Possibly no other one movement has done so much to bring about the definite location of rural communities and their appreciation by rural people. A conference of national organizations engaged in social work in rural communities held in 1919 summed up the experience of a group of representative rural leaders in the statement: "In rural organization it is recognized that the local community constitutes the functional unit and the

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county or district the supervisory unit." In other words, it is the rural community which really "carries on," whatever the executive organization of the county or district may be.

The strength of the rural community as a social group lies in two facts. First, it is not so large but that most of its people know each other. The size of the community in this regard does not depend so much upon the actual number of square miles involved as upon the number of its population. People may all be acquainted in a sparsely settled community covering a ten-mile radius, and there may be less acquaintance in a small community with a dense population. Secondly, the great majority of the people in the average rural community are dependent upon agriculture for their income, either directly or once-removed. These two facts make possible common interests and a social control through public opinion which is not possible in larger social units such as the county or city. Sir Horace Plunkett appreciates this when he says:

"Our ancient Irish records show little clans with a common ownership of land hardly larger than a parish, but with all the patriotic feeling of larger nations held with an intensity rare in modern states. The history of these clans and of very small nations like the ancient Greek states shows that the *social feeling assumes its most binding and powerful character where the community is large enough to allow free play to the various interests of human life, but is not so large that it becomes an abstraction to the imagination.*"<sup>[4]</sup>

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This inherent social strength of the rural community, the fact that the community is relatively permanent, and the appreciation that only through community effort may rural people realize their natural desire to enjoy some of the advantages of cities, force the conviction that the community must be the primary unit for the organization of rural progress. It is from this point of view that we shall discuss the community aspects of the various human interests of the farmer and the consequent relations of "The Farmer and His Community."

#### FOOTNOTES:

- [1] Galpin, C. J., "The Social Anatomy of an Agricultural Community." Research Bulletin 54, Agricultural Experiment Station of the University of Wisconsin, May, 1915; and also in his "Rural Life," Century Co., New York, 1920.
- [2] The following four pages are revised from the author's bulletin, "Locating the Rural Community," Cornell Reading Course for the Farm, Lesson 158.
- [3] See Reports of the Town and Country Department, Committee on Social and Religious Surveys, 111 Fifth Ave., New York, or Geo. H. Doran, New York.
- [4] "Rural Life Problem in the United States," p. 129. Italics mine.

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## CHAPTER II

### THE FARM HOME AND THE COMMUNITY

The American farmer thinks first of his own home; only recently has he commenced to appreciate that his and other homes form a community. In the "age of homespun" the pioneer subdued his new lands and built his home; the farm and the home were his and for them he lived. He bought but little and had but little to sell. Farms were largely self-supporting. Neighbors helped each other in numerous ways and as the country became more thickly settled neighborhood life grew apace. But there was little sense of relation to the larger community. Roads were bad and people were too widely scattered to come together except on special occasions. The family was the fundamental social unit and social life revolved around the family, or in the immediate neighborhood.

But "times have changed." The farm is no longer largely self-supporting. It is now but a primary unit in a world-wide economic system, conducted with money as the basis of exchange and dominated by the interests of capital. Farm products are sold for cash and their value is determined by distant or world markets with which the farmer has no personal contact and of which he often has but little knowledge. Most of the goods consumed on the farm must be purchased. The marketing of his products and the purchasing of goods have given the farmer increasing contacts with the village and town centers and a broader knowledge of the world at large.

During the past century modern ideas of transportation and the development of industries due to inventions and scientific discoveries have resulted in an enormous growth of city populations. The social life of the cities is increasingly dominated by the interests of the individual rather than those of the family, until the breaking down of urban family life has become a world-wide

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problem. The family is no longer the social unit of the city as it is in the country.

Now farm people are by no means as isolated from town and city as is often imagined. Their brothers and sisters, sons and daughters have gone to make up the increasing urban populations. Through correspondence and visiting back and forth, through frequent trips to town, through the daily city newspapers, and through the general reading of magazines, farm people are in more or less close contact with the life and manners of the cities. Inasmuch as slightly over half of our people now live in towns or cities and only one-third live on farms, it is not surprising that urban ideals and values and the urban point of view tend more and more to dominate those of the countryside. There has been a natural tendency, therefore, for the association of country people to center in the country town and village, in the community center.

Better transportation and the inability to maintain satisfactory institutions in the open country have made this process inevitable and it will do much to abolish the evils of rural isolation. The increasing difficulty of maintaining successful churches in the open country and the growth of the village church, the dissatisfaction with the one-room district school and the desire for consolidated schools and community high schools, are evidences of this tendency.

The smaller size of the farm family has made it less self-sufficient socially than formerly, and the fact that fewer near relations live nearby and farms change hands more often has resulted in fewer neighborhood gatherings. The different members of the family tend to get together more with groups of their own age and sex coming from all parts of the community, and definite effort is made for the organization of such groups according to their various interests.

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Attention is directed to these tendencies because in our present emphasis on the relation of the farmer to his community and on community values, we must not lose sight of the fact that the family must ever be recognized as the primary social institution of rural life. Indeed, it may not be too much to claim that the largest value in the agricultural industry is in the possibility of the most satisfactory type of home life. The millionaire farmer is so rare as to be negligible, and although farmers as a class doubtless have as wholesome and satisfactory a living as they would in other pursuits, yet no one engages in farming as a means of easily acquiring large wealth. The highest rural values cannot be bought or sold.

The mere fact that farming is practically the only remaining industry conducted on a family basis—which seems likely to continue—and that all members of the family have more or less of a share in the conduct and success of the farm, creates a family bond which does not ordinarily exist where the business or employment of the father and of other members of the family is dissociated from the home. Although the burden of the farm business on the home is often decried and there is obvious need of lightening the mother's work for the farm as much as possible, yet under the best of conditions there is on the farm a constant and intimate contact between the father and mother and children which is rarely found under other conditions.

Primitive woman discovered the art of agriculture. At first, the men assisted the women in what time they could spare from hunting; but as game became scarce and the food supply grown from the soil was found to be more certain, agriculture became man's vocation. Permanent home life commenced with the development of agriculture. As he became a farmer, primitive man stayed at home with his wife and shared with her the nurture of the children. Before then the family had been *hers*, now it was *theirs*. The mere fact that the home and the business are both on the farm, that father is in the house several times a day and that the whole family are acquainted with his farm operations, will always give the farm home a superior solidarity, so long as the family lives on the farm. Though but few farm homes are ideal and some of them have but little that is attractive, yet nowhere are conditions so favorable for the enjoyment of all that is most precious in family life as in the better American farm homes.

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If this be true, that the chief value in agriculture is in the possibility of the most satisfactory home life, then community development should be considered primarily from the standpoint of its effect on the farm home, for the social strength of the country will be more largely determined by its homes than by its other social institutions. We should endeavor, therefore, to build up that type of community life which makes for better homes and stronger families. While seeking to afford superior advantages to individuals, all effort toward community improvement should recognize that the strength of the community is in its home life.

The need of this point of view with regard to rural community organization has been very forcibly indicated by Mr. John R. Boardman, one of our keenest observers and interpreters of country life in his "Community Leadership." He says:

"At the heart of the rural situation is the rural family. The social problems involved in home life in the rural village and on the farm are of two kinds,—developmental and protective. The social unit in the city is the individual. Urban conditions have rapidly disintegrated the family as a social unit. Grave dangers have resulted from this interference with the unity of domestic life. The rural family is in danger of meeting the same fate. It is now the social unit in the rural social structure. Every effort must be put forth to make this situation permanent. The major problem is one of home conservation. Protection of the rural family against social exploitation will demand increasing attention. The development of social organization along lines which interfere with the unity and solidarity of rural family life must be approached with extreme caution and tolerated only as they may be absolutely necessary. So far as possible social organization must be built around the rural family and give it every possible opportunity to act as a family in the scheme of organization and activity. The home as a social center must receive increased attention. There is great danger, in the new

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interest which is being aroused in rural social life, that the matter of social organization be greatly overdone. The rural family will be the one to suffer first and most severely as a result of this craze for social organization."

In support of this point of view it is interesting to note that the strongest rural institutions, the church, the grange, and the recently organized Farm Bureaus, are all organizations which have an interest for the whole family or for most of its members. With an increasing sense of social needs and responsibilities on the part of rural people, new organizations will be formed and various community activities must be undertaken, but if country people will remain true to their traditions and, with clear view of changing conditions, will seek to organize their community life as an association of farm and village *families*, they will create the most satisfying and enduring type of society. The community buildings now becoming so popular in rural communities are a good example of a family institution organized to furnish better recreation and social facilities for the whole family.

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Inasmuch as the home is its primary social institution, the rural community must give its first consideration to its relations to the home and how the home life may be strengthened, if the rural family is to withstand the influence of the disintegrating home life of the city. For the farm home is in a process of readjustment to modern conditions and the recognition of ideals and objectives of home-life by the community will be a powerful factor in their maintenance.

The mother has ever occupied the central position in the home. Under modern conditions, as a result of her education and broader knowledge of life, through her more frequent contacts with town and city and through her wider reading, many a farm mother is coming to feel that her position is an anomalous one. In some cases she may be able to solve her own problems, but only a general change in public opinion concerning their position will bring a more acceptable status to farm women as a class.

Some of the farm woman's problems arise from the increasing division of labor between her husband and herself and from the marketing of the farm products; these are the problems of her economic status. The peasant woman of medieval Europe or the wife of the American pioneer never worried that she did not receive a monthly allowance or a certain share of the farm income. She worked with her husband and family in raising the farm products and she shared in their consumption, for but relatively little was sold off the place. To-day, the wife of the farm owner does little work on the farm; its products are sold and much of the food and practically all of the clothing is purchased. She and her children contribute a considerable amount of the labor of the farm enterprise, and do all of the housework; but the husband does the selling and most of the buying, she often has but little share in the management of the family's finances, and rarely knows what she may count on for household expenses. She comes to feel that she is no longer a real partner, but a sort of housekeeper, though without salary or assured income. In over nine thousand farm homes studied in the northern and western states,<sup>[5]</sup> one-fourth of the women helped with the livestock, and one-fourth worked in the field an equivalent of 6.7 weeks a year, over half of them cared for the home gardens, and one-third of them kept the farm accounts. Over a third of them helped to milk, two-thirds washed the separators, and 88 percent washed the milk pails, 60 percent made the butter and one-third sold the butter, but only 11 percent had the spending of the money from its sale. Likewise 81 percent cared for the poultry, but only 22 percent had the poultry money for their own use and but 16 percent had the egg money. These figures do not give us a complete analysis of the household finances in relation to the amount contributed by farm women, but they are indicative of the general situation.

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It is because of these facts that farm women feel that a larger portion of the farm income should be spent in giving them better household conveniences, somewhat commensurate with the amount that is spent for improved farm machinery and barn conveniences. Only one-third of these farm homes had running water; and but one-fifth had a bath-tub with water and sewer connections; 85 percent had outdoor toilets. Improvement is in evidence, however, for two-thirds had water in the kitchen, 60 percent had sink and drain, 57 percent had washing machines, and 95 percent had sewing machines. It is not that she is merely seeking less work so that she may attend her club or go to the movies, that the farm mother desires better conveniences and shorter hours—her average working day is now 11.3 hours—but because she has new ideals of the nurture which she wishes to give her family and of what she might do for them had she the time and physical strength.

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As a result of the coöperative survey of 10,000 representative farm homes in 241 counties in the 33 northern and western states made by home demonstration agents and farm women, Miss Ward<sup>[6]</sup> gives some interesting "side-lights," which are as illuminating as the statistics:

"Women realize that no amount of scientific arrangement or labor-saving appliances will of themselves make a home. It is the woman's personal presence, influence, and care that make the home. Housekeeping is a business as practical as farming and with no romance in it; home making is a sacred trust. A woman wants time salvaged from housekeeping to create the right home atmosphere for her children and to so enrich their home surroundings that they may gain their ideals of beauty and their tastes for books and music not from the shop windows, the movies, the billboards, or the jazz band, but from the home environment.

"The farm woman knows that there is no one who can take her place as teacher and companion of her children during their early impressionable years and she craves more time for their care. She feels the need of making the farm home an inviting place for the young people of the family and their friends and of promoting the recreational and

educational advantages of the neighborhood in order to cope with the various forms of city allurements. She realizes that modern conditions call for an even deeper realization and closer contact between mother and child. The familiar term, 'God could not be everywhere so He made mothers' has its modern scientific application, as no amount of education and care given to children in school or elsewhere outside the home can take the place of mothering in the home. 'The home exists for the child, hence the child's development should have first consideration.'

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"Farm women want to broaden their outlook and keep with the advancement of their children 'not by courses of study but by bringing progressive ideas, methods, and facilities into the every day work and recreation of the home environment.'"

"True enough," you say, "but these are problems of the individual home. What have they to do with the community?" Just this: The status of the farm woman is a matter determined more by custom than by individual achievement. It is difficult for any one woman, no matter how able or strong-minded, to maintain a status much in advance of that of her neighbors; but let the women of a community get together and discuss their problems and ideals and the group spirit strengthens each of them in the pursuit of the common ideals. It is such a desire for mutual support—even though they are not conscious of it—which has drawn farm women together into clubs and which has given such an impetus to the Home Bureaus, or women's departments of the county Farm Bureaus. Not only in women's organizations, but finally in community organizations of men and women, such as the Grange and the church, the social standards of the community receive the sanction of public opinion, than which there is no more powerful means of influencing family usages. The community as such, must give recognition to a new and better status of its farm women.

If the rural home remains the primary social institution, it will be due to its intelligent effort at self-defense, and not to any inherent right which it has to such a position. Originally the family was but a biological group. Until modern times the agricultural family was chiefly an economic unit. Only with the isolation of the American farm, did the individual family assume the primary social position known to our fathers and grandfathers. Physical isolation and large families made the farm home the only possible social center. Isolation is largely passing, families are smaller, and organizations of all sorts and commercial amusements compete with the family. It is the use of leisure time which reveals the true loyalty of the family group. If there be nothing to attract them to the fireside, they will inevitably go elsewhere whenever possible. Hence, if it would have its foundations strong, the community must encourage the enrichment of home life, particularly, in the hours of leisure when life is most real. The family games after supper, the group around the piano singing old and modern songs, the reading aloud by one member of the circle, the cracking of nuts and the popping of corn, the picnic supper on the lawn, the tennis court or croquet ground, the home parties, the guests ever-welcome at meals, these are but items in a possible scorecard of the sociability of the home. We are giving much thought to all sorts of group activities, but how much attention have we given to systematically encouraging the social unit which has the largest possibilities, the family? Last summer my friend, Professor E. C. Lindeman, of the North Carolina College for Women, spent several weeks in becoming acquainted with rural Denmark under peculiarly favorable conditions. A statement in a letter from him regarding Danish home life is apropos in this connection:

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"I observed that the country people find a great deal of social expression within their own homes. The home life is organized on a much higher plane than is common in America. In addition, there is a larger content of cultural and educational material within the family circle."

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In the same way the economic position, health, education, and all other phases of life of the family are the most potent influences both in the life of its members and of the community.

The question arises, therefore, what is the community doing to strengthen the home? In recent years the new discipline of Home Economics has vigorously attacked the problems of diet, clothing, and household management, and has accomplished much. It is now concerning itself with health, child welfare, and even with child psychology and the family as an institution. Yet the home economics point of view is necessarily restricted to that of the institution which it serves, i.e., the home; it has the same limitations, when pursued solely from the home standpoint, that farm management has as an interpretation of farming if not related to agricultural and general economics. We need a consideration of the problems of the home from the standpoint of other social institutions and with regard to its function in social organization. We need a clearer concept of the relation of the home to the community and to community associations and activities.

The community institutions, the school, the church, and various organizations, have had too much of a tendency to compete with the home rather than to support and strengthen it. Thus the tendency of the school has been to demand a larger and larger portion of the child's time and to assume that because certain phases of education can be more economically given in the school, that, therefore, it should take over as much of the educational function of the home as is possible; a conclusion which is by no means valid. In the home project a new educational principle has been discovered, which has far-reaching significance: for in it the school and the home cooperate, the school outlining, standardizing, and interpreting, while the home furnishes supervision, advice, and encouragement. Thus, the home is stimulated to perform those educational functions in which it is superior, through a definite effort upon the part of the school to strengthen them. The same principle is being applied to education in hygiene. Why should not the church and Sunday school adopt similar methods and undertake a definite system of encouraging the home

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to give moral and religious education in an adequate fashion, rather than attempt to give homeopathic doses to children *en masse*? Why should not the church, or the school, or both, give parents instruction and inspiration as to how to educate their children in matters of sex, about which they are in the best position to gain their confidence? Should not our clubs and social organizations, for men and women, boys and girls, face the question, as to whether their aggregate activities are unduly competing with the home, and should they not give definite thought as to how they may assist and strengthen the basic institution of our social organization? If the home is the essential primary social institution, then its well-being should command the consideration of every institution of the community; for the function and objectives of the home cannot be determined solely by either its own ideals and purposes, or by the values established by the various special interest groups. The home and the community institutions are constantly in a process of adapting themselves to each other, and to the extent that each recognizes the function of the other and is willing to coöperate rather than to compete, is the highest success of each made possible.

This problem of the relation of the home to the community is a relatively new one, and is largely the result of better means of communication which have enlarged the horizon of every farm home. When the life of the child was almost wholly within the home and the neighborhood, the parents gave themselves little concern about the influence or conditions of the larger community. But when her children go to a consolidated school and their school associates are unknown to her, when they attend the movies in the village, and when they read the local weekly or the city daily newspaper and the monthly magazines, so that they know what is going on throughout the world, then, if she be wise, a mother commences to realize that the community is having a growing influence in shaping their character and that however ideal the home may be, it is but a part of their lives. She commences to appreciate that she must have an understanding of the life and forces of the community so that she may use her influence toward making their social environment what it should be and so that she may be able to make the home so attractive that it will hold their primary interest and loyalty. Thus community problems of health, of education, of recreation and social life, and of religion become inter-related with those of the home. The successful homemaker can no longer concern herself solely with home-management, but must assume her share of responsibility in community-management, or "community housekeeping."

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With the new responsibilities of suffrage rural women are following the example of their city sisters in taking a larger interest in civic affairs and social legislation, and with a most wholesome influence on community life. There is, however, some danger that while the men are engaged with their business problems, these social problems will be too largely left to the women;<sup>[7]</sup> for without the sympathetic understanding and hearty coöperation of their husbands, rural women will find that their new social ideals will materialize but slowly. Here again, such family organizations as the Grange, the Church, and Farm and Home Bureau, in which community activities engage both men and women are peculiarly serviceable.

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An interesting example of how the family may function in community life is found in a small town in southern Michigan (Centerville) where the people have established a coöperative motion picture theater, to which the families buy season tickets, and where one may find whole families together enjoying the best pictures to the accompaniment of a community orchestra. This is also being accomplished in many community buildings.

On the other hand the home need not abdicate all of its old-time functions as a social center. A few years ago in attending a rural community conference at the University of Illinois I was interested to hear a farm woman, a graduate of that university, tell how she and her neighbors had held amateur dramatic entertainments on their front verandas during the summer. The young people took the parts and the audience sat on the lawn, and thus many families were brought under the influence of the better homes who would not have thought of visiting them. When winter came on, these entertainments were continued in a slightly different manner, so that neighboring families were brought into contact without any tendency toward undue intimacy between families which would not associate otherwise. Family parties for young and old, should by no means be abandoned in favor of community parties, however satisfactory and attractive the latter may be.

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The social responsibility of the rural home must receive new recognition, for the day when we can live to ourselves in the enjoyment of a select group of personal friends is rapidly passing, if we are to have satisfactory social conditions. It is one of the bad effects of the increasing amount of tenancy in our best farming sections, and of the frequent changing of farm ownership, that the shifting of residence makes it difficult for the family to secure a satisfactory social position in the community life.

In the last analysis, however, the largest contribution of the home to the community and the best means of solving the problem of its relation to community life, is in the development of the best social attitudes among its members toward each other and toward the life of the community; for all sound social organization is but an application of the relations of the family to the affairs of larger social groups, and unless attitudes of mutual aid, common responsibility, and voluntary loyalty, are maintained in the home, so that its relations form a norm for all other human groups, rural society will have lost the chief dynamic of social progress.

#### FOOTNOTES:

[5] From "The Farm Woman's Problems," Florence E. Ward. U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, Circular 148 (1920).

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 15.

[7] Benjamin Kidd claims that this superior interest of women in race welfare is due to woman's cultural inheritance and that from the very nature of the division of labor between man and woman, man is less capable than woman of devoting himself to human welfare. "But the fact of the age which goes deeper than any other is that the male mind of the race as the result of the conditions out of which it has come, is by itself incapable of rendering this service to civilization. It is in the mind of woman that the winning peoples of the world will find the psychic center of Power in the future."—"The Science of Power," p. 241.

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## CHAPTER III

### THE COMMUNITY'S PEOPLE AND HISTORY

The community is composed of people in a certain area, but the community may be dead or it may be alive. The *life* of the community is determined by the degree to which its people are able to act together for the best promotion of their common welfare. This ability to act together will obviously depend upon the extent to which the people have common aims and purposes. If the people of a community form distinct groups with diverse ideals and purposes, it will be much more difficult to secure that sympathy, tolerance, and understanding which are necessary for united action, than if they are more alike. Yet it is just such diversity of interests of different elements in the community which gives rise to community problems and which brings about an appreciation of the need of developing community life.

It is necessary, therefore, to have some appreciation of how the characteristics of its population influence community life.

In the first place, a community of people of different nationalities or races, or sometimes even of people from different states, find it much more difficult to secure a common loyalty than if they were of one stock. It is, of course, quite true that many an old community of a single stock is divided by family, religious or political feuds; yet usually there is more solidarity between people of common traditions and culture. The largest problem in the so-called "Americanization" of foreigners in rural communities is to get the natives to understand and appreciate the newcomers and to realize that the future of the community depends upon mutual respect and good will. Had we a little more of an historical perspective, we would remember that all of our ancestors were "foreigners" but a few generations back. In almost every part of the United States are communities in which alien groups form one of the chief obstacles to a better community life. Throughout the South, the most fundamental problem is that of a better understanding between the two races, and until some means of amicable adjustment is attempted, there is little prospect for the development of community life. In some of our best agricultural sections there have been successive waves of immigration of different nationalities. Thus in Dane County, Wisconsin, of which Madison—the state capital—is the county seat, Dr. J. H. Kolb<sup>[8]</sup> describes communities in which Germans, Norwegians, and Swiss have largely supplanted the original settlers from New England. In an interesting study of Americanization in a community in the Connecticut Valley of Massachusetts, John Daniels<sup>[9]</sup> has described how the French Canadians and Irish and then the Poles have taken up the land, and how good feeling between them and the native Yankees was gradually established. On the other hand, a nearby community in southern New York comes to mind, in which there is a colony of Bohemians, and another of Finns, which have been fairly successful in building up hill farms deserted by the descendants of the original settlers, and yet the community as a whole has done little toward making these people feel that they are a part of its life, although their industry is one of its largest economic assets. "America is the home of the free" and most of our people do desire a real democracy, but we seem to have assumed that it will develop spontaneously, and we have not appreciated that good will and common understanding require some means of acquaintance and exchange of ideas, and that the interests and desires of all the people in a community, young and old, must receive recognition. Unless we can establish democracy in our own local community, how can we expect it in the state or nation?

A second factor in community life is the age of its people. How often do you find a community composed chiefly of elderly people which is progressive? In the more progressive communities are not the middle-aged and young married people in control? The younger people desire better advantages for themselves and particularly for their children, and so they stand for better schools, better churches, and better facilities for all phases of community life. It is largely for this reason, it seems to me, that older communities seem to have cycles of relative decline and progress, according to the proportion of older and younger people. It is to be hoped that in future generations the ability to "keep young" may become more common; indeed, this is one of the chief objectives of modern education.

The density of population is also a determining factor with regard to many phases of community life, for it is obviously much easier to carry on many community activities where the people live fairly close together and not very far from the community center, than where the country is but sparsely settled. Even with automobiles and telephones, the distance between homes will have a large influence in determining the nature of community activities. One of the most difficult of our rural problems is how to bring to the people in sparsely settled regions the advantages which they rightly crave. It will be physically and economically impossible for them to have as good opportunities as sections which are more densely settled, but ways must be found whereby a larger degree of equality of opportunity is available to more thinly inhabited communities.

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Changes in population immediately affect community needs. Where immigration is increasing rapidly, institutions such as schools, churches, and stores are often inadequate, and there is every incentive toward the development of community spirit and united effort to meet the common needs. On the other hand, in the older sections decreasing populations make it impossible to maintain as many institutions as formerly. Many an eastern community has inherited two or three churches, which were once well filled, but which now merely serve to divide the community as none of them are able to operate successfully, though it is obvious that unless the people are more loyal to their common needs than to their differences that the community will be unable to survive.

In relatively new communities, and often for several generations, the influence of the original settlement of the community may have a strong effect on its life. Thus where a new section is settled by acquaintances from an older community, by relatives, or those of one church, there is a bond between them from the beginning, but where land is settled by homesteaders from different sections, the process of establishing common ideals and purposes is a gradual one. Many a community in the middle west still bears the stamp of its original settlers. About in the center of West Virginia is the little community of French Creek which was settled by a few New England families a little over a hundred years ago. A recent study<sup>[10]</sup> of this community shows that it has had a powerful influence in the educational life of the whole state, and that its progressive spirit is largely traceable to "an ancestry of energetic people with high ideals which have been passed on by each generation." On the other hand, in many cases this influence is soon lost, due to some radical change in local conditions and the influx of new elements.

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Its history plays an exceedingly large rôle in advancing or retarding community development. History and tradition are the memory of the community; they bring to mind its past experiences. Common ancestors and common participation in important events in the past give a sense of identity and heighten community consciousness. Pride in the history of the community is like pride in a good family, and is a strong factor in maintaining the standards of its people. Of course the past may be one of which no one is proud and which they may prefer to forget, but this is a spur to new endeavor as it is to a family to attain a new status.

Community life is likely to be at a low ebb where there is but little knowledge of, or interest in, the history of its past. I was recently impressed with this in visiting a small inland community, which was not without many events of interest in its earlier development. I failed, however, to find any connected records of the community's past or any of its people who know much of its history. So far as I could learn there had been few celebrations or community activities for many years and there was a general feeling that the community had been on the down grade and needed redirection. It seemed to me that one of the things which might arouse community loyalty in this instance would be for its people to clean up some of the old neighborhood cemeteries where many of the early pioneers lie buried, and which are now grown up and unkept.

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Then I think of another community where every few years on important anniversary events the history of an organization or of the community as a whole is related and often published in the local press. Its past has no more striking events than that of the locality last mentioned, but these people have pride in their community and their loyalty is renewed on these anniversary occasions.

Miss Emily F. Hoag<sup>[11]</sup> has recently given a good picture of how the history of their community has been made to live in the hearts of the people of Belleville, New York, through their loyalty to the old Union Academy, and she has given a fine example of how a community may be brought to a realization of the contribution which it has made to the life of the state and nation.

Only by a knowledge of the community's history can the nature and origin of the attitudes of its people be understood. A generation or two ago, perchance, there was a quarrel between two families which was carried into the school meeting, and to this day two factions have persisted. The attitudes of the people in many a progressive town may be directly traced to the influence of some outstanding leaders—a teacher, minister, or doctor, perhaps—long since gone to their reward. A village fire, the coming of a railroad or its deflection to a nearby town, a bank failure, a prohibition crusade, the establishment of a library are but a few examples of events which form crises in the life of every community and which have a far-reaching and subtle effect in moulding its character.

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The cultivation of a knowledge of its own history is, therefore, one of the first duties of a community which seeks to understand itself so that it may better direct its life. Every community should maintain a record of its history, and have some means of preserving important historical material. The New York legislature has recently passed an act authorizing any township or village board to appoint a local historian, without salary, and to furnish safe storage for historical records. One of the most progressive rural communities in the country is the Quaker settlement

at Sandy Spring, Maryland,<sup>[12]</sup> whose first historian was appointed in 1863 and whose historian reads the record of the year at each annual meeting. These "Annals" form a most intimate account of the community's progress. The custom of some rural newspapers of publishing local history of the past year on New Year's Day serves much the same purpose.

One of the best means of encouraging historical appreciation, and one which is very generally neglected, is the teaching of local history in the schools. Educators have learned that it is more pedagogical to commence instruction in geography with the local environment of the child, which it can know and understand, than to begin—as formerly—with the nebular hypothesis; but they are only commencing to appreciate that the same principle applies to the teaching of history. Is it not true that most children can glibly recite dates and events in the history of their own and foreign countries, of whose significance they have only a vague appreciation, but who never secure any real historical point of view or an appreciation of the importance of history because it has not been made concrete and intimate, as must be the case in considering local events? If national history is taught to develop patriotism, why should not local history be taught to inspire civic loyalty? Such a study of the efforts and sacrifices of former citizens would bring a new sense of obligation to be worthy of the heritage they have bequeathed, and would gradually establish an attitude of loyalty to the community which would be considered as essential to respectability as devotion to one's country. Indeed, how can one be truly loyal to a great country which is mostly unknown to him if he is not loyal to the people with whom he lives day by day in his home community?

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One of the best means of reviving interest in the community's past is through the production of an historical pageant, which is discussed on page 161; for as the people act together the events of the past, they gain a new realization of what they owe to the life of the community in bygone days, and come to appreciate that men come and men go but the community continues and perpetuates their influence for better or for worse.

Socrates' injunction to "know thyself" is the epitome of wisdom for the community as it is for the individual. The first step in this process of self-acquaintance is to secure an accurate knowledge of the kinds of people which compose the community, and how its past is influencing its present.

#### FOOTNOTES:

- [8] "Rural Primary Groups," a study of agricultural neighborhoods. Research Bulletin 51, Agr. Exp. Station of the University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1921.
- [9] "America via the Neighborhood," p. 419, D. Appleton & Co., 1920.
- [10] A. J. Dadisman, "French Creek as a Rural Community," Bulletin 176, Agricultural Experiment Station, West Virginia University, June, 1921.
- [11] "The National Influence of a Single Farm Community," Bulletin 984, United States Department of Agriculture, Dec., 1921.
- [12] See "A Rural Survey of Maryland," Dept. of Church and Country Life, Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., 1912; reprinted in part in N. L. Sims' "The Rural Community," p. 227, New York, Scribners, 1920.

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## CHAPTER IV

### COMMUNICATION THE MEANS OF COMMUNITY LIFE

We have seen that the real life of the community depends on common interests and the ability of its people to act together. This having things in common is the basis of all community and is achieved only through the exchange of ideas by various means of communication. Without communication there would be no community and no civilization. It is man's ability to communicate through spoken and written language that has made him *human*. Man is more than animal because he can exchange ideas with his fellows, and can profit by the experience of the race. This power of communication creates a new world for him in which he lives on a different plane from all other living things. The very words *community* and *communication*, both derived from *communis*—common, indicate their relation to each other; *community*—the having in common, *communication*—the making common.<sup>[13]</sup>

Until modern times practically all communication between the masses of the people was by word of mouth. The people of the old world lived together in villages which were largely self-dependent, and only the higher classes were educated to read and write. There was little

opportunity for contact with the outside world, and the people felt little need of better means of communication. It has been frequently asserted that isolation has been the chief rural problem in America. The reason for the dissatisfaction with life on isolated farms is better appreciated when we remember that during all previous history men have lived together in close association and their whole mode of thought, customs, attitudes, and desires have been formed in the intimate life of compact groups. It is but natural, therefore, that life on the isolated farm with but few contacts with others than immediate neighbors should become irksome and that town and city have had a peculiar attraction for farm people.

We cannot here examine the causes and history of the development of our modern means of communication, but we must recognize that it is due to them that rural community life as we are coming to know it in the United States is made possible. Without these newer facilities for more frequent association and exchange of ideas, rural life would still be confined to the small local neighborhood.

At the same time, the railroad and trolley have abolished the isolation of the rural community and have made possible the diversion of local interests and loyalties to larger centers. Thus while communication aids the integration of the community it affords equal facilities for its disruption. Doubtless some of the smaller community centers will be unable to compete with the attraction of nearby larger centers, but there seems no good reason to believe that better communication will injure the best life of communities which are of sufficient size to support the institutions which will command local loyalty. This dual influence of means of communication on the internal and external relations of rural communities creates some of the chief problems of rural social organization, for the increase of means of communication in the past two or three generations has been more momentous and has had a more far-reaching effect on human relations than in all the previous centuries since the invention of writing.

A brief survey of the more important of these new agencies will indicate how they affect the relations of the farmer to his community and to other communities. These may be considered under the two general heads of means of transportation, and means for the exchange of ideas.

As long as transportation was by wagon and by boat, commerce was slow and expensive; each community was compelled to be largely self-dependent, and life was isolated to an extent that it is difficult for us to conceive. Anderson has well stated the situation when he says:

"Merchandise and produce that could not stand a freight of fifteen dollars per ton could not be carried overland to a consumer one hundred and fifty miles from the point of production; as roads were, a distance of fifty miles from the market often made industrial independence expedient."<sup>[14]</sup>

It was the steam railroad which made larger markets available, made possible the growth of our large cities and the opening up of new lands distant from markets. The railroad and manufacturing by power machinery put an end to the "age of homespun," and made it more profitable for the farmer to sell his products and to purchase his manufactured goods in exchange. The railroad, and the markets which it made available, changed the village center from a place of local barter to a shipping point and so tended to center the economic life of larger areas in the villages with railroad stations. Better local roads were necessary and business tended to become centralized in the village. The numerous wayside taverns along the main highways disappeared, as did the neighborhood mill and blacksmith shop. The railroad, more than any other one factor, has determined the location of our rural community centers.

The electric railroad made the village centers more available to farm people and gave transportation facilities to many villages without railroads, but it also made it possible for the people of smaller communities to go to the larger centers for trading and other advantages. Trolleys have made it possible for many farm children to get to high school who could not otherwise have attended and have enabled those living near them to more easily get back and forth from the village centers for all phases of community life. On the whole, however, they have probably carried more traffic between communities, and it seems strange that they have not more generally been able to find a profit in hauling produce from the farms to the nearest markets or shipping stations.

Of more importance to community life has been the development of good roads, a movement which did not get under way until the present century and which was chiefly due to the rural free mail delivery and the automobile. The change in rural life due to automotive vehicles can hardly be exaggerated. In our best agricultural states practically every farmer has his automobile. He can get to the community center as quickly as the business man or laborer gets to his work in the average city, and can go to the county seat or neighboring city as quickly as one can drive to the business section from the more distant parts of New York or Chicago. Auto-bus lines radiate from most of our small cities, and auto trucks not only bring freight from nearby wholesale centers, but are rapidly supplanting horses for hauling farm produce to the shipping station or market.

As good roads have been due chiefly to state and county, and more recently to national aid, it is but natural that they should have been constructed where the traffic is heaviest connecting the main centers. What is now most needed to build up the local communities is a systematic development of the principal local roads radiating from the community centers.

Good roads and automobiles have made possible a new sort of a local community, which could never have existed without them. Consider the present possibility of consolidated schools with auto-busses to haul the children; the numbers of automobiles which come in from the farms to every village center where there is a band concert or movie show; the ability to get in the

"flivver" after supper and ride to a relative's or friend's on the other side of the town and be back for early bedtime; and one can perceive how the people in a community area are bound together and develop common interests in new advantages made possible by their ability to get together easily and quickly. How could the county agricultural agent or the visiting nurse cover a county as effectively as they now do without the automobile? The rural community can now enjoy the services of expert paid executives in many fields of work as diverse as a county commercial club secretary, a Boy Scout leader, a Sunday school executive, or county health officer, because the county has become a unit which can be covered as easily as a city and is large enough to support such a division of labor as no one community could enjoy. We shall have occasion to refer to many county organizations and agencies which not only build up the county and the county seat, but which strengthen the life of every community which they serve, and whose work is very largely possible because of good roads and automobiles. Where bad roads still exist many of these services must wait and less community life is possible.

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Nor does the home lose with the community advancement due to better transportation. Surely it is better to have the children living at home than boarding in the village while they attend high school; the doctor is secured more quickly and the visiting nurse is available; and the family can come and go as a family because less time is required and there is no waiting for the horses to feed, or to get rested.

It is true of course that the automobile makes it possible for people to go to the larger towns and other village centers, and to visit their particular friends and relatives in neighboring communities, and thus seems to furnish means for breaking down and stratifying community life. These tendencies exist, but they will not seriously injure the community which has anything worth while for its people. Better transportation simply makes possible a more highly organized community life, and any complex organization is the more easily deranged; a complex machine or a high-bred animal is more susceptible to injury than a simple tool or scrub. Many ministers have railed against the automobile, while others have used it to fill their pews. We cannot get away from that oldest of paradoxes, first learned by Father Adam, that every new good has possibilities of evil. A certain type of mind has always enjoyed condemning every new invention as "of the Devil," and yet the world wags on and no one who knows them would go back to "the good old days."

The automobile has brought new ideas both to the community and to the farm and home. Farmers and their wives are traveling by auto much more than they ever did by train, and it is impossible not to pick up new ideas. One of the most effective educational devices is the farm tour in which a group of Farm Bureau members travel from one farm to another studying the methods of farming, and the women have adopted the idea for an inspection of farm homes.

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To discuss all the effects of automotive vehicles—cycle, car, truck, bus, and tractor—on farm life would fill a book in itself: space forbids except for incidental mention in the following chapters.

Turning to the mechanisms for the transmission of ideas, we appreciate the even more wonderful inventions which have brought the whole world to the farmer's door.

A generation ago farmers went several miles to the nearest postoffice for their mail, and usually got it but two or three times a week. To-day over the greater part of the country it is delivered to them daily, and they can ship small packages by parcels post from their doors. This daily delivery has greatly widened the circulation of the daily newspapers and magazines of all sorts, and has given farm people a new knowledge and a livelier interest in city and world-wide affairs. The parcel post has made the mail-order business, but it is even more beneficial to the local merchant who can fill a telephone order and mail it to a customer for less expense than delivery costs in the city. Correspondence and advertising by farm people have greatly increased. It is true that the abolition of many rural postoffices has destroyed an old-time rendezvous, but farmers probably go to the community center more frequently than formerly. A more unfortunate feature of the rural delivery service is that it often gives the farmer a mail address at a postoffice of a community where he rarely goes, and fails to indicate the community in which he is located to one unacquainted with the local geography (see page 232).

Even more important as an aid to community activities is the telephone. Visiting is now done more over the phone than in person, but conversation can be had with any one in the community at any time, and isolation is banished. The telephone has brought a larger protection to the farm home in calling the doctor, police, or fire assistance. The economic value of the phone soon became apparent for the distribution of market reports and weather forecasts or for ordering goods or repairs from town, and the marvelous wireless telephone will greatly extend these services. The Extension Service of the Kansas Agricultural College is installing a wireless outfit which will receive market and weather reports and will transmit them to the farm bureau offices at the county seats, where they may be relayed through the local telephones to every farmer. Thus world-wide conditions may be flashed to the farmer's fireside. Within the community the telephone has made possible a degree of organization hitherto impossible. Meetings are called, committees are assembled, or their business is done over the phone, so that both social and economic life are greatly stimulated.

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The farmer is sometimes chided for not having organized rural life more effectively. The simple reason is that he has not had the mechanisms whereby he could do so. With only mud roads and horses people could get together but infrequently, and arrangements had to be made when they were together. City life was better organized because people could get together more easily. To-day both time and space have been so largely overcome that communication in the country is



almost as rapid as in the city and more effective organization is possible.

Better transportation, mail, and telephone service have made available agencies for the communication of ideas, previously accessible only to the few or patronized so infrequently by those further away as to furnish too small a constituency for their successful maintenance. The free public library is a powerful educational agency, but many a community has been too small for its support. Now county library systems are being organized—thanks to automobiles—which give branch stations to every community (see p. 102). Lyceum courses of lectures and entertainments, chautauqua courses, public forums for the discussion of current problems, and last, but not least, the moving picture shows with their pictures of important events from all parts of the world and showing life from Central Africa to the Antipodes, all of these are agencies for bringing new ideas to the rural community, and are becoming increasingly common as better transportation makes it possible for the people to utilize them. The fact that these agencies must be located where they can serve the largest number of people, determines their location at the community centers and they are thus a large factor in unifying the community.

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Modern transportation has abolished the isolation of the farm and new means of communication have freed the spirit of the farmer and brought the world to his doors. Together they make possible so many satisfactions heretofore only available to the cities, as to quite revolutionize the whole aspect of rural life. They give a new position to the rural community and to the farmer's status in it.

#### FOOTNOTES:

- [13] Community is derived from the Old English word *commonty* which came to mean "the body of the common people, commons." Communication is from the Latin *communicare*, also derived from *communis*—common, and *ic* (the formative of factitive verbs)—to make, or to make common.
- [14] "The Country Town," p. 20.

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## CHAPTER V

### THE FARM AND THE VILLAGE

We have seen that an active community must focus its life at some center, and that this center is usually a village which has been established primarily for business purposes. The relation of the American village to the surrounding farms is historically unique and is largely due to the rapidity and ease with which large areas of the United States were settled after the advent of railroads. In the colonial period and the early days of the New West, every settlement was so isolated that it was obliged to be largely self-sufficient. Transportation was slow and uncertain and prohibitive for other than the necessities which could not be locally produced. Under these conditions the farmer and village business man were so inter-dependent that they were forced to consider each other's interests. But when settlement became safer and transportation easier the homesteaders took up their claims without relation to village connections; they traded where it was most convenient, and their social life centered largely in the immediate neighborhood and in the district school and country church. On the other hand the village was settled by men who came primarily for business. The spirit of the age was that of competition and they came primarily for profits. Their business came from the farms, but they felt little sense of obligation to them. Every village was a potential city in their eyes and its growth and the rise of real estate values was of more concern to them than the development of the community's basic industry of agriculture. The village craftsman and business man gets most of his living from the farms and it should be to his interest to give them the best of service, but more and more he has become primarily a business man or craftsman, coming to the village to "make money" and moving on when he sees better opportunities elsewhere. His business and craft affiliations link him to the centers of commercial and industrial life in the cities, and he is strongly inclined to take the city's point of view. Particularly has this been the case with the country banker who has so largely controlled the economic life of the village and countryside. Too often he has inevitably been more largely influenced by the interests of eastern capital and the mortgage owners than by the real needs of his local constituency.

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The result has been an increasing friction between the villages and the farms, and we have come to think of them as two separate groups or interests rather than as essential and inter-dependent parts of a social area—the community. The literature of country life and of rural sociology has very rightly recognized the existing situation, but many writers seem to accept the division between village and farm as inevitable, and even question whether there can be a rural

community of the type herein described, rather than to recognize that this is but a necessary stage in the beginning of community life, due to the mode of settlement and temporary conditions.

This friction between farmer and villager has been most acute in the Middle West and has found its extreme expression in the Non-partisan League Movement, which has engendered a degree of bitterness between the two factions which cannot be permanently maintained without serious injury to their common interests. This, however, is only an attempt of the farmers to secure redress through political control, and is but the political form of expression of a protest which is being more effectively made as an economic movement through coöperative buying and selling agencies, particularly strong in Kansas and Nebraska, but rapidly spreading throughout the country.

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Some rural leaders would have us believe that the interests of the village and the farm are fundamentally antagonistic and irreconcilable. They advocate that the consolidated school or high school be placed in the open country where it will be uncontaminated by the urban-mindedness of the village; that the grange is the farmers' organization and is sufficient for him and has no need of affiliating itself with the affairs of the village; that the farmers should develop their own coöperative stores and selling agencies so that they can be economically independent of the "parasitic" trader of the village. Such a naïve point of view has a certain logical simplicity which is based on the presupposition that conflict is inevitable and that justice and equity can be secured only through dominance. The same line of reasoning finds no solution of the problem of capital and labor, or of the interests of producer as over against consumer, except in strong organization and eternal economic conflict. It is apparent that there is much justification for this view and that it seems in many cases to be a necessary stage in the adjustment of interests, but that it is either inevitable or a permanent necessity is controverted both by experience and by a more thorough analysis of the relationships involved.

There is no gainsaying the fact that conflict has been one of the chief agencies of human progress in the past; but neither can it be disputed that coöperation, or mutual aid, has been of equal importance. Neither attitude can be conceived as primary or dominant; they have interacted throughout the history of mankind. Fundamentally, the problem of the relationship of these two phases of life is much the same as that of the nature and function of good and evil. The one cannot exist without the other, and both are relative terms. Our present thought on these problems has been too largely dominated by a wrong interpretation of the theory of the survival of the fittest as the primary force in human evolution. We have assumed, and the German militarists carried the doctrine to a logical conclusion, that this hypothesis gave the sanction of a biological law to a competitive struggle between men. But such an inference was explicitly denied by Charles Darwin,<sup>[15]</sup> and has no biological foundation. The struggle he described is between species and not between members of the same species. On the other hand, we find throughout nature that those species have been most successful which have developed the most effective means of mutual aid.<sup>[16]</sup> Thus our economic and political thought has been dominated for the past two or three generations with a blind worship of the dogma of unrestrained competition, which has no basis of proof either in biological or social science.

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When we examine what has gone on in the older sections of our country and project the present tendencies into the future, we get a different point of view, and come to see that only by an adjustment of the relations of the village and the farm to each other can the best life of both be secured. We shall have occasion in subsequent chapters to consider the social and political problems involved, but let us here discuss merely the economic relations, which have been the chief source of discord.

In the first place if we examine the situation in the older parts of the country we find a much more cordial relation between village and country than farther west, and a greater sense of belonging to a community. The reasons for this cannot be discussed in detail, but a large factor is the increasing tendency to centralize institutions; school, church, grange, lodge, stores, etc.; in the village as the country becomes older, roads are better, and higher standards develop. Furthermore, the relative status of the farmer changes the situation. In the older parts of the country most of the capital needed to supply credit to farmers and their business organizations comes from within the locality, whereas in the newer sections they are dependent upon outside capital. In the older sections where land has become more valuable and wealth has accumulated, the farmer as well as the villager is a bank director, and the amount of capital which the farmer has invested in his business is often much greater than that of the village business man. When the farmer comes into town in his first-class automobile as frequently as he desires, he has a very different status from former days. The "banker-farmer" movement, which started as an effort of the banker to assist the farmer in better methods of production and marketing, has now become a "farmer-banker" movement in which the country banker has been forced to give new thought to the credit facilities of his patrons, and is already challenging the justice of the country's credit facilities being dominated by the large city banks which are chiefly interested in financing industry and commerce.

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There is no question that in many a rural town there are too many stores, as there are in the cities, that in many cases their service is very inefficient, and occasionally their prices are exorbitant, but several forces are already tending to remedy these evils where they occur, and improvement may be hastened by intelligent and constructive discussion. Thus exorbitant prices or poor service has made possible the large sales of the mail-order houses, but the total volume of their business in most localities is relatively small and their competition has probably been beneficial to the wide-awake merchant. For first-class merchants have been able to show that

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they can meet the mail-order prices if the customer is willing to pay cash, and the advertising of the mail-order houses has undoubtedly increased the wants of the average farm household. In a recent address Dr. C. J. Galpin has pointed out that one of the shortcomings of the average country merchant is that he has not studied the needs of his patrons and brought to their attention new inventions and the better grades of goods. He holds that the higher standard of living of city people is largely due to the fact that attractive goods and better equipment are constantly brought to their attention in the shop windows and by salesmen.

The coöperative buying of farm supplies and machinery, which is now assuming such large proportions, is due not merely to an effort to secure lower prices, but to secure better goods. It is a notorious fact that for many years the farmer has had to buy inferior fertilizers and feeds from local dealers because they were all he could get. Both mixed feeds and fertilizers have been sold under certain brands on much the same principle as patent medicines, until the farmer has organized his own agencies to secure their manufacture in accordance with the best scientific formulas. This has been primarily due to a short-sighted policy on the part of manufacturers, but it has done greater injury to the retailer who, in general, has made little effort to learn the real needs of his trade and supply it with the best goods. The same has been true of seeds and agricultural machinery. As a result of this one of the chief claims of such a coöperative agency as the New York Grange-League-Federation Exchange is that it is able not only to sell at a lower price but to furnish the best quality. The wide-awake country merchant has been keen to appreciate these facts and wherever he has studied his trade and devoted himself to its interests he has built up a successful business. The "Country Gentleman" has done a real service in recently publishing a series of articles by A. B. MacDonald which have described the successes of a few of the outstanding "Big Country Merchants."

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The "chain store" has not as yet invaded the village, but it is rapidly gaining a foothold in the smaller cities and village merchants may as well prepare for its competition, for there seems no good reason why its greater buying power and superior organization should not enable it to undersell the local merchant if the customer is willing to pay cash. As yet all chain stores are on a cash basis and this would seem to prevent their gaining much of the business of the farmer who has depended on long time credit. But the coöperative stores, which do business only for cash, have solved the credit problem by establishing credit facilities whereby short-time loans may be made and a credit established against which purchases are charged. There is no question that both farmer and merchant would be better off if credit were carried by a financial institution. The farmer is being rapidly educated in business practices, and it will be surprising if some enterprising corporation does not establish a chain of village stores which will do a cash business, but which will arrange for separate credit on a strictly business basis. If one looks at the trend of business in the cities and towns during recent years, he cannot but come to the conviction that either country merchants will have to get together so as to pool their purchasing power and get the advantages of expert assistance in advertising, accounting, store arrangement, and other technical services which the chain store enjoys, or they will be forced to content themselves with the poorer and less profitable class of trade. I have seen no studies of the matter, but it would be interesting to know how large an amount of farmer trade is now enjoyed by the chain groceries in our larger towns. My own impression is that they are a much more serious competitor of the small country merchant than is the mail-order house. These are but a few of the forces which will bring better service from the village merchant.

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There are also ways in which farmers may secure better service without attempting to operate a coöperative store of their own or deserting the local merchants. Farm Bureau associations have in numerous cases made arrangements with a local dealer whereby he would handle their seeds, fertilizers, or spraying materials at a specified rate of profit, upon condition that they give him all their trade in these articles and place their orders in advance. This principle of collective buying through an established merchant at an agreed rate of profit has much to commend it, and is being utilized by the Grange-League-Federation Exchange in New York state to take care of its local business as far as possible. The fact is that the profits of a strictly coöperative store, after paying the salary of a competent manager and other costs of operation, which would make a very attractive income for a single merchant, do not make a dividend to each of its many patrons much more than a good rate of interest on the total cost of purchases. It may as well be recognized that unless there be a strong loyalty to the coöperative principle by a considerable group of patrons and unless there be peculiar need of a coöperative store that it is not a mechanism which will automatically secure much lower prices or superior service, for the success of the enterprise depends primarily on the manager and if he be competent, he must be paid sufficient to command not only his services but his loyalty and initiative. The coöperative store will find it good business to have a profit-sharing arrangement with its manager and employees, if it expects to secure the same service from them that may be secured from the better merchants. On the other hand, if by pooling their buying power a group of farmers can throw their business to one merchant in consideration of his selling at a specified profit, even if only for a particular line of goods, they get the advantage of their collective purchasing power and have none of the responsibility for maintaining the business. Although it is my belief that the coöperative principle is essentially sound and must ultimately dominate our business life, yet it will need to find means of giving larger incentive to its managers if it is to compete with the best individual business men. After all, what is wanted is to get business on a functional basis, and if this can be accomplished by means of collective buying through an established business which furnishes its own capital and management, the farmer is the gainer. The essential thing is that business be put on the basis of public service rather than private profit. When that principle is recognized as being the only sound basis of our economic system, then the methods of business organization

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will be determined by what experience shows to be most advantageous to the community, and it may well be that true "*coöperative competition*" between individual merchants and coöperative stores may exist side by side with advantage to all concerned.

Another factor in rural community life is the increase of industrial establishments in villages and small towns. There can be no question that the centralization of industry in our large cities, which has proceeded so rapidly since the development of steam power, has now passed its maximum and that there will be a considerable decentralization of certain industries which can be operated profitably in small units. The metropolitan city has passed its maximum of economic efficiency for many phases of manufacturing, if economic efficiency is judged by its power to produce "well-being," rather than mere wealth. We have been obsessed with the glamour of the bigness of the modern city and we are but beginning to seriously question its real efficiency. The possibility of superior living conditions in a small town are now being recognized both by employer and laborer, and better transportation and the development of electric power lines make possible the organization of certain of our large industries in small units. As this process proceeds the business of the village and small town will no longer be chiefly dependent on agriculture and there will be a further need for accommodation of the different interests of the community. Here again, some see only loss to rural life; but if one examines the situation more thoroughly, mutual advantages are equally apparent. If the farmers are organized for coöperative selling, they will be benefited by the better local markets, which are the backbone of the agricultural economy of so prosperous a country as France. Certain local industries, whose production is of a seasonal nature, might so arrange their operation that some of their labor might be available to work on the neighboring farms during the rush season. Even more important would be the increased purchasing power of the community, making possible better stores and business and professional services of all sorts, and the increase of wealth which would make possible the support of better schools, churches, and social advantages of all sorts. It is, of course, true that the introduction of industry in not a few cases seems to have lowered the standards of community life, but this is by no means universal or inevitable.

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One of the unfortunate phases of the efforts of small communities to secure industrial plants is that they often secure establishments which are not adapted to local conditions or whose financial status is insecure, and the enterprise inevitably results in failure, with discouragement to all concerned. There is great need for county chambers of commerce or commercial clubs with skilled commercial executives as secretaries who can give the same expert service to the business life of the small rural communities that the cities now have. The business life of the community might profit as much from such a service as the farms have from the expert assistance afforded through the Farm Bureaus.<sup>[17]</sup>

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We have been considering the economic relations of the farm and the village as affecting community life, for they are at present the chief factor in creating community interest, as well as the leading cause of group friction. The rural community of to-day is primarily an economic unit, but in the future it seems probable that business will occupy a relatively less important place than the social activities of the community center. Not that there will necessarily be less business, although the widening of markets constantly tends to take business from the local centers, but that business will be more efficient and less competitive; business will not occupy so large a share of attention, but will take its rightful place as a means to an end, while the community will take more interest in those institutions which actively promote all phases of its higher life, of health, education, art, sociability, and religion.

These social institutions will increase in relative importance and they must be located at the community center if they are to have a sufficient constituency to be efficient in their work and command the loyalty of rural people. Inasmuch as both farmer and villager are necessary for the adequate support of church, lodge, school, and other community organizations, they cannot be expected to work together in these activities if one is antagonistic to the other, or if the one is helping to put the other out of business. The farmer has had many grievances against the townsman, but the fault has not been entirely on one side, and only by mutual support and the recognition of their dependent interests can a satisfactory community life be maintained. The root of the whole trouble lies in the imaginary division of the community into town and country. With the realization that their common interests are essential and that their differences are due to lack of proper adjustment, many of these difficulties will be alleviated. It is my experience that in the most successful communities, the farmers speak of "our" town, they are proud of "our" bank, and "our" stores, school, and churches are the best in the region. Such loyalty is the best of evidence that the business men of the town have devoted themselves to supplying the farmers' needs, and that there is mutual understanding between them. Only by a common loyalty to mutual service can the true community exist.

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Farmers need the village and it should be to them "our town," of whose successes and improvements they are proud. As the villagers cannot exist without the farmers they should be interested in supporting every movement for the farmers' weal. As they have more frequent contacts with other centers and with cities, they will be the first to bring many new ideas and suggestions to the community, but they must realize that only as all elements of the community are agreed will any new movement be permanently successful. There must be loyalty to farm leaders as well as to those of the village. Indeed, the most successful rural communities are those in which all are one big community family whose institutional interests center in the village.

#### FOOTNOTES:

[15] See George Nasmyth, "Social Progress and the Darwinian Theory."

[16] See P. Kropotkin, "Mutual Aid."

[17] See L. H. Bailey, "The Place of the Village in the Country-Life Movement," *York State Rural Problems*, II, 148. Albany, N. Y., 1915.

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## CHAPTER VI

### COMMUNITY ASPECTS OF THE FARM BUSINESS

In the days of the pioneer the farm business was hardly affected by community conditions. A general store where necessities could be purchased, a mill where grain could be ground, and a blacksmith shop were about the only necessary business agencies. The farm was largely self-sufficient and there was but little real community life. Nor was there much change in the next generation or two among the farmers who built substantial homes, supported their neighborhood churches and schools, and with the free labor of a good-sized family made a comfortable living. Their interests were chiefly in their families and neighbors, and questions of local government were about the only community bond. When new sections of the country were opened up by railroads and with the growth of cities farm lands increased rapidly in value, there was an era of speculative farming, which Dr. Warren H. Wilson has called the era of the "exploiter."<sup>[18]</sup> A farm was bought with an idea of its improvement and resale at a good profit, and many farmers moved from one section to another in search of new land which was both fertile and cheap.<sup>[19]</sup> The era of land speculation has by no means passed, as has been learned to their sorrow by many who bought farms at inflated prices during the World War, and whenever there is a sudden rise in land values, speculation will doubtless recur. On the other hand, as cheap lands become scarce, as the better lands become more valuable and the amount of capital required to equip and operate a farm in the better agricultural sections increases, there will be less tendency to be on the lookout for a profitable sale and the farm business will become more permanent because of the large effort and capital expended in the enterprise and the consequent attachment of the owner. A man with a considerable investment does not care to move frequently. Thus higher land values—inevitable with an increasing population—will favor a more permanent type of farming, conducted on scientific and business principles, of what Dr. Wilson calls the "husbandman" type. This type of farmer not only desires but requires better institutions of all sorts, which can only be maintained at a community center. Thus permanency of ownership of farm operators conduces to community development.

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Unfortunately, however, the rise of values of the best land seems to encourage tenancy rather than ownership, for tenancy is greatest and increases most on the best farm lands. The general economic aspects and the ultimate solution of the tenancy problem are national rather than local problems. The effect of tenancy as it now exists, with a frequent shifting from one community to another, is, however, a very serious community problem, for all observers agree that the maintenance of a satisfactory standard of community life is much more difficult where tenancy predominates.

One important economic aspect of tenancy is that tenants, who are frequently moving, will less readily and effectively affiliate in coöperative enterprises, and we shall see that coöperative organizations have a large influence in promoting the solidarity of the rural community. This has been well brought out by one of our best students of the tenancy problem, Dr. C. L. Stewart, who says:

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"Farming efficiency in the future, however, will probably consist to a greater extent in the ability to increase net profits through coöperative dealing with the market. The efficiency test must, therefore, rule more strongly against operators of the tenures, whose characteristics are opposed to successful coöperative effort on their part.

"That tenants," he continues, "changing from farm to farm at more or less short intervals, should generally be more active and successful than owners in building up coöperative organizations is hardly in the line of reason.... If in the future, coöperation assumes forms requiring greater permanency of membership in the societies, greater intimacy of acquaintance among the members, or greater investment per member, the tenants will doubtless find themselves handicapped in their relation thereto."<sup>[20]</sup>

The effect of a large percentage of tenants is even more serious upon the social side of community life. Those who have studied the problem are agreed that both schools and churches tend to be inferior in tenant communities. There is little "chance of development of deep friendships and associations which give vitality to church life" where a large proportion of the tenants are frequently moving, nor can they give as good financial support to the church as

landowners. The frequent shifting of the tenant population creates a difficult problem for all the social life of the community, for it is impossible for a community to assimilate a considerable percentage of its population every year and to develop those strong ties of loyalty which are essential to real community life.

Thus a reasonable permanency of residence of its population is essential to successful community life and this is largely determined by the economic situation of the farm business. And the importance of the effect of tenancy, or any other economic aspect of agriculture on the life of its people must be recognized as a fundamental consideration in determining rural policies. Well being *on* the land and not wealth *from* the land is the final goal of agriculture.

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Community life is also affected by the type of farming which is prevalent among its people. Modern agriculture is becoming specialized, and the crops grown are determined both by soil and climate and by the markets available. Fruit sections are due primarily to the former, while the regions producing market milk are determined chiefly by the latter factor. Now various types of farming make distinctly different demands upon the time of the farmer and so to a considerable extent they condition his social life. Dairying is probably the most confining sort of farming, and on the one-man farm there is little opportunity for getting away. "Haven't missed milking morning or night for six years," one dairyman replied to me when asked if he ever had a vacation. The fruit grower, on the other hand, during the winter can take a few weeks to go South or visit relatives without injury to his business. In the South after the crops are "laid by" in midsummer is the season for camp-meetings, picnics, and "frolicking" in general. Not only does the fruit grower have more leisure than the dairyman, but population is denser in a fruit-growing or trucking community and hence the communities are smaller and more compact. Just what characteristics of community life may be attributed to these differences in vocation it would be difficult to say, for so far as I am aware no exact studies have compared several communities of each type, but that they exercise a large influence on community customs and the social attitudes of the people is patent to even a casual observer who passes from a dairy section to a fruit region, or from the northwestern grain belt to a region of general farming.[21]

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Specialization in agricultural production also affects community life in that its economic interests are unified both as regards production and marketing and as the income of most of its people comes from one or two products, their attention is focused upon them and a greater degree of solidarity results than where farming is more diversified and farmers are not so dependent on the sale of one or two crops. Specialization is chiefly due to advantages which it ensures in marketing, as will be indicated in the next chapter, and it is because there is less economic pressure to compel general farmers to market together and that they lack the solidarity developed by specialization, that coöperative selling associations have not generally succeeded in a general farming region when they have attempted to handle various farm products.

Specialization in agriculture encourages further division of labor because there is a sufficient volume of work to pay for expert services. Thus dairy communities have developed cow-test associations, which employ one man to test the percent of butter-fat for each cow, to interpret their milk production records, and sometimes to advise them with regard to feeding. In fruit regions a considerable business is done in contract spraying. Threshing crews and threshing-rings have long been common. Custom plowing by tractor, and hauling of farm produce by motor truck are becoming common. It seems probable that such division of labor will increase as much as is practicable, but it finds very definite limitations in the agricultural industry, due to the very short season in which many operations can be performed and which thus gives short employment for any of the seasonal operations.

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Division of labor also involves increasing the manufacture or "processing" of agricultural products which is an asset to the community if performed locally as far as possible. Butter is no longer made in the home but at the creamery, and milk is prepared for the city market at the shipping station, or is sold to a local condensary, all of which employ more or less skilled labor. With crops which are perishable or bulky, "processing" must be performed locally. Thus canneries are located where the vegetables or fruits are grown. Although the selling of equipment for coöperative canning plants has been almost as much of a swindle as promoting coöperative creameries, yet large numbers of coöperative creameries exist where conditions for them are suitable, and there seems no inherent reason why coöperative canneries cannot be made successful when farmers have learned how to organize and to employ expert help.[22] In his delightful vision of the possibilities of a new Ireland, entitled "The National Being," George William Russell ("A. E."), holds out the hope that the increase of such local coöperative manufacture of agricultural products may be the means of furnishing an opportunity for the rural laborer to better his status.

"But what I hope for most," he says, "is first that the natural evolution of the rural community, and the concentration of individual manufacture, purchase, and sale into communal enterprises, will lead to a very large coöperative ownership of expensive machinery, which will necessitate the communal employment of labor. If this takes place, as I hope it will, the rural laborer, instead of being a manual worker using primitive implements, will have the status of a skilled mechanic employed permanently by a coöperative community. He should be a member of the society which employs him, and in the division of the profits receive in proportion to his wage, as the farmers in proportion to their trade." [23]

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To the extent that "processing" farm products is taken from the farm and performed at the community center, or that there is a division of labor, the local community is thereby strengthened, for its life is more highly organized; it is more inter-dependent.

An interesting phase of the relation of the community to the farm business is in the protection of crops and animals from insect pests and diseases. If one man plants his wheat late enough to escape the Hessian fly his crop is benefited, but if all in a community do so the subsequent infection is greatly reduced with consequent advantage to all. The chief obstacle preventing the successful combating of the cotton boll weevil in the South has been the difficulty of securing united action in the necessary cultural measures for its control. Most striking results have been secured in the eradication of the Texas Fever Tick from large areas of the South, although this has been carried on using the county as a unit; for many purposes in the South the county is practically a community. Some of the best community work in this field has been in the West in poisoning ground squirrels and other injurious rodents and in rabbit drives. Although the poisoning campaigns are conducted over whole counties or several counties, they are organized by communities and their success is possible only because every one in the community does his part. Whenever the farmers of a community become convinced that they are unable to fight a pest or disease individually, but can do so if they act collectively so that a sufficiently large area is treated as to prevent immediate re-infection, a new community bond has been established. Whether these activities are carried on by communities of the exact nature previously defined (page 10) is immaterial. The significant fact is that their people are learning how to act together in the common defense, for it was the common defense which first compelled mankind to live in communities, and it is defense for one purpose or another which is ever compelling the people of a locality to act together.

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Farm management experts point out the practical value to the farmer of community experience with regard to methods of farm practice peculiarly adapted to local climate, soils, and markets. If one is going into dairying he can learn little from his neighbors if he locates in a fruit section, but in a dairy section he may constantly learn from the common experience. Dr. G. F. Warren says:

"There is so much to learn about farming in any community that one man cannot hope to learn it alone. The experience of the community is of the utmost value to every farmer. Different men try out new varieties of crops, new machines, different breeds of animals, different methods of raising crops, different methods of building construction, different ways of saving labor. Each man gets the experiences of all; if a man is following a type of farming different from his neighbors, he cannot hope to try all these things. He is not likely to progress very rapidly."<sup>[24]</sup>

These advantages occur if there be a true community; i.e., if through communication one may learn the experience of others, but in some cases the experience is of little value because it is not available.

Finally farmers are coming to find it profitable to establish the reputation of a community for advertising purposes. So at the railroad station we are faced with the sign, "Kalamazoo, the home of celery." We know of "Kalamazoo, direct to you" stoves, but we had forgotten that it is one of the oldest and best celery-growing communities in the country. Thus increased specialization gives very real advertising values to a community which builds up a reputation for its products. But such a reputation is simply the recognition by the outside world of the character of the community. Thus ability to advertise itself is a very real index of its solidarity, and the desire to be able to gain advantage from advertising may become a real motive for activities of a community, as it does with many an individual. The ability to advertise but shows the economic value of the creation of a real community.

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Common interests in the farm business form the primary bond for the establishment of true rural communities, and the strongest of these common interests are those involved in the problems of marketing.

#### FOOTNOTES:

- [18] See "The Evolution of the Country Community."
- [19] See Hamlin Garland, "A Son of the Middle Border."
- [20] Land Tenure in the United States with special reference to Illinois, University of Illinois, "Studies in the Social Sciences," Vol. V, No. 3, Sept., 1916, p. 124.
- [21] See John M. Gillette, "Constructive Rural Sociology" (1st Ed.), Chapter III.
- [22] For an excellent discussion of "Processing Farm Products," see Theodore Macklin, "Efficient Marketing for Agriculture," Macmillan, New York, 1921, Chap. VI.
- [23] "The National Being, Some Thoughts on Irish Polity," p. 57, Maunsel & Co., Dublin and London, 1916.
- [24] "Farm Management," p. 98, Macmillan & Co., New York, 1913.

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## CHAPTER VII

# HOW MARKETS AFFECT RURAL COMMUNITIES

We have already observed the influence of transportation and the growth of markets in revolutionizing the self-sufficient farming of the pioneer and the industrial self-dependency of the isolated community, but we must give further consideration to the influence of markets on rural community life, for the world is now facing problems of the readjustment of its whole economic system which necessitate a better understanding by the farmer of his dependence on markets and by urban populations of their dependence upon the raw materials produced by the farm, if the mechanism of our complex modern civilization is to be maintained. These relations involve the largest questions of the interdependence of industries and of national and international policy in relation thereto, and we can but call attention to some of the more fundamental principles involved. An understanding of some of the elementary principles of agricultural economy in relation to national and international economy by the masses of our farmers, but particularly by their local leaders, is essential to any permanent progress not only of agriculture, but of industry and commerce.

Before the time of railroads when rural communities were isolated from the few cities situated on the seaboard and along the larger waterways, there was little incentive for the inland farmer to raise more than he needed for the use of his own family. As a result there was inefficient farming and a low standard of living.<sup>[25]</sup> Railroad transportation made it possible for the farmer to send his products to the existing markets and so made it an object for him to produce a surplus, but, more important, it also made possible the rapid growth of numerous industrial and commercial centers and so was directly responsible for the creation of new and growing markets. Steam power, the use of coal, and the economies of the factory system made it possible to manufacture in large city factories many articles previously produced in the farmer's home or in the village centers. Thus a division of labor was effected which was profitable to all parties; the growth of industrial populations gave the farmer a market for his produce, and in turn he was able to purchase from the city many goods previously unknown to the farm—fertilizers, agricultural machinery, factory-made clothing, furniture, and other factory products too numerous to mention. Furthermore, transportation and reasonably stable government made possible the growth of international commerce so that the markets of many staple farm products became practically world-wide and a division of labor arose between certain nations. England and Germany are dependent on other countries for a considerable part of their food supplies and raw materials, while certain agricultural countries depend on them for manufactured goods.

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The point which must ever be borne in mind in considering the relation of rural and urban communities is their interdependence; that the development both of modern industrial centers and of modern agriculture and the higher standards of living on American farms, have been due to an exchange of commodities and services which was mutually advantageous. Without the growth of markets our farms would still be self-sufficing, but they would lack the many comforts and cultural advantages which they now enjoy, and this rise in the farmer's standard of living has stimulated further growth of industry and so made better markets.

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These considerations are particularly pertinent at the present time of agricultural and business depression. The present position of American agriculture, and its lack of buying power in our markets, has been largely due to the fact that Europe has heretofore furnished an open market for our surplus agricultural products. To-day Europe is unable to purchase this surplus. The cause seems to be chiefly an economic paralysis resulting from the political interference by the tariff walls of newly-created states with the established economic relations of agricultural areas and manufacturing centers, and an unwillingness of the farmer to do business with a currency so debased that its value is highly problematical. So we see the great city of Vienna,<sup>[26]</sup> once one of the gayest and most brilliant capitals of Europe, now reduced to destitution, and the cities not only of Russia but of Germany being forced to revert to the ancient system of barter in order to secure adequate food.

The ultimate dependence of all cities upon the farms and mines is to-day exemplified in Europe with such appalling tragedy, that even the smug isolation of the American farmer and the American business man is broken down, not only by human sympathy but by the necessity of a better adjustment of their own economic system to the world crisis from which they are unable to escape.

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This shift of control from the city to the country has been powerfully portrayed by Norman Angell:

"Moreover, the problem (of feeding Great Britain) is affected by what is perhaps the most important economic change in the world since the industrial revolution, namely the alteration in the ratio of the exchange value of manufacture and food—the shift over of advantage in exchange from the side of the industrialist and manufacturer to the side of the producer of food."<sup>[27]</sup>

"Before the War the towns of Europe were the luxurious and opulent centers; the rural districts were comparatively poor. To-day it is the cities of the continent that are half-starved or famine-stricken, while the farms are well-fed and relatively opulent. In Russia, Poland, Hungary, Germany, Austria; the cities perish but the peasants for the most part have a sufficiency. The cities are finding that with the breakdown of the old stability—of the transport and credit systems particularly—they cannot obtain food from the farmers. This process which we now see at work on the continent is in fact the



reverse of our historical development."<sup>[28]</sup>

But although the farmer may have sufficient food for the time—though in Russia millions are starving, due in considerable measure to the economic and political chaos of the nation—yet if this reverse process should go on, rural civilization would be reduced to that of former generations, and its advance would be possible only when the industries which furnish its material basis were revived and confidence in the medium of exchange were again established. The city owes its existence to the farm, but without the city the farm would go back to the hoe and the sickle and the "age of homespun."

I am not seeking to justify the modern city, for its economic and social weaknesses are ever increasingly apparent, but it is important that we fully realize the fact that rural progress has been chiefly due to the goods and services received in exchange from urban markets. We have already noted the tendency toward specialization in agriculture and its effect on the rural community, and that specialization has been chiefly due to markets. One of the chief factors in encouraging specialization in the growth of certain products by whole communities and sections is the fact that a larger volume of a given product ensures better marketing facilities and a better price to the producer as long as the supply is not in excess of the demand. Where there is a considerable volume of a certain product, buyers can meet their demands more easily and are attracted to it, whereas a small lot of howsoever good a product must seek a buyer. Freight rates are reduced, damage in transit is reduced, and better transportation is secured in carload and trainload than in small shipments. The middleman's charges are less if he is assured a considerable volume of business. Thus specialization makes possible a more effective system of marketing than is possible with indiscriminate production.

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Not only must there be sufficient volume of a given product, but it must be so standardized with regard to varieties, grade and quantities or packages that the reputation of the goods may be established in the market. In order to secure uniformity it has been found necessary to standardize varieties and to grow a few well-known varieties of a given product which are best adapted to local conditions and to the market, rather than a number of varieties, as might be feasible if they were all sold directly on the local market.

Uniformity of grading and packing is also essential to establish a reputation on the market. A concern like the California Fruit Growers' Exchange cannot afford to spend half a million dollars a year in advertising unless it knows that its product will be as advertised, for advertising an unreliable product may secure temporary sales, but will hardly be a profitable investment, for the value of advertising an honest product is cumulative. To secure necessary uniformity of grading and packing it has been found necessary with almost all agricultural products to have the grading and packing done at a central establishment rather than on the farm. For even assuming the honesty and good intent of the farmer, the standards and skill of different farmers will vary to such an extent that uniformity is impossible. Uniformity of grade and package must be secured at some stage of the process of marketing before the goods are bought by the retailer. Until recently much of this service has been performed by the commission men at the central markets, who have taken what was shipped to them or what their agents purchased and graded it to meet the demands of the trade, and who, of course, had to charge for their services. It has been found more profitable with most products to have the grading and packing done as near to the farm as is possible to secure a sufficient volume of business for the enterprise. Thus we have local packing houses for fruits, potatoes, poultry products, grain elevators, etc., usually located at the point of primary shipment. These local plants, as well as local creameries, canneries, and other agricultural factories and storage plants, become community institutions as they meet the needs of the farmers within the areas tributary to the centers where they are located. It is true, of course, that many of these plants are located in the open country or at mere railroad stations, and that many of them draw their patronage from several communities; yet more commonly than otherwise they are located at village centers and serve the areas tributary to them. With the advent of good roads and motor trucks, the areas served by such establishments will tend to become larger, but there are many local circumstances which will tend to limit the process of centralization. Whether these plants are operated by private individuals, by stock companies, or by coöperative associations of the producers, they are essential to an effective marketing system and may greatly strengthen community life. If, however, there be two or three elevators in a little village, each operated for profit by a private owner, where all the business could be more economically handled by one concern and where the competition creates friction and suspicion, then like the rivalry between an excessive number of churches, they tend to divide the community.

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Students of marketing problems seem agreed that better marketing systems will benefit the farmer through greater efficiency which will reduce the costs of the process rather than through greater profits from higher prices, and that in many lines the largest improvement is possible in the grading, packing, and shipping from the local station. This being the case, it seems obvious that the solution of the marketing problem will increasingly depend upon community action.

Better transportation and storage facilities tend to stabilize prices over large areas and to give the larger markets increasing advantage in bargaining for the farmer's products. Not that there is any concerted action upon the part of the buyers to take an undue advantage of the farmer, for there is usually keen competition between them, but inevitably the "centralization" of the buying power of the larger markets makes it possible for them to very largely determine the price, just as the large employers of labor can to a considerable extent determine the wages they will pay if labor is unorganized; for whenever there is a surplus the individual farmer must sell, while the buyer can, within limits, purchase where or from whom he chooses. Thus for the same reason

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that labor is forced to organize trade unions to maintain its wages and working conditions, farmers are forced to organize to market their products together and to bargain collectively for their price. This is the outstanding agricultural movement of the past decade and at the present time is so successfully challenging the established system of marketing as to command national attention. The success of such a movement depends primarily upon the solidarity and efficiency of the local units, so that collective bargaining requires the organization of the agricultural community into selling associations for its various products. The whole process encourages the economic organization of the rural community and heightens community consciousness through the effort of its members to defend their common economic interests.

The method of collective selling may vary, but in practice the coöperative selling association has proven the most satisfactory and will be discussed in the following chapter.

When the most successful farmers on the best land in Illinois lose twenty-five cents on every bushel of corn they raised, as was the case in 1921, and when it is easier for isolated farmers in Kansas to burn corn than to buy coal at the prices current, while at the same time millions of innocent women and children are starving in Europe, it seems evident that the complex system of marketing upon which modern industry and civilization has depended, is pretty well out of gear and that national and international questions must be wisely solved before it can again function. Yet in last analysis the solution of the complex problems of marketing rests not alone with international treaties, but with the farmers' selling associations of the rural communities. If we are to have a marketing system which is truly functional, which is built on the principle of the greatest service at the lowest cost, rather than on the principle now implicit in business of sufficient service to secure the maximum of profit which the traffic will bear, then it must be a coöperative system, the primary unit of which is the local coöperative association, whose success depends upon the loyalty of its members to the coöperative principle. So coöperation is a community problem.

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Nor can we expect marked progress in other phases of rural life as long as the economic question is acute. It is not true that economic prosperity in agriculture will of itself ensure the higher culture of the countryside; but it is true that so long as the farmer is compelled to devote all of his strength and time to making a competence for his family, that his attention must necessarily be fixed on economic ends and that he will have neither the means nor the time for those satisfactions of life which are possible to one with some leisure. Says "A.E.": "I believe the fading hold the heavens have over the world is due to the neglect of the economic basis of spiritual life. What profound spiritual life can there be when the social order almost forces men to battle with each other for the means of existence?"<sup>[29]</sup> For weal or woe the material existence of both farmer and townman throughout the civilized world is inextricably inter-dependent. If a better economic system is to arise it must come through the general understanding of these relations by the education of all parties and by a willingness to find satisfaction in the well-being of all rather than in the largest individual profit. Unless these attitudes can be established in the local community, how can we expect to secure harmony of interests among larger groups? Loyalty to the common good must first be developed in the local community among neighbors.

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In subsequent chapters we shall have occasion to consider various forces and methods for creating this spirit of community, and we shall see that whereas the higher culture of rural life awaits a better economic system, this spirit of loyalty which is essential for coöperative organizations may be developed through various forms of community activity.

#### FOOTNOTES:

[25] See Percy Wells Bidwell, "Rural Economy in New England at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century." Trans. Comm. Acad. Arts and Sci., Vol. 20, p. 253, 1916; and E. G. Nourse, "Agricultural Economics," p. 65.

[26] See the account of Mr. A. G. Gardiner, *Manchester Guardian*, Weekly Edition, Feb. 6, 1920, quoted by Norman Angell in "The Fruits of Victory," p. 27: "Suddenly all this elaborate structure of economic life was swept away. Vienna, instead of being the vital center of fifty millions of people, finds itself a derelict city, with a province of six millions. It is cut off from its coal supplies, from its food supplies, from its factories, from everything that means existence. It is enveloped by tariff walls."

[27] "The Fruits of Victory," p. 12, New York, 1921.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

[29] (George William Russell), "The National Being," p. 167.

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## CHAPTER VIII

# HOW COÖPERATION STRENGTHENS THE COMMUNITY

The greatest improvements in marketing are being effected through coöperation. We have indicated that willingness to work together for the common good and loyalty to this principle are essential for successful coöperative enterprises. As these same attitudes are the basis of community life, it seems obvious that to the extent that membership in coöperative associations becomes general throughout a community, the stronger will be the community life. Indeed, the very etymology of the two words, *coöperate*—to work together, and *community*—having in common, indicate that community activities are essentially a form of coöperation—of working together. Inasmuch as coöperative enterprises are rapidly increasing and that they must, therefore, exercise a powerful influence upon community life, it is necessary to gain a clear idea of just what is involved in the principle of coöperation and to what types of organization the term is applicable.

In a general way there has always been a certain amount of coöperation between neighboring farmers in the exchange of work in barn-raising, threshing, silo-filling, slaughtering, etc. Out of this have grown such coöperative organizations as threshing rings, and groups for the common ownership and use of all sorts of more expensive machinery, the coöperative ownership of sires, cow-test associations, and many other forms of organization for mutual aid in farm operations. All of these are coöperative associations in the common usage of the word coöperation, but in recent years the term has come to have a more technical meaning to denote a form of organization in contrast to the corporation or stock company, which has been the most prevalent type of business organization in recent years.

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The coöperative association differs from the corporation or stock company in three essentials. First, it is democratic in its control; all true coöperative organizations employ the principle of "one man, one vote," the influence of each member of the association being equal as far as the legal control of its administration is concerned. The individual members and not the amount of stock owned controls the policy of the association. Coöperation is democracy applied to business. Second, the coöperative association is organized to secure more efficient service rather than to exact profits. This is a point upon which there is much misunderstanding upon the part of those starting coöperative enterprises and which requires further explanation. Third, the earnings or savings of the association (commonly thought of as "profits") are distributed among the members or patrons of the association *pro rata* according to the volume of the business which they have transacted with the association, so that although its control is democratic its benefits accrue according to the amount of financial interest involved. There are certain other principles of business procedure which have been found essential to the successful operation of different kinds of coöperative associations, but these three—individual voting, service rather than profits, and pro-rating the earnings—are fundamental to all truly coöperative associations, and it is to this combination of business methods to which the term coöperation has now come to be applied in a technical sense.

Exclusive of associations formed for coöperation in the general sense of the term, i.e., for various purposes of farm operation as mentioned above, farmers' coöperative associations may be divided into three general groups: for buying, for selling, and for finance.

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Coöperative buying has been most successfully developed by industrial workers in towns and cities and is commonly known as "consumers' coöperation." Starting with a few poverty-stricken workers who pooled their meager savings so that they could buy at wholesale and share in the profits of the retailer, the Rochdale system has grown until the wholesale coöperative societies of England and Scotland are probably the largest general merchandising corporations in the world, doing a business of approximately a billion dollars a year.

Coöperative buying of farm supplies, fertilizers, machinery, spraying materials, feeds, binder twine, etc., is one of the first forms of coöperative effort ordinarily undertaken by farmers' associations, and is carried on by numerous methods. In most cases the services rendered in the business management of such buying is at first largely on a voluntary basis or is but poorly paid. Only in a few sections of the country has the coöperative buying of agricultural supplies assumed a permanent or stable form of organization, and in those cases it is very frequently a department of a coöperative selling association, such as a fruit exchange. From an educational standpoint there is much to be said for commencing coöperation through organization for buying agricultural supplies, for through it farmers are trained in the principles of coöperation with the greatest possibility of advantage and the least risk of loss. There is little probability of loss in judicious coöperative purchases of carload lots with orders in hand, while in coöperative selling, unless marketing facilities are so bad as to force him to take the risk, the chance of loss is a serious consideration to the farmer. This point has been well stated by Edwin A. Pratt, a leader of agricultural organization in England, who says:

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"Inquiry into the conditions under which organization of agriculture has been successfully carried out in other countries showed that a beginning had invariably been made with the simplest form of combination for the joint purchase of agricultural necessities. In this way the advantages of coöperation could be brought home to cultivators, who were gradually educated in the theory and practice of combination without having their suspicions aroused and their mutual distrust stimulated by proposals that they should at once alter their old conditions of trading in accordance with that system of combination for transport or sale which really constitutes not the beginning of agricultural organization, but one of the most difficult and most complicated of all its many phases."[\[30\]](#)

One of the allurements of coöperative buying has been to at once establish a coöperative store for a general merchandising business. The history of such stores started by granges in the 70's and 80's is instructive in this connection. A few of them survive, but most of them were failures. Only after years of experience and education in coöperative purchasing and other coöperative enterprises have the aims and methods of operating coöperative stores been sufficiently appreciated by most rural communities to ensure their successful establishment. We have already considered (page 48) some of the considerations which should govern the attempt to compete with local merchants. Generally the successful operation of a coöperative store is more difficult for an average group of farmers to manage than the simpler forms of coöperative purchasing, or coöperative credit or selling associations.<sup>[31]</sup> Moreover, a coöperative store will seriously affect the solidarity of a small community unless a goodly majority, both from farm and village, are convinced of the necessity of competing with local retailers and will give the store their patronage. Except in the buying of agricultural supplies, which may be considered rather as the raw materials and equipment of the farm as a manufacturing business and which are therefore entitled to wholesale prices, consumers' coöperation as usually conducted through coöperative stores is not a distinctively agricultural problem, but is the same for the farmer as for the villager or industrial worker, and its desirability and limitations are determined by similar considerations.

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With the change to a commercial type of farming and with the higher price of land, the American farmer has had to make larger use of borrowed capital and his business has been seriously hampered by a lack of credit facilities to meet his needs. Probably in no field of coöperative effort have the benefits been more apparent than in that of the rural credit banks which are found throughout Europe and which have thoroughly demonstrated their usefulness. Attention has been called to the fact that our best farm lands are more and more operated by tenants, and that this is inimical to strong community life. One of the reasons for this tendency has been the inability to secure long-term loans on farm real estate by the man who has little capital of his own. As lands rose in value this became increasingly difficult. To meet this situation a commission representative of all sections of the United States visited various countries in Europe in the spring of 1913, and as a result of their report, in 1916 Congress finally enacted the Federal Farm Loan Act establishing a system of farm land banks. Under this system one-half of the value of a farm and buildings up to \$10,000 may be borrowed and paid off under the amortization plan in from five to forty years at a low rate of interest. The details of the system do not concern our present discussion, but the essential feature of the system is the local land bank through which the loans are made and collected. The local land bank is strictly a coöperative society organized to secure long-term credit facilities for its members under the terms of the federal act through the regional land banks of which each local bank is a member. Like other coöperative associations, the area in which the local bank does business is not necessarily that of a community, it may be a whole county where there are but few members, or there may be more than one bank in a single community, but more commonly it is located at a village center and tends to become a community institution.

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Equally important for financing the current expenses of farming operations and to make possible the orderly marketing of crops, is the farmer's need for short-time credit. Our banking system has been developed to meet the needs of the business world, and the period for which loans can be made is too short to meet the needs of the farmer, who often requires credit for six months to a year. In some ten states legislation has been passed authorizing the formation of local credit associations, which are really local coöperative banks, but the number of credit associations established in rural communities has been insignificant, thirty-three out of a total of thirty-six being in North Carolina.<sup>[32]</sup> The tremendous losses suffered by American farmers during 1921 and their inability to secure sufficient credit from their local banks has shown the necessity for better short-time credit facilities, and bills are now before Congress which will enable the local land banks to also handle short-time loans in coöperation with the Federal Reserve Banks. If this is done, the amount of business done by these local banks will be greatly increased and the coöperative principle in banking will be greatly strengthened.

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Coöperative selling associations have had a rapid growth in the United States during the past decade. In 1919 the federal Bureau of Markets estimated that agricultural products worth one and a half billions out of a total of nearly nineteen billion dollars sold from farms were marketed through coöperative associations, and the total has greatly increased since then. The California Fruit Growers' Exchange, probably the largest coöperative selling association, does a business of over \$50,000,000 annually and has one of the most efficient distributing systems in the country.

At the present time some very ambitious programs of national organizations for coöperative marketing are being started, such as the United States Grain Growers, Inc., which is modeled after the successful Canadian Grain Growers, Inc. One of the chief obstacles to all such plans of effectively organizing the marketing of various agricultural products is the fact that a strong central organization can be developed only by the federation of local associations whose members understand the purposes of the organization and are loyal to them. The history of all coöperative movements shows that those which have been permanently successful have arisen through the federation of strong local associations, and numerous failures of well-intentioned efforts at large-scale coöperative marketing have been due to the fact that numerous local associations cannot be organized by the parent association with any assurance that they will function effectively.

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The late G. Harold Powell, for many years the successful manager of the California Fruit Growers' Exchange, in his discussion of the fundamentals of coöperation emphasizes that

coöperative associations must be born of a real need:

"Among farmers, who under existing conditions are already prosperous, the need of business organization is not usually felt, even though the costs of marketing and extravagant profits of the middlemen or the railroads might be greatly reduced. They must feel the pressure of need before they can launch a successful business association. When the farmers buy their supplies at reasonable prices, and sell their products readily at a good profit, they do not feel the necessity of organization. It has been the experience of the past that they must feel the need of getting together to meet a crisis in their affairs, and the realization of the need must spring from within and not be forced upon them from without by the enthusiasm of some opportunist who seeks to unite the farmers on the principle that organization is a good thing.... In short, if an organization is to be successful, the investment of the farmer must be threatened by existing social and economic conditions before he can overcome his individualism sufficiently and can develop a fraternal spirit strong enough to pull with his neighbors in coöperative team work."<sup>[33]</sup>

The tremendous losses suffered by American agriculture in 1921 furnish exactly such a crisis as Mr. Powell suggests, and have given the strongest impetus to the coöperative movement. But even when the necessity exists and is recognized it takes time to build up a strong coöperative association. [Pg 85]

The successful operation of a local coöperative association is a matter of slow growth, because it requires the education of the membership in the principles both of coöperation and of marketing, and what is equally essential, the development of a willingness to sometimes forego the advantage of larger profits by individual members in order to ensure the permanent success of the association. The local association has to learn how to conduct its business just as does the individual business man, and it has to compete with individuals and firms who are in business for profit and who have the advantage of experience in the existing marketing system and the financial backing of its business connections. In the attempt to create local selling associations rapidly so as to secure a sufficient volume of business to ensure the success of large marketing enterprises, there is always a tendency to encourage the local members to believe that they will secure a considerably larger share of the consumer's dollar, and when prices are not materially better than under the old system they readily become dissatisfied and withdraw. The best authorities and advocates of coöperative marketing insist that it will be successful only to the degree that it can become more efficient than the existing system and so effect savings and make legitimate earnings, but that there is little prospect for large "profits"; indeed, that the legitimate objective of coöperation is not profits, but savings. Professor Macklin summarizes the matter as follows:

"The true coöperative organization seeks to establish and maintain a distributing system to provide adequately and dependably at minimum cost the essential marketing services of which the industry and its individual members have constant and vital need. Its justification lies in rendering these services at a lower cost and in bringing to farmers a higher proportion of the consumer's dollar."<sup>[34]</sup> [Pg 86]

With the factors involved in successful coöperative selling associations we are not here concerned, except to insist upon the point that as the weakest link measures the strength of a chain, so the strength of the local association determines the strength or weakness of the central selling association. A joint stock company may afford more efficient management than a coöperative association, and unless the local membership is convinced of the superior equity and ultimate advantages of a strong coöperative system, there is little hope for the coöperative to compete with the stock company. Coöperation means working together, and its emphasis is more on duties and obligations than on rights and personal advantage. In coöperative enterprises the individual must be convinced that his best interest in the long run is bound up with the best interest of the whole membership, and unless he is sometimes willing to forego immediate personal advantage and unless he can learn how to work with others, sometimes without compensation or with less than he could secure otherwise, there is little chance for developing a strong organization. For coöperation is but democracy applied to certain phases of business, and, like democracy in politics or any other sphere of life, its highest sanction lies in belief and satisfaction in the collective well-being.

It seems obvious, therefore, that those attitudes which are essential for coöperation are the same which encourage community life, and that where the coöperative spirit dominates, community activities will be strengthened. Whereas, on the contrary, in those localities where family, political, or personal feuds, jealousies and suspicions are rife, coöperative enterprises will be difficult and the community will be weak. [Pg 87]

That coöperation does develop those qualities which make for better communities is attested by all who have observed its effects. As a result of his long experience Sir Horace Plunkett says:

"It is here, in furnishing opportunity for the exercise of education secured from the agricultural colleges, that the educational value of coöperative societies comes in; they act as agencies through which scientific teaching may become actual practice, not in the uncertain future, but in the living present. A coöperative association has a quality which should commend it to the social reformer—the power of evoking character; it brings to the front a new type of local leader, not the best talker, but the man whose knowledge enables him to make some solid contribution to the welfare of the community."<sup>[35]</sup>

So, likewise, a keen observer of Danish coöperation describes its influence in creating scientific and social attitudes:

"Among the indirect, but equally tangible results of coöperation, I should be inclined to put the development of mind and character among those by whom it is practised. The peasant or little farmer, who is a member of one or more of these societies, who helps to build up their success and enjoy their benefits, acquires a new outlook. The jealousies and suspicions which are in most countries so common among those who live by the land fall from him. Feeling that he has a voice in great affairs he acquires an added value and a healthy importance in his own eyes. He knows also that in his degree and according to his output he is on an equal footing with the largest producer and proportionately is doing as well. There is no longer any fear that because he is a little man he will be browbeaten or forced to accept a worse price for what he has to sell than does his rich and powerful neighbor. The skilled minds which direct his business work as zealously for him as for that important neighbor."<sup>[36]</sup>

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It is interesting to note that the three highest authorities on the coöperative movement in Ireland all lay great stress on its importance as a means of community organization and value its social effects as highly as its economic benefits. Thus Sir Horace Plunkett says:

"Gradually the (coöperative) Society becomes the most important institution in the district, the most important in a social as well as an economic sense. The members feel a pride in its material expansion. They accumulate large profits, which in time become a sort of communal fund. In some cases this is used for the erection of village halls where social entertainments, concerts and dances are held, lectures delivered and libraries stored. Finally, the association assumes the character of a rural commune, where, instead of the old basis of the commune, the joint ownership of land, a new basis for union is found in the voluntary communism of effort."<sup>[37]</sup>

In the same vein Smith-Gordon and Staples in their account of the coöperative movement in Ireland, see it as the most important force for socialization because it makes the most immediate and practical appeal to men of all parties and sects and establishes a business system which develops the community attitude:

"The present individualist system which takes care of the business interests of the farmer is a dividing and disintegrating force. It tends to destroy the natural associative character and to set each man against his neighbor.... But as a member of a society with interests in common with others, the individual consciously and unconsciously develops the social virtues.... The society is in miniature a community, and the community is but a part of the larger social group."<sup>[38]</sup>

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George William Russell ("A.E."), the poet-prophet of Irish agriculture, bases his whole conception of a desirable polity for the Irish State upon coöperative communities, and considers coöperative societies as a prerequisite to rural organization. After describing the marked economic and social changes which have taken place in a typical Irish community as the result of coöperation, he says:

"I have tried to indicate the difference between a rural population and a rural community, between a people loosely knit together by the vague ties of a common latitude and longitude, and people who are closely knit together in an association and who form a true social organism, a true rural community, where the general will can find expression and society is malleable to the general will. I will assert that there never can be any progress in rural districts or any real prosperity without such farmers' organizations or guilds. Wherever rural prosperity is reported in any country inquire into it, and it will be found that it depends on rural organization. Wherever there is rural decay, if it is inquired into, it will be found that there was a rural population but no rural community, no organization, no guild to promote common interests and unite the countrymen in defence of them."<sup>[39]</sup>

The same observations might be made upon the effect of coöperative enterprises in solidifying rural communities in the United States. It seems doubtful whether coöperative associations in the United States will develop a general social program as they have done in Ireland, Belgium, and Russia. On account of a different social inheritance and account of our facility in forming and belonging to numerous organizations, it seems probable that we will limit our coöperative societies to strictly economic functions, and will use the increased income secured through them in other organizations for social purposes.

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Commercial farming is breaking down the old individualism of the farmer, for the exigencies of the economic situation are forcing him to market collectively through coöperative selling associations, and as he learns that his own best interests are bound up with those of the whole community, he becomes increasingly concerned for the common welfare; he commences to think in terms of "us" and "ours," instead of only "me" and "mine." The community becomes a reality to him.

#### FOOTNOTES:

[30] "Agricultural Organization," p. 99. London, P. S. King & Son, 1912.

[31] See Clarence Poe, "How Farmers Coöperate," Chap. III, p. 37. "Coöperative buying is good; coöperative merchandising may or may not be." New York, Orange Judd Co., 1915.

- [32] V. N. Valgren and E. E. Engelbert, "The Credit Association as an Agency for Rural Short-time Credit." Department Circular 197, U. S. Dept. Agr., 1921.
- [33] "Coöperation in Agriculture," pp. 22, 23. New York, The Macmillan Co., 1913.
- [34] Theodore Macklin, "Efficient Marketing for Agriculture," p. 260. New York, Macmillan Co., 1921.
- [35] "The Country Life Problem in the United States," p. 123.
- [36] Harvey, "Denmark and the Danes," p. 146, quoted by F. C. Howe, "Denmark a Coöperative Commonwealth," p. 61.
- [37] *Ibid.*, p. 128.
- [38] "Rural Reconstruction in Ireland; a Record of Coöperative Organizations." New Haven, Yale Univ. Press, 1919.
- [39] "The National Being," p. 39.

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## CHAPTER IX

### THE COMMUNITY'S EDUCATION

#### THE SCHOOL

At its beginning the United States Government gave support to education by the allotment of public lands to the states as an endowment for public schools, and although the federal government has done but little since then for primary education, the support of education has become one of the chief concerns of state and local governments. In colonial times public schools were largely confined to New England. With the settlement of the Middle West district schools were established with the aid of the government land grants. But in the South conditions were not favorable for public schools until long after the Civil War, and only in the last generation or two has public education become firmly established.

The district school, the famous "little red school-house" of the nineteenth century, was frequently the neighborhood center and the school district commonly formed a neighborhood area, particularly in hilly sections where its lines were adjusted by topography. A recent study of neighborhood areas in Otsego County, New York, shows that about half of them are identical with the school districts, chiefly on account of topography, while in Dane County, Wisconsin, more neighborhood areas are determined primarily by the school district than by any one factor.<sup>[40]</sup> Formerly the district school-house was quite frequently used for Sunday school or preaching services; spelling-bees and other entertainments were held from time to time; and political meetings and elections were commonly held there.

Although the district school is still a neighborhood social center in many sections, its decadence commenced at the close of the nineteenth century, the change depending upon the general progress or isolation of the community, particularly as affected by transportation. Several factors have combined to make the district school unsatisfactory to the rural community of to-day. In the older parts of the country the population has so decreased that in many districts the maintenance of a school has become exceedingly expensive, it is difficult to secure competent teachers, and there are too few pupils to make the school attractive. The better educational advantages of town and city schools have caused much dissatisfaction upon the part of the better class of farmers who wish their children to have the best possible start in life, and many of those who can afford to do so have "moved to town" to educate their children, thus making a bad matter worse for the district school. As long as roads were poor the district school was the only one possible, but with better roads, automobiles and trolleys, the consolidation of schools has proceeded rapidly in the past decade, particularly in the prairie states.

A modern school cannot be maintained at every other crossroads. Improved roads naturally radiate from the village center and hence it is the logical point for a consolidated school or high school. There are localities in isolated regions where it might be desirable to establish consolidated schools in the open country, but in most cases where there is a natural village center, the school should be located there and the school laws should make possible the organization of the consolidated school district regardless of township or county lines. Indeed legislation has already been enacted to this end in several states and forms one of the most important movements for strengthening the rural community. Here and there are to be found consolidated schools which have been placed in the open country at the center of a township because it was the point most easily agreed upon by all the patrons, particularly where the township is an administrative unit of the school system. In some cases somewhat successful

efforts are being made to have such consolidated schools serve as social centers, but it is believed that in the long run community life will flow to its natural centers and that the seeming success of such social centers in the open country, unless the neighborhood be an isolated one, will tend to weaken the communities concerned. Usually a consolidated district of this sort will contain parts of two or three community areas and the location of the school at a point between them weakens the support of the community centers to that extent. Here we encounter one of the many ways in which our artificial unit of rural government—the township—interferes with community progress.<sup>[41]</sup>

Formerly only the children of the upper classes who were preparing for college received a secondary education, but during the past generation there has been a rapid growth of public high schools which serve as the "people's colleges." At first these were found only in the cities and larger towns, but rural communities have demanded equal advantages and state and national legislation has aided them in the cost of maintenance. Federal aid for secondary education in vocational subjects, now available through the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, has encouraged the establishment of rural high schools and has greatly increased the number giving instruction in agriculture and home economics. Hundreds of rural high schools are now giving agricultural courses better than the agricultural colleges gave twenty-five years ago.

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Rural high schools with full four-year courses have been found mostly in the larger villages and towns, but the movement is now well under way to divide the period of secondary education into a junior and senior high school (the so-called "six-six" plan), and junior high schools, including the seventh to ninth grades, are being established in many smaller communities by simply adding a grade to the consolidated schools. The educational forces of the country, as expressed by statements of the U. S. Bureau of Education and the National Education Association, are now committed to the policy of consolidated rural schools wherever they are practicable and to the establishment of a sufficient number of high schools so that every rural child may attend high school and still be able to live at home. Obviously it is important from the standpoint of community development that the high schools should be placed at community centers and that where some of the communities are too small to support senior high schools that they should be located at a village which serves as a center of what, for want of a better term, we may call "the larger community" (see pages 232-3).

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One of the reasons for consolidated schools is that the objectives of rural education are changing and that country people are demanding that their children be educated for country as well as for town life. Formerly the content and method of rural education was an imitation of that of the city and inevitably made industrial, commercial, and professional occupations the ideal of the pupil. The schools of New England have done an immense service to the rest of the country but they were an important factor in depopulating many a New England town. The introduction of nature study, agriculture, and home economics is becoming general in rural schools. Educators do not desire to train rural children solely for farm life, and thus to segregate a farm class, even were that possible, but they are attempting to give equal emphasis to the values of country life so that it may prove equally attractive to the best as well as to the less efficient rural youth.

Furthermore the whole attitude of rural as well as urban education is changing from that of teaching individuals so as to equip them with intellectual tools for their personal advancement, to one of training future citizens who will attain their own best interests by useful service to the community. The curriculum and objectives of the school are rapidly becoming socialized, and as this process goes on the school will more and more become the most important single institution for creating community loyalty.

The community school, particularly the high school, no longer confines itself to the instruction of its regular pupils; it is the educational center and headquarters of the community. With the assistance of the Extension Service of the agricultural colleges, rural high schools are holding one-week extension schools for farm men and women, and under the Smith-Hughes Act they are offering continuation short courses for the younger farmers. The progressive rural high school is taking a live interest in the one-room district schools which may be too far from the center for consolidation, and is seeking to interest their pupils in attending high schools through athletic meets, play festivals, and similar assemblages of all the schools of the community, which thus create a natural bond of interest and common enthusiasm. The principal of the high school at Oxford, N. Y., recently organized a public-speaking contest of representatives of all the country schools in his supervisory district, in connection with the annual play festival which he had established several years before. This proved to be a huge success and gave the boys and girls from the district schools new confidence in their ability of self-expression. One of the greatest needs which farmers' organizations are to-day feeling is their lack of leaders who can speak for them effectively at public gatherings and before legislative hearings in competition with men who make their living by talking. Such contests, particularly when the topics discussed deal with affairs of country life with which the children are acquainted and in which they are vitally interested, as was the case with the one at Oxford and to which much of its success was attributed, are therefore of great value and may well be substituted for the academic debates so often heard on subjects quite foreign to the child's life and beyond his real comprehension.

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In many places new school buildings are being constructed with an auditorium, which may be used as a gymnasium, library room, dining room, etc., so that they may serve as social centers for the community. Where the community is not large enough to afford a separate community house this is frequently the best and most economical means of meeting this need. This will be discussed further in considering community buildings.

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Numerous rural high schools are conducting lyceum and entertainment courses, and some are operating motion-picture shows on Saturday nights. Where no other organization is better adapted for taking the responsibility of furnishing high-class entertainment to the community, this is a useful service. School orchestras and bands, choruses, and dramatic clubs are also valuable additions to the community life.

The successful community school will not center all of its activities in its own building, but it will take some of its talent to the country schools for local athletic and play contests, dramatic or musical entertainments, etc., and thus magnify the importance of the local school in the neighborhood, for only by acquiring a desire for these advantages will the people in the more isolated parts of the community come to interest themselves in the activities of the whole community at its village center.

It is becoming more and more apparent that if the school is really to function as it should, that it must have the active interest and support of its patrons. It is not enough that they should assemble at the annual school meeting, elect school officials, vote taxes for its maintenance, and then leave its management to the school board and teachers. It is highly desirable that every encouragement should be given toward making teaching a life profession, but as teaching becomes professionalized it tends, like every other calling, to become more or less of a bureaucracy. It is essential that educational methods should be determined by and be in charge of educators who are trained for such service, but if they get the idea, as sometimes seems unfortunately the case, that it is the business of the people to supply funds for the support of the schools and then to leave their entire operation to the teachers and superintendents, they assume an attitude which is fatal to the life of the school, for no educational system, however ideal in theory, can be effective without the sympathetic understanding and cordial support of the majority of its patrons. It is for this reason that large emphasis is being placed by progressive educators on the organization of parent-teachers associations or school improvement leagues for the discussion of school problems by parents and teachers. In many cases the parent-teachers association forms one of the chief bonds of the country community and the State of Virginia has built up a remarkable system of community organization through its Coöperative Educational League with hundreds of local leagues which interest themselves in all phases of community life.

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The school is also coming to realize that although it is the institution specially created for the systematic education of the child, that much of his education is received outside the school and that certain phases of his education may be accomplished more effectively through the coöperation of the school with other institutions and agencies. Thus instead of seeking to absorb all of the time of the child and to give it all kinds of training within the school or as part of its curriculum, the school is commencing to develop methods for strengthening and coördinating the educational work of the home, the church, and of various organizations.

The teaching of agriculture has been made vital and effective by the home project in which the boy comes to appreciate the value of the principles studied at school in connection with an agricultural enterprise in raising crops or livestock of his own on the home farm. This tends to enlist the interest of the parents, who contribute largely to the educational process. The same principle is being applied to a less extent in work in home economics, and the giving of school credit for various kinds of home work has established a community of interest between home and school. In the teaching of hygiene, and particularly with regard to sex hygiene, the school finds it difficult to establish those habits and attitudes which are as important as mere knowledge without the help and coöperation of the home. So, too, the medical inspection of school children, with the work of school nurses and clinics held at the school for children of pre-school age, stimulate the home to better health.

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Because of the separation of church and state in this country we have very largely neglected all effort toward religious education in our public schools, and even ethical training has been more or less of a secondary objective until very recently. A growing appreciation of the inadequacy of the ordinary Sunday school has led to a movement for giving systematic instruction and training in religious education under church auspices at a time set apart by the school and for which school credit is given when it meets reasonable educational standards. The week-day school of religion is still in an experimental stage. It has been established longest in cities, but is now being attempted in rural communities, and if sectarian dogmatism and jealousies can be submerged, there seems every reason to hope that this may be a most important feature of our educational system.

So, too, the boys' and girls' clubs in agriculture and home economics, the boy and girl scouts, the campfires, the little mothers' leagues, the health crusades, the Y.M.C.A and Y.W.C.A., and other organizations for children and youth, have created new interest in certain aspects of school work and are a source of educational dynamic which progressive educators are utilizing as valuable allies.

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Thus in very many ways the school is adapting its methods to meet its responsibility for developing good citizens who are loyal to the welfare of the community, and the school principal is rightly expected to be a leader in community affairs in so far as they concern the participation and interests of the school.

It is a far cry from the isolated one-room, box-type district school, with a young girl with no professional training teaching a dozen youngsters of all ages as best she can with little or no equipment, to the modern consolidated school or rural high school with all the intimate connections with the life of the whole community above described, but this difference measures one phase of the progress which has been made in recent years toward the integration of the

rural community and depicts one of the most important forces involved in this process, whose influence is only commencing to be felt. How different will the life of rural communities be a generation or two hence when in most of them practically all of the parents and children will have had a high-school education, with all the broader contacts and outlook on life which that involves! We need only to study the influence of the Danish Folk High Schools<sup>[42]</sup> to visualize the outcome.

## THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

The public library has possibilities as an educational institution exceeded only by those of the school. In many cases it is the intellectual center of the community, while in others the caricature of the library of Gopher Prairie in Sinclair Lewis' "Main Street," where one of the chief objects was to keep the books from being soiled or worn out, is not much overdrawn. Increasingly, however, the librarian is studying methods of salesmanship for increasing the local consumption of the products of the world's best minds in books and magazines, and is of inestimable service to all organizations whose members have occasion to study what human thought has contributed to the solution of their problems. The public library gives the means of further education to many a person deprived of academic privileges, who may realize the truth of Carlyle's saying: "The true University of these days is a Collection of Books."

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In many states public libraries are aided by state and local appropriations, particularly in New England and the states settled by New England stock, for it is to New England<sup>[43]</sup> that we are indebted for the public library as well as the public school. It is not, however, economically possible for every small community to support a permanent local library, and many of those established have a precarious existence and are maintained only through the devotion of public-spirited individuals. To meet the need of isolated neighborhoods a few county libraries, notably in Washington County, Maryland, and a few counties in Delaware and Minnesota, have made use of book-wagons which are accompanied by a librarian who makes a "rural free delivery" of books to each home and assists the families in their selection. It seems, however, that the chief value of the book-wagon is as a means of creating a desire for books, and that when this is created it will be much more economical to furnish them through branch stations at neighborhood or community centers. Systems of traveling libraries are also supported by many states and make it possible for the most isolated neighborhoods to secure the best of books. Unfortunately, however, the places which need them most do not always know of them nor will they take the initiative to secure them. They are of particular value for securing collections of books on special topics for the use of granges, churches, and study clubs of all sorts. But as the demand for traveling libraries grows, the administration of the system from the state library becomes a large undertaking and the need of better local libraries is realized.

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A system of "county libraries" has been developed in California, has spread to several other states, and is now being advocated by the American Library Association and by library leaders generally. Under the county system a central library is established at the county seat, with branches or loan stations at the different community centers, and with traveling collections for the more isolated neighborhoods. The larger centers which have local libraries continue to maintain them and simply serve as part of the system. Thus the library resources of the county are pooled and the farm people are given the same sort of service that a city library gives its people through its branches. The feature of interest from a community standpoint is that, although this is a county system, it recognizes the usefulness of local branches and makes possible a library service adapted to its needs for every small community, whereas separate libraries have heretofore been possible only in the larger centers.

## THE COUNTRY WEEKLY

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One of the most important educational agencies of the rural community is the oft-derided weekly newspaper. After a period of difficult competition with city dailies the surviving weeklies are becoming recognized as community institutions. Those which are succeeding are doing so by becoming the voice of the community and the means of its self-acquaintance. No agency may be more powerful in unifying or disrupting the life of the local community. This new concept of the country weekly has been well expressed by W. P. Kirkwood, of the University of Minnesota:

"Community building was a concept unknown to the editor of thirty or forty years ago. To-day it is an accepted concept of dynamic force, full of significance in most of the country towns of America.

"Community service, as such a concept, is fast finding its way into the country press—in the Middle West, at least. As this ideal gains acceptance, giving definite direction to newspaper effort for the upbuilding of communities, the press gains an enlarged constituency with a truer conception of the power and usefulness of the newspaper....

"Community service, community building, then, as a master motive, establishes the country weekly newspaper publisher securely in his position of leadership. It assures added community prosperity and the local development of the finer satisfactions of life in which he must share, and no other agency can take this from him, neither the city daily, coming in from a distance and concerned with the larger affairs of the larger

community, nor the school, nor the church, nor any other."<sup>[44]</sup>

In a bulletin on "The Country Weekly in New York State,"<sup>[45]</sup> Professor M. V. Atwood, of the New York State College of Agriculture and for several years a successful publisher, discusses the purposes and future of the country weekly. He holds that the country weekly is not, as often stated, and should not be a mold of public opinion, but should rather express and interpret the sentiment of its constituency.

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"The country newspaper," he says, "is a service agency; it is a community institution like the church, the school, the library, and the farm and home bureau. It helps all these institutions to do their work...."

"If the country newspaper does not do much thought-molding it does offer a medium for the dissemination of thought, for the propagation of ideas of the people of the community. The value of the newspaper to the community becomes especially apparent when some local project is to be considered, like the erection of a school, the building of good roads, or the installation of a water system. For weeks the paper will offer in the form of letters, the views of different people of the community. The subject is thoroughly aired. Even if the editor takes no sides in the matter, his paper has been of inestimable service to the community."

Indeed, as we shall see later, such a free discussion is a most essential step in all community activities, and the service of the newspaper is probably greater if it acts as a free and open forum for discussion rather than a partisan of either side. Of the news of the future, Professor Atwood says:

"Most of these papers will also be printing much more farm news than they do to-day because as the publishers have surveyed their fields they will have found the primary interest of their readers is agricultural. There will be some exceptions for some communities will have ceased to be dominated by agriculture because of the coming of factories. The real country weeklies will not become agricultural text books; but the news of the farms, the improvements to farm buildings, and the experiences of successful local farmers will find much space in their columns."

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"The community editor of the future is not going to worry much about 'hot' news. He will realize that most of the striking facts of any story have already been printed in the neighboring city papers, but he will realize also that the genuine community interest in the event has not been glimpsed by the city editor, who is out of touch with the local situation; around these community aspects the local editor will weave his story."

Possibly the best appreciation of the country weekly is a prose poem written by Professor Bristow Adams, editor of the New York State College of Agriculture, and presented at the first country newspaper conference held at that institution during Farmers Week 1920, entitled "I am the Country Weekly,"<sup>[46]</sup> and which vividly depicts its service as an agency for developing community consciousness:

"I am the Country Weekly.

"I am the friend of the family, the bringer of tidings from other friends; I speak to the home in the evening light of summers vine-clad porch or the glow of winters lamp.

"I help to make this evening hour; I record the great and the small, the varied acts of the days and weeks that go to make up life.

"I am for and of the home; I follow those who leave humble beginnings; whether they go to greatness or to the gutter, I take to them the thrill of old days, with wholesome messages.

"I speak the language of the common man; my words are fitted to his understanding. My congregation is larger than that of any church in my town; my readers are more than those in the school. Young and old alike find in me stimulation, instruction, entertainment, inspiration, solace, comfort. I am the chronicler of birth, and love and death—the three great facts of man's existence."

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"I bring together buyer and seller, to the benefit of both; I am part of the marketplace of the world. Into the home I carry word of the goods which feed and clothe, and shelter, and which minister to comfort, ease, health, and happiness.

"I am the word of the week, the history of the year, the record of my community in the archives of state and nation.

"I am the exponent of the lives of my readers.

"I am the Country Weekly."

#### FOOTNOTES:

[40] Out of 185 neighborhood areas, 39 were chiefly due to the school district, the next most important influence being the church parish which determined the neighborhood in 33 cases. J. H. Kolb, "Rural Primary Groups." Research Bull. 51, Agr. Exp. Sta. of the Univ. of Wisconsin, p. 48.

[41] The relation of the consolidated school to township and community lines is well shown in a study of the schools of Randolph County, Indiana, and Marshall County, Iowa, by Dr. A. W. Hayes, in his "Rural Community Organization" (Chap. VI, Univ. of Chicago Press,

1921). In Randolph County more of the schools are located in the open country while the more recent consolidations in Marshall County are located mostly at the village centers. Dr. Hayes recognizes the differences but he gives no facts which make possible a judgment as to the relative efficiency of the two methods from a community standpoint.

- [42] F. C. Howe, "Denmark a Coöperative Commonwealth." H. W. Foght, "Rural Denmark and its Schools."
- [43] "In Pease and Niles' 'Gazateer of Connecticut and Rhode Island' (1819) the social library is almost as regularly mentioned in the descriptions of the various towns as are the saw-mills, or the ministers and doctors."—Bidwell, "Rural Economy in New England," p. 347.
- [44] In the *Inland Printer*, February, 1920, quoted by Atwood, l. c., p. 305.
- [45] "The Cornell Reading Course for the Farm," Lesson 155, March, 1920. See also his "The Country Newspaper and the Community," Chicago, A. C. McClurg & Co., 1922.
- [46] Quoted by Atwood, l. c., p. 314.

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## CHAPTER X

### THE COMMUNITY'S EDUCATION (CONTINUED)

#### THE EXTENSION MOVEMENT

The era of modern agriculture in the United States began with the passage of the Morrill Act by the Federal Congress in 1861. This made a grant of public land to each state to establish a college for instruction in agriculture and the mechanic arts, and it has been the influence of the "land-grant colleges," more than any other agency, which has been responsible for our agricultural advancement. In 1888 the Hatch Act made an annual federal appropriation to each of these colleges for the establishment of an agricultural experiment station, whose investigations, with those of the United States Department of Agriculture, have been largely responsible for the scientific basis of modern agriculture.

From the beginning the agricultural colleges realized their obligation to bring the results of scientific investigations to the attention of farmers as well as to their own students, and their faculties spoke before meetings of state and county agricultural societies, granges, and farmers' institutes. In 1875 Michigan was the first state to make an appropriation to its State Board of Agriculture for conducting farmers' institutes, and in the next twenty-five years most of the states established systems of farmers' institutes either under their state boards or departments of agriculture or under the agricultural colleges, through which itinerant speakers addressed one or more meetings of farmers in each county every year. These institutes grew in popularity and led to separate meetings for farm women, and sometimes for children, and in some cases permanent county organizations were created for holding institutes with local speakers as well as for managing those furnished by the state. Farmers' institutes have performed an important service in the education of the rural community. Not only have they given instruction in methods of agriculture and in the problems of country life, but they have been an important means of bringing rural people together in a common cause; they are a community activity and strengthen the community bond. In many cases in isolated localities the annual farmers' institute has been one of the few occasions at which the people of the community get together, and has been looked forward to as a social event. Furthermore, it was through experience with farmers' institutes that the need of better means for bringing instruction to rural communities was appreciated and other methods were developed.

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It was but a few years after the establishment of the agricultural experiment stations under the Hatch Act of 1888, that the colleges commenced to realize that the results of their investigations would not be extensively utilized by farmers unless other means were employed than mere publication of reports and bulletins and addresses at farmers' institutes and agricultural meetings. These were good, but they were felt to be inadequate and it was evident that to secure the general adoption of new methods some means of more systematic instruction and of local demonstrations were necessary. The agricultural colleges came to feel that they should have definite departments with men who could devote their time to giving instruction to the people on the land. The first appropriation for agricultural extension work was made to Cornell University by the State of New York in 1894, but it was a decade later before the leading agricultural colleges had established departments of extension work. In general the early period of the extension movement was chiefly concerned with methods of agricultural production and had no definite program for the local organization of its work. This finally came about through the county agent movement.

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The county agent movement<sup>[47]</sup> had its origin in an effort to combat the ravages of the Mexican Cotton Boll Weevil as it swept through Texas and advanced eastward from 1900 to 1910. It was in 1903 that Dr. S. A. Knapp was commissioned by the Federal Secretary of Agriculture, James Wilson, to devise methods whereby the Texas farmers might be shown how they could grow cotton in spite of the weevil. He soon found that progressive farmers who were using the cultural methods which the entomologists had found to be successful for raising an early crop, were able to raise fairly good crops before injury became serious. He therefore employed practical farmers to go among their neighbors and get them to agree to give a fair trial to the methods advocated by the government, i.e., to demonstrate their practicability. Those making the trials were called "demonstrators" and their neighbors who came to follow their example in testing the new methods were called "coöperators" and were called together at the "demonstrator's" farm to see the results of his work and to receive instruction from the "demonstration agent" who supervised the work for the government. As this work was in charge of practical farmers more or less known locally, it appealed to the farmers as a common-sense method, the results spoke for themselves, and the demand for the work spread rapidly. Dr. Knapp found that the county was the best unit for the work of the supervising demonstration agent, and he soon came to be known as the county demonstration agent, which was later contracted to county agent or county agricultural agent. The whole movement came to be called "the farmers' coöperative demonstration work." Three new features in agricultural instruction of farmers were involved in this system; it was more or less coöperative on the part of a local group of farmers; it used the demonstration method of teaching, i.e., the farmer demonstrated to himself by his own trial; and a local county agent was employed for the supervision of the work. It soon became apparent that merely trying to circumvent the depredations of the boll weevil would not solve the problem and that instead of raising only cotton as a cash crop the farmer must diversify his crops so as to raise more of the foodstuffs consumed on the farm and to have other products for sale. This involved the application of the demonstration method to the growing of corn, legumes, hogs, etc., in short, it involved the whole field of farm management and agricultural practice. The work of the county agricultural agents was liberally supported by local business men, commercial clubs and railroads, and the General Education Board, as well as by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. In 1909 the Mississippi legislature passed the first act permitting counties to appropriate funds for this work, and this was followed by most of the southern states within a few years.

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The Report of President Roosevelt's Country Life Commission in 1909 called attention to the need of a national system of agricultural extension work in charge of the agricultural colleges, and congressmen and agricultural leaders in the North who had observed the success of the county agent movement in the South commenced to feel that county agricultural agents might be equally valuable in the North as a means of local agricultural education. As a result, the first county agricultural agents in the North were appointed by the Office of Farm Management of the U. S. Department of Agriculture in 1910 and 1911. In 1912, 113 were employed in coöperation with the state agricultural colleges and local county organizations in the North and West. The success of the work of these agents and of the extension work of the agricultural colleges led to a general demand from the agricultural interests of the country for a federal appropriation to the agricultural colleges for establishing a system of extension work the chief feature of which would be the employment of county agricultural agents who would supervise field demonstrations by the farmers on their own farms. This resulted in the federal Smith-Lever Act of 1914, which made an annual appropriation to each land-grant college "to aid in diffusing among the people of the United States useful and practical information on agriculture and home economics and to encourage the application of the same ... through field demonstrations, publications, and otherwise, ... to persons not attending or resident at said college." This act is notable in that it established the most comprehensive national system of non-resident instruction in agriculture and home economics of any country, and recognized the necessity of de-centralizing this instruction by having it carried on by agents in the counties who could have immediate and continuous contact with individual farmers and groups of farmers.

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As the work of the county agents in the South grew more permanent they found that it was more efficient if they worked with and through local groups of farmers, and community agricultural clubs were quite widely organized, but no strong county federation was developed, except in West Virginia, where the local clubs formed a county organization which was called a Farm Bureau. The term Farm Bureau originated in Broome County, New York, in 1911, when the first county agent in that state was employed by the Binghamton Chamber of Commerce, the Lackawanna Railroad, and the U. S. Department of Agriculture. As the number of county agents rapidly increased in the northern states it soon became apparent that if their work was to be of the greatest service to the farmers for whose benefit they worked, that it should be supported and managed by the farmers themselves rather than by business interests. The Farm Bureau Association, composed of farmers throughout a county, soon came to be a prerequisite to the placing of an agricultural agent in a county, and with the passage of the Smith-Lever Act and of state legislation accepting its provisions and appropriating state funds contingent upon similar appropriations by the counties, this became the usual procedure. The county farm bureau association coöperates with the state college of agriculture and the U. S. Department of Agriculture in the employment of the county agent, and the annual membership fees together with county appropriations pay the expenses of the work other than salary. The affairs of the farm bureau association are in the hands of the usual officers and executive committee, who report to an annual meeting of the membership. Further than this the method of organization varies in different states. In most of the northern and western states there is a local committee in each community which arranges for the demonstrations and meetings to be held by the county agent, and there is no further organization of the local membership, but in a few states definite

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local organizations or community clubs with officers and regular meetings have developed. In either case, however, the unit of local organization and interest in the work of the farm bureau is usually the community, although its executive administration is on a county basis.

As the extension work came under the local control of these organizations of farmers, the objectives of the work were more largely determined by the farmers' point of view. Whereas the original purpose had been to "extend" to the farmer the better methods of agriculture discovered by the experiment stations and the federal department of agriculture, the program of work came to be largely determined by the particular needs and problems of the local communities in a given county. The farmers conferred with the agent—their agent—and pointed out their greatest difficulties. The program of work was then a matter of determining what demonstrations and instruction could be arranged to meet these problems, under the direction of the county agent and with any assistance possible from the state agricultural college. With the rapid growth of Farm Bureaus,—for on June 30, 1918, there were 791 farm bureaus with approximately 290,000 members,—the movement became truly a farmers' movement rather than a mere "extension" of the work of the agricultural colleges, though the close affiliation with them constituted its strength and furnished its leadership.

It so happened that almost as soon as the Smith-Lever Act became effective the world was plunged into war and marketing problems became more and more important. Whereas in the first decade of the county agent movement interest had been chiefly in better methods of production, it now rapidly shifted to include better methods of marketing and the development of coöperative selling associations, whose organization was assisted by the farm bureaus wherever they were needed and practicable.

The entry of the United States into the World War greatly accelerated the farm bureau movement. "Food will win the war" was the slogan which challenged American agriculture. The number of county agents in the North and West increased from 542 to 1,133 within the year ending June 30, 1918. It was the county agent system which formed the mechanism through which the federal government secured the whole-souled coöperation of the farmers of the United States under peculiarly trying conditions. The winter of 1917-18 was severe and seed corn was unusually poor. As a result, the available supply of sound seed corn in the spring of 1918 was the lowest on record in the face of the greatest need for a bumper crop. Had it not been for the remarkable organization developed through the county agents and the farm bureau system of the entire country, the corn crop of the great Corn Belt would have been far below normal. As it was, nearly a normal acreage was planted and an abundant harvest secured. The rôle which the agriculture of the United States played in the World War has never been adequately written or appreciated, but it was full of as much romance and heroism as were the industries which commanded the headlines of the press. Dr. Bradford Knapp, for many years in charge of the county agent work in the Southern States after the death of his father, its founder, has called attention to the fact that during the war "of the four great activities or industries in America, agriculture, manufacturing, mining, and transportation,—one alone—agriculture, stood the test, and that mainly because there was already in existence an organization extending from the United States Department of Agriculture through every state agricultural college ... to the counties and the farmers, by which information was rapidly disseminated and farmers were made aware of conditions of what must be done to win the war."

It was inevitable that such an organization growing rapidly during a war should develop an unusual solidarity, and this was but strengthened by the difficulties which agriculture encountered with the cessation of hostilities. During the war several states had formed state federations of the county farm bureau associations and in November, 1919, a convention was called at Chicago for the formation of a national organization, which resulted in the formal organization of the American Farm Bureau Federation<sup>[48]</sup> in March, 1920, with 28 states represented, and a membership in county farm bureaus of 400,000. In the next two years the southern states, which previously had developed no strong county organizations, rapidly adopted the farm bureau idea, and when the American Farm Bureau Federation held its second annual meeting at Atlanta, Ga., in November, 1921, it included 35 states with a local membership of 967,279.

I have dwelt at length upon the growth of the county agent and farm bureau movement, because there is probably no one agency which has done more in the last decade toward the integration of rural communities throughout the United States or which has had a larger educational influence on all aspects of country life. The farm bureau usually organizes its local work by communities and in large numbers of counties the community areas have been defined for the first time by the county agents. The value of this organization by communities was repeatedly shown during the war. For example, in New York State it was possible for the county agents to organize meetings on the Agricultural Mobilization Day called by the Governor on April 21, 1917, in 1,089 communities, with an attendance of 85,075 persons, upon only a weeks notice. In several of the states which have encouraged community organizations, a very definite effort has been made to develop an all-round program of community improvement. Thus the West Virginia extension service has invented a community score card<sup>[49]</sup> with which several communities have scored themselves for three successive years in order to make an analysis of their social situation and to enable them to outline a program of work for the solution of their local problems. Several of the states are now employing specialists to assist the farm bureaus in their problems of community organization.

The county organization of extension work has been unique in its educational methods; methods which have large significance for all movements for rural progress.

First, its educational method is that of the demonstration carried out by farm people under the expert direction of paid county leaders in an effort to solve the immediate problems of the farm and the farm home. It builds on the experience, point of view, and interests of its pupils, who learn under the supervision of a teacher chosen by them, through a process which involves their making real experiments in finding the best solution of their problems. No class of people, here or elsewhere, has ever had opportunity for the training in the scientific attitude and point of view which American farmers may now receive, and on account of the nature and organization of their work they are steadily and surely, if not entirely consciously, adopting the method of science. The consequence of this movement in the social and political development of this country cannot be foretold, for the scientific attitude must finally be the basis of all true democracy.

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Secondly, the program of work—the subject matter of the educational method—is largely chosen by the people themselves, but with the help of experts employed by them to supervise its execution. Here we have an institution arising from the land, wholly democratic in spirit and polity, yet recognizing the services of experts and employing them for its own purposes. In the county farm bureaus, and the organizations to which they have given rise, there is developing a new use of science both in the educational methods and in the employment of scientifically trained leaders, in the service of and directed by a democracy—a democracy no longer provincial but of national scope in that there is real coöperation between the local community, the county, the state, and the nation.

Lastly, the extension movement recognizes that only by the development and training of the largest amount of enthusiastic, voluntary, local leadership can its work have a foundation which will make it permanent. It thus recognizes an essential factor of all social organization, i.e., the power of personal leadership in shaping the public opinion of the group, and it consciously undertakes the development of intelligent initiative as a means of social progress.

When one has observed the feeble beginnings of this movement only a decade ago, and has witnessed its growth to the present nation-wide system, promoting plans for national organizations for coöperative marketing, he appreciates the power of science, education, and organization as new forces in the life of the rural community, whose future influence one would be rash to prophesy.

This account would be misleading if it failed to indicate that the extension movement has given attention to the problems of the farm home, of the mother and the children, as well as to those of the farm business. In 1910, girls' canning clubs were started in the Southern States and young women were employed to supervise their work. Very soon the mothers became interested and before long home demonstration agents were appointed to work with the agricultural demonstration agents. In 1916 home demonstration work was in progress in 420 counties in the South. A few home demonstration agents were employed by farm bureaus in the Northern States prior to 1917, but the additional funds appropriated by Congress for food conservation work during the war caused a rapid increase in their number and women's work in the North received its chief impetus during the war. The Smith-Lever Act specified that its funds should be used for extension work in home economics as well as in agriculture, but it was not until the farm bureaus commenced to employ home demonstration agents and to organize the women for their support that work with the farm home became established on a permanent basis. In most of the northern states the farm bureau is now organized on what is called the "family plan," that is, it includes in its program of work projects dealing with the farm for men, with the farm home for women, and with club work in agriculture and home economics for boys and girls. In many of the states a separate agent is employed for each of these lines of work and the women are organized in a separate department of the county farm bureau and have their own local farm women's clubs. In New York State the women's work has been further differentiated by organizing it as a County Home Bureau which with the Farm Bureau forms the County Farm and Home Bureau Association.

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During the war the home demonstration agents gave their attention to food conservations and clothing, but as a permanent program has developed the local clubs of farm women have shown a lively interest in problems of health, home management, care of children, education, recreation, and civics. They have found that the problems of the home cannot be solved without an effort to create better community conditions and "community housekeeping" has attracted an increasing interest. The present aims of the women's work have been aptly phrased in the Home Bureau Creed written by Dr. Ruby Green Smith, associate state leader of home demonstration agents in New York:

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#### The Home Bureau Creed

"To maintain the highest ideals of home life; to count children the most important of crops; to so mother them that their bodies may be sound, their minds clear, their spirits happy, and their characters generous:

"To place service above comfort; to let loyalty to high purposes silence discordant note; to let neighborliness supplant hatreds; to be discouraged never:

"To lose self in generous enthusiasms; to extend to the less fortunate a helping hand; to believe one's community may become the best of communities; and to coöperate with others for the common ends of a more abundant home and community life:

"This is the offer of the Home Bureau to the homemaker of to-day."

Nor should we fail to recognize the part which the boys' and girls' club work has had in the extension movement. Space will not permit any adequate account of its origin and growth, or of its methods and influence. No movement has done more to redirect and give dynamic to the rural school than has the club work; nor has any movement done more to train leadership among the coming generation on the farms. Commencing with corn clubs for the boys, canning clubs were soon organized for the girls, and later pig clubs, potato clubs, calf clubs, sewing clubs, cooking clubs, and clubs are now organized with various projects covering almost all phases of agriculture and home economics. These clubs may be called the Junior Farm Bureau, for in them farm children are receiving a training which will mean much for the future organization of country life. The public confidence in the work is shown by the fact that in 1920, 500 banks in the northern and western states loaned nearly \$900,000 to club boys and girls for financing their projects.<sup>[50]</sup> As a result of the school exhibits of the products of the club work, many a community fair has been started, and as a result of club picnics and play days community picnics or festivals have become an annual event in many places and have brought better feeling and increased pride and loyalty to the community. In 1919, 464,979 boys and girls were enrolled in club work.

Thus the extension movement started by the agricultural colleges and the United States Department of Agriculture has become a national movement of rural people, men, women, and children, whose strength is largely due to the fact that it has been the means of organizing the local communities and of bringing them together in county organizations, which with the aid of state and national funds and supervision, employ trained executives to stimulate and supervise the work of the local groups. It is a unique agency for the education and organization of rural life which is giving the American farmer a new position in the life of the nation.

#### FOOTNOTES:

- [47] This movement can only be sketched in barest outline. It is fully and authoritatively discussed in another volume of this series by Prof. M. C. Burritt, entitled "The County Agent and the Farm Bureau." See also O. B. Martin, "The Demonstration Work." Boston, The Stratford Co.
- [48] For a full discussion of this movement, its objectives and accomplishments, see O. M. Kile, "The Farm Bureau Movement," Macmillan, New York, 1921.
- [49] Nat. T. Frame, "Lifting the Country Community." Circular 255, Extension Division, W. Va. University, 1921.
- [50] See "Status and Results of Boys' and Girls' Club Work, Northern and Western States," 1920. George E. Farell. U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, Department Circular 192.

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## CHAPTER XI

### THE COMMUNITY'S RELIGIOUS LIFE

From the earliest times and among all peoples the common religious life has formed one of the strongest bonds of the rural community. Several of the original thirteen colonies which formed the United States were settled by those seeking freedom to worship as they chose, and as their descendants migrated westward many of the new settlements were largely composed of the membership of some one church or those of a similar faith. Dr. Warren H. Wilson has called attention to the fact that the Mormons, the Pennsylvania Germans, and the Scotch Presbyterians are the most successful farmers and remain on the land because they have given a religious sanction to country life and have made the church the center of the life of the community, as it was in the medieval village community of Europe. Whatever attitude one may take toward their religious beliefs, all impartial observers are agreed that the Mormons have established the strongest agricultural communities and that they have discovered and applied to a high degree some of the most fundamental principles of social organization. Concerning them Dr. Wilson says:

"These exceptional farmers are organized in the interest of agriculture. The Mormons represent this organization in the highest degree. Perhaps no other so large or so powerful a body of united farmers is found in the whole country. They have approached the economic questions of farming with determination to till the soil. They distrust city life and condemn it. They teach their children and they discipline themselves to love the country, to appreciate its advantages and to recognize that their own welfare is bound up in their success as farmers, and in the continuance of their farming communities. This agricultural organization centers in their country churches. They have turned the force of religion into a community making power, and from the highest to the lowest of their church officers the Mormon people are devoted to agriculture as a mode of



But although large numbers of communities throughout the United States were settled by people of one religious faith, and thus had the strongest bond of community, yet large areas were settled by scattered homesteaders belonging to different sects, and as time went on, newcomers came into the older communities and established churches of various denominations, so that throughout most of the country the churches have come to have more of a divisive than a unifying influence on community life.

In our discussion of the religious life of the rural community we shall confine our attention to the protestant churches, because most of our rural people are protestants. It is true that in some sections, such as Louisiana and southern Maryland, and in many sections recently settled by Europeans, the people are mostly Roman Catholics; but in general the catholic church is strongest in the cities and towns and does not have strong rural parishes throughout the country. Throughout most of the United States the Methodist, Episcopal and Baptist denominations have by far the largest number of churches and membership, and their traditions and methods have largely shaped the religious life of our rural communities.

During the century in which the United States west of the Alleghanies has been settled conditions have changed with such rapidity that the religious life is still largely dominated by its development during the days of early settlement and the present generation is faced with the problem of readjustment of its religious institutions to meet the present situation. In the days of the pioneer the circuit rider made his rounds over a large district, preaching at school houses and private homes and in the few country churches at intervals of one to three months. As the country became more thickly populated, country churches sprang up and several of them were joined together in the employment of a resident pastor with preaching at the larger churches every week and at the outlying stations once in two or three weeks. Doctrinal beliefs were strong and theological differences were frequently bitter. The preaching was practically the only service of the church, except for an annual "protracted meeting" or revival. The main emphasis was upon the personal salvation of the sinner. Sunday schools had not become a recognized feature of the church and but little thought was given to religious education and training by the church. The minister christened the babies, married the young people and buried the dead, but otherwise, with numerous preaching services, he was unable to do much pastoral work. A large proportion of the rural churches were located in the open country and like the district school were largely neighborhood churches, for bad roads and horse-drawn vehicles made it difficult for people to go over two or three miles. In many cases several churches were established in a single village or in nearby neighborhoods by different denominations and were largely supported by home-missionary aid contributed by the older churches in the East and the wealthier city parishes. Prior to the Civil War when most of our population was engaged in farming and before the exodus of the last half century to the towns and cities, most of the rural churches were fairly well attended, but with the recent decline in rural population, many of them, and particularly those in the open country, have faced the same situation as the district school in that there are now too few people to make possible the economic support of a pastor and church building.

Furthermore, it must be recognized that the standards of rural people have changed as regards the church in the same way that they have concerning the school. When all of the people have had a common school education, many of them have had high school training, a few have been to college, and many of them now and then visit the larger churches of towns and cities, they are no longer satisfied with the occasional preaching of an uneducated man, however religious and earnest he may be. The Sunday school has become an established part of the work of the church and as people have appreciated the value of education in secular affairs, they have come to place more hope in the religious training of their children than in merely saving them by sudden conversion. The church is becoming more and more an institution for the training and expression of religious life rather than only a place for preaching. Moreover, the church now has to meet the competition of other institutions and interests which did not exist in the earlier days. The grange, the lodge, organizations of all sorts, moving pictures, athletics and automobiles, furnish means of association and command the interest and support of the people, where formerly there was only the church for the righteous and the tavern or the saloon for the convivial.

All of these and other factors have conspired to weaken the relative influence of the church in our rural communities and the situation has become so serious in many sections that it has challenged the attention of denominational leaders. During the past fifteen years there have been a series of careful studies of the condition of the rural churches in various parts of the country. These studies have given indisputable evidence of the conditions responsible for the decline of the rural church and of the measures which must be taken if the religious life of the rural community is to be adequately fostered; and they have clearly shown that the problems of the rural church must be solved from the standpoint of meeting the religious needs of the rural community rather than that of the interests of the individual church. In the older parts of the country, and—alas—far too frequently in the newer sections, the most serious obstacle to the religious life of the community is an unnecessary number of churches, which divide its limited resources both of funds and leadership. Overchurching is more largely responsible for the decadence of the rural church than any one factor. Small congregations are unable to support a full time pastor, and where several of them are competing in a small community, it is deprived of the services of a resident minister. Preaching once in two weeks and practically no pastoral visitation are not conducive to the life of a church. The small church maintains its Sunday school with difficulty for there are too few of any one age for a satisfactory division of classes. Equally serious is the fact that the ablest men will not enter the ministry to devote themselves to what

they regard as an unnecessary and unchristian competition.

Tompkins County, where I live, is a fair average of rural New York. A recent survey shows that but eight of its twenty-eight rural communities have full time resident pastors, though there are ministers residing in twenty-five parishes who also serve other parishes nearby. Throughout the county there was one church for every 332 people, but the average village church had but 92 active members, and the average country church had but 32. The church membership has remained practically stationary for thirty years, while the attendance has decreased from 21 percent of the rural population in 1890 to 14 percent in 1920. One community of 900 population had five churches, no one of which had a resident pastor or over 45 members, while two of them had but 11 members each and were closed. Six strictly rural communities in the southern part of the county have 16 churches, though none of these places can properly support more than one church with a resident pastor. After a careful study of the whole county, I am of the opinion that if at least one-third of the rural churches were abandoned or combined, the work of the church would be greatly strengthened. This county is cited because it is fairly typical; many worse have been reported in other surveys.

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Another handicap of the rural church is the frequent shift of ministers. In Tompkins County only 4 of the 57 churches have had the same pastor for ten years, 17 changed pastors three times in ten years and 17 of the pastors had been in their parishes one year or less. When a minister stays but a year or two, his parishioners tend to be only acquaintances and rarely does he really know them. A minister cannot become well enough acquainted with a new parish to do effective pastoral work in less than a year, and many ministers who have seemingly good programs of work fail to realize them because they attempt to force progress and to secure results more rapidly than is possible. One of the chief duties of the rural pastor is to train leadership. A church is no stronger than its permanent resident leadership. No matter how brilliant the work of the minister, if he has failed to develop local leadership, his work is soon dissipated when he leaves. Now leadership cannot be produced in a year or so and where it is most needed it requires several years to discover and develop it. Unfortunately much of this frequent shifting of rural pastors is directly due to ecclesiastical rule rather than to the needs of the local churches, though much of it results from meager salaries and sectarian rivalries which soon discourage a man who sees larger opportunities for service elsewhere.

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Numerous studies of the actual condition of the rural church in many parts of the country all show the futility of denominational competition in maintaining two or three churches where only one is needed or can be supported. Furthermore, the present generation of young married people who desire the best religious influences for their children are no longer much interested in the theological or ecclesiastical differences of the various denominations, and they refuse to support them or do so under protest and with an apathy which makes effective church work impossible. As a result, there has been a strong movement in recent years toward the consolidation of rural churches and for the establishment of what are called "community churches." Although much effort has been given toward getting denominational boards and leaders to form state federations for promoting inter-denominational comity, and although notable progress in this direction has been made in a few states, particularly in Maine and Vermont, yet the chief impetus to the community church movement has come from the people themselves, who have insisted upon a combination of the local churches often in spite of ecclesiastical indifference or opposition. The lack of coal in 1918 induced many churches to hold their services together and in many cases gave an impetus to the idea of their permanent federation.

The term community church has come to be applied to various forms of churches, but whatever its form, its fundamental purpose is the service of the community rather than the advancement of a particular denomination and it admits all Christian people to its fellowship, in contrast to the exclusiveness of the purely denominational church which insists upon the importance of particular theological beliefs or systems of church government.

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As the term is now used a "community church" may be a church definitely affiliated with some denomination, it may be a "federated" church, or a "union" church. The union church is unaffiliated with any religious denomination. If it be the only church in a community, it is then a community church, but if one or two others decline to unite, it is a *community church* only in aspiration. It is this type of independent union church, to which the term community church is most commonly applied by the laity, and such community churches have increased rapidly in the past five years as a protest of the people against denominational competition and inefficiency. These independent community churches have now become so numerous in one or two states that they are holding state conventions. The question at once arises whether if they become affiliated in even the most nominal manner they will not soon constitute what will practically be another denomination and will fail to effect the growth of Christian unity which they desire. On the other hand, denominational leaders who are in entire sympathy with the abolishment of competition and the establishment of but one church in a rural community where only one is needed, point out that the union church loses the advantages of affiliation with a body of churches which have regional and national boards and agencies for giving them assistance and support in their work. The history not only of church but of all sorts of secular organizations, indicates that sooner or later local organizations with common aims and purposes tend to get together in conventions and to establish federations through which they may unite their resources in maintaining agencies to promote the common cause. Most organizations, whether religious or secular, need the stimulus of association with kindred organizations devoted to the same purposes and the help of expert supervision which can be secured only from state or national bodies.

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The "federated church" obviates this difficulty to a certain extent. Each of the federating

churches maintains its own corporate identity and its affiliation with its own denomination, to which it sends its contributions for benevolences and denominational work. The federating churches form a joint organization for the employment of a minister and use the same building, or use two buildings in common—sometimes one for church and one for Sunday school services or social purposes,—and the church is a community church for all practical purposes. In the long run this usually results in a federated church finally affiliating with the denomination which is preferred by the large majority of its membership and which is least objectionable to the minority.

Denominational leaders, on the other hand, hold that neither "union" or "federated" churches will be permanently satisfactory, but that the community church, though organized on the "federated" principle, should be definitely affiliated with some one denomination, and that a single denominational church which effectively serves the whole community may be truly a "community church."

Whatever the outcome of this movement may be it has forced the recognition of the fact that the religious welfare of the rural community should be the first consideration and that denominational relations must be conceived as a means rather than an end, as has commonly been the case heretofore. When country people have learned the advantages of consolidated schools and of coöperation in marketing, and have developed the ability to work together in these and other phases of community life, they are no longer content to waste their energies in maintaining feeble churches, whose differences no longer command their loyalties, and they very naturally desire to bury their religious differences and to coöperate in the maintenance of a single church which will give that inspiration and dynamic to all the life of the community which can be furnished only through the religious motive. So in religion as in other phases of life, the community idea is replacing the older individualism.

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We have already noted the change of emphasis in the work of the church from that of merely holding a preaching service for the personal salvation of adults, to a greater reliance upon the power of religious education through the Sunday school and other organizations of young people. When Sunday schools were first started, a century or more ago, they were bitterly opposed by many of the more conservative church people. To-day they are a recognized part of all protestant churches, but oddly enough their advancement has been due more largely to the work of the laity than to that of the clergy, although there can be no question that church membership is most largely recruited from the Sunday schools. Thus in our survey of Tompkins County, New York, we found that out of 175 persons admitted to the rural churches on confession of faith, 61 of whom were adults and 114 children, 134 were previous members of the Sunday school.

The rural Sunday school in the small church has the same difficulty as does the district school, in that it has too few scholars of approximately the same age to form classes of sufficient size to command their interest and enthusiasm. Likewise it is forced to depend upon untrained and frequently-changing teachers. Although there has been a marked advance in the grading and organization of Sunday schools and of the literature for their study, yet there is a growing conviction that a period of twenty minutes a week is inadequate to secure effective religious education. On the other hand, although the separation of church and state in this country prevents the giving of religious instruction in our public schools, educators have come to recognize its importance in the education of the child. As a result there is now a definite movement for the organization of week-day schools of religion. When these schools are conducted by trained teachers and their work is of an educational standard satisfactory to the public schools, the pupils are given credit for their work toward promotion in the public schools. The State of New York has enacted definite legislation permitting the schools to dismiss those pupils whose parents so desire, for a definite period each week when they may attend whatever school of religious instruction their parents may designate, and for which the public schools shall give credit when satisfactory as to educational methods. Such week-day schools of religious instruction have been carried on in some of our cities for several years, and at the present time are being introduced into rural communities in various sections of the country. Sometimes each church maintains its own school, but inasmuch as this movement is usually promoted by the inter-denominational Sunday school associations the tendency is to secure the coöperation of all the protestant churches in establishing one school for the community. This movement is still young, but if it makes the progress which now seems probable, it should be a powerful agency toward the elimination of weak churches. It makes possible the organization of graded classes of sufficient size so that a real group spirit and interest are created and the instruction can be given with the same pedagogical efficiency as in the public schools. Obviously the success of the movement will depend upon the degree to which it can command the support of the whole community and it will thus tend to strengthen community life.

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A new attitude toward the social life of its people is also having a large influence upon the program of many rural churches. Formerly religion was one thing and sociability was another, and the church felt no responsibility for the recreation of its people. Gradually church suppers and sociables became customary, but they were held either to raise money or as a means for attracting outsiders into the fold. In the days when money was scarce in the rural community it was often difficult to raise the pastor's salary. Much of his salary was paid in kind, and annual "donation parties" contributed a considerable share of his living. But as markets developed and farmers came to sell most of their products for cash, money became more plentiful and it became evident that no church can be maintained upon a sound business basis which does not make up an annual budget and raise it by the direct contributions of its people. Putting the finances of the church on a business basis has removed the need of church suppers for raising funds, but their

social value has become so apparent that they are now held merely for the better acquaintance and enjoyment of the church people. In so far as the social life of the church has been consciously planned as a "bait" for outsiders to attract them into the church, it has, in the long run usually been ineffectual. Too often the motive has been so thinly veiled and the program of the social hour has been given such a religious atmosphere that outsiders very naturally take a defensive attitude, and although they may enjoy the occasion they are perfectly aware of its ulterior objective.

Recently, however, the church has come to appreciate that play and recreation are a normal and necessary part of the life of its people and that it cannot abolish the saloon and condemn certain amusements without incurring a responsibility to provide, or to see that there is provided, satisfying facilities for recreation and sociability. In short, it is coming to recognize that a social program should be undertaken because it is a worthy service and a real need of the people and not as a mere means to other ends. Furthermore, where the church generously sponsors a social program which is enjoyed by all the people of the community, without thought of its being aimed at any proselyting, many of them come to take an increased interest in the strictly religious services and work of the church.

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So to-day many a rural church is holding community sings, its young people are staging amateur dramatic entertainments, its boys have a troop of boy scouts and the girls join the girl scouts or the camp-fire girls, baseball and basketball teams are formed from the Sunday school classes, the men have a club which meets once a month for the discussion of current topics and a supper, the women come together for sewing parties, and the whole people assemble for suppers and for the celebration of national holidays and festival occasions. In a small village in western New York the four Sunday schools have recently formed an athletic association which has erected a one-story gymnasium in which the boys can play basketball and all can find enjoyment.

One of the handicaps of the average country church is that its building is not adapted to social purposes, although the newer buildings are being constructed with better facilities. Sometimes this need is being met by erecting a separate church house which is used for Sunday school and social purposes. Where there is more than one church it is frequently felt that one building may serve the needs of all and so in many communities the churches have united in the promotion of community buildings to serve as social centers for all the people. Thus in its social as well as in its educational program the church finds that a satisfactory social life cannot be secured through sectarian competition, but that by united effort the churches may meet the community needs.

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Although in the past the chief duty of the country minister was to preach on Sunday, yet those most beloved and most successful in building up strong churches have won the hearts of their people more largely through their pastoral work, through their personal acquaintance and influence on the lives of families and individuals. Although a broader educational and social program is needed in the rural church, there is an equal opportunity for a larger service through a new sort of pastoral work by the minister who can serve the community as a social worker. There is an impression that there is no need for so-called social work, for the expert assistance of the poor, the neglected, the delinquent, and the mentally defective, in most rural communities; that this may be necessary for the city slums, but that there are but few such people in the open country. But the recent work started during the war by the Home Service of the local chapters of the American Red Cross and the work of various child welfare and health organizations have shown that country people are not always aware of the needs of some of their not distant neighbors, and that there is a deal of service which might be given the more unfortunate members of the average rural community which they are not now receiving. The average rural community cannot support a paid social worker and needs but part of her time, while the county is usually too large an area for her to cover. Why should not the rural minister be qualified to do much of the family welfare work of his community, calling in outside expert assistance when needed? What better pastoral work could he do, and yet how many rural pastors are doing this sort of work in any intelligent sort of fashion, and how many families in need, outside of his own membership, would turn to the average rural minister for help? Dr. C. J. Galpin has well said of the rural minister that "he is the recognized community psychologist and sociologist." The trouble is that although he is often so recognized, he is usually an amateur rather than a professional. Obviously, as a doctor of souls, the village pastor should be the local "social worker" of every rural community, but if he is to so serve he must first be trained so that he can bring to bear a knowledge of social science upon the problems of the families with which he deals. An average rural community can hardly afford more than one pastor with such qualifications, and it is evident that he would need to give his whole time to one parish. Such a modern representative of the old "curé" of the medieval parish could give real spiritual service to many a rural family which the average rural church never reaches, and he would be a real father to his people.

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Finally, and most important, we must recognize that no other institution can take the place of the Christian church as a source of those ideals of life which give religious sanction to loyalty to the common good—to the community—rather than to self or particular interests. The ideals of its Founder who conceived the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man as the norm of human relationships, and who thought man's relation to man should be the expression of his loyalty to their common Father, will ever furnish the strongest spiritual dynamic for the best community life, for the whole community movement is but one means toward the realization of His ideal of the Kingdom of God on earth. Indeed so keen a mind as the late Professor Josiah Royce has interpreted the spirit of the early church and the ultimate aim of Christianity as that of "the beloved community."<sup>[52]</sup> Though it may require new equipment and new methods to meet the changed conditions of modern life, the mission of religion to interpret the highest values of life

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will ever make it the motive force of community life, the heart of the community. As Dr. E. DeS. Brunner has well said, "The aim of the country church movement is not to substitute anything for the Gospel. It is to assist in expressing the best religion of the ages in terms of the best spirit of the age."<sup>[53]</sup>

#### FOOTNOTES:

- [51] "The Evolution of the Country Community," p. 63. Boston, The Pilgrim Press, 1912.  
[52] Cf. "The Problem of Christianity."  
[53] "The Country Church in the New World Order," p. 39.

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## CHAPTER XII

### THE COMMUNITY'S HEALTH

In the early days in which the country was but sparsely settled, sickness, except for epidemics of such diseases as smallpox and yellow fever, was regarded as an individual affair. In recent years bacteriology and medical science have revealed the causes of many diseases and the manner in which they are spread. With a denser population and with more frequent contacts as a result of better transportation, the possibility of contagion has very largely increased and we now appreciate that the health of the family—even of the rural family—cannot be maintained without attention to the health of the community as a whole. Good health has become a responsibility of the community.

The rapid growth of cities in the last fifty years has forced them to take measures for the preservation of health, and public health administration has become a distinct branch of medical science. It is the health problems which have arisen in the congested sections of our large cities, and those which are due to a sedentary life or to unhealthful conditions of certain trades and industries, which have incited the discoveries of medical science and which have created a new attitude toward sanitation and hygiene among city people.

There has been a distinct change with regard to the attitude of society toward health. A generation or two ago many people—particularly elderly females—were not ashamed of "enjoying poor health," and a delicate physique was regarded as rather incidental to the more highly cultured. To-day, although we sympathize with the afflicted, society places a premium upon a sound physique. The importance of physical exercise, of recreation and athletics for the development and maintenance of a sound body are now much more fully appreciated than they were fifty years ago. We are coming to understand that good health is largely due to habits of personal hygiene which must be instilled by the home and the school, and that without such habits the mere knowledge of sanitation and hygiene will not be generally applied. This new emphasis upon physical fitness has naturally received larger attention in the cities on account of the more unfavorable conditions of city life, while the new knowledge and appreciation of the value of health has not been so constantly forced upon the attention of rural people.

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Gradually we are coming to appreciate that we have an ethical responsibility for good health, and it is even receiving a religious sanction, for we have come to know that the cause of evil behavior may be due primarily to an unsound body rather than to a perverted soul. The church has ever ministered to the sick and has supported hospitals, but to-day it is commencing to advocate the prevention of disease through sanitation and hygiene, and to preach the religious duty of fostering health and preventing sickness.

One of the principal factors in the farmer's relative indifference to health measures is the fact that he has become accustomed to think that an outdoor life and isolation from other people give him an ability to withstand sickness and he has rather gloried in his ability to throw off ordinary ailments and to withstand the physical hardship which his work often demands. He can see how health conditions may need attention in the city where people are crowded together, but he is not impressed that other causes make such diseases as typhoid and malaria much more prevalent in the open country, and that bad sanitation on a farm a mile away may cause sickness in his own family. American farmers have been educated on the nature and spread of disease by their experience with animal diseases, such as bovine tuberculosis, hog cholera, and Texas fever. If they can be interested to utilize this knowledge in the care of the health of their own families, and if they will provide health facilities for their own families equal to those which they feel necessary for their livestock, health conditions on the farm will show rapid improvement. It is not that the farmer is indifferent to the health of his family, but he has been *forced* to have his herd tested for tuberculosis, and he faces the possibility of heavy losses if he does not have his hogs

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vaccinated for cholera, while he has not appreciated that by preventative agencies the better health of his wife and children may be insured and the cost of remedial treatment be greatly lessened.

The purely economic aspects of sickness and disease have been a potent factor in the health movement, particularly in cities. The vast sums invested in life insurance have led progressive insurance companies into extensive campaigns for promoting public health so that their risks may be reduced. Vast quantities of the best health literature have been distributed by some of the industrial insurance companies and they have done much to demonstrate the value of public health nursing by employing nurses who visit their policy holders. The extension of the insurance method to health insurance, and the adoption of insurance by large corporations for their employees has furthered this general movement, and has revealed the tremendous economic losses due to preventable sickness and disease. The farmer has failed to appreciate the purely economic handicap under which he labors as a result of sickness and the lack of adequate medical service and efficient public health administration such as cities enjoy, because the cost of sickness is distributed and is borne by each family and he has no means of knowing the aggregate cost for the whole community. Were it possible for a rural community to secure and have brought to its attention the total economic loss due to sickness in a given year and the proportion which might be preventable with a reasonable expenditure for better health facilities, its people would doubtless become as interested in better health administration as does the employer in a large city industry, and the true economy of better health facilities would be apparent.

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Few concrete studies of the losses occasioned by sickness in rural communities have been made, but one of Dutchess County,<sup>[54]</sup> New York, in 1915 well illustrates the conditions which would doubtless be found in many another rural county. This survey covered five districts of the county with an aggregate population of about 11,800—most of which was rural territory. 1,600 cases of serious illness were found to have occurred during the year. "Some 9,000 days were lost by men and women of working age (15 to 54 years). Children lost 13,700 school days. On the average this cost the community for each child at least 33 cents a day for which it received no return. These two items safely represent a money loss of \$20,000 to \$25,000." As a result of the study it was estimated that the total money loss occasioned by sickness in a year within the whole county would be at least \$412,000. "Of the 1,600 patients whose care has been analyzed in this report, 72 percent could have been cared for adequately in their own homes had there been available medical and nursing service. The remaining 28 percent (442 patients) could not have been cared for adequately in their own homes ... 24 percent of the patients secured no medical care. Many startling instances of unnecessary and indefensible suffering and misery were found.... Of the 113 women who went through childbirth in their homes, only one had the continuous care of a graduate nurse, and only 18 had any service whatever from graduate visiting nurses. 35 percent of the children born came into the world under unfit conditions and surroundings." Largely as a result of this study, Dutchess County now has an efficient county health association through which a number of public health nurses are employed, who visit all districts of the county.

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One of the most serious handicaps in maintaining the health of the rural community is its frequent lack of medical service. The number of doctors practising in the open country was always inadequate, but in recent years it has decreased until now many large sections are without any resident physician. The influenza epidemic of 1918, following the shortage of doctors during the war, revealed the plight of many a rural community without medical service. The higher standards now required by medical colleges and state licensing boards has resulted in a real shortage of physicians and the young men are not going into the country to practise. A recent study made by the New York State Department of Health showed that in 20 rural counties 88 percent of the physicians had been practising over 25 years and only 3 percent less than ten years. This means that most of the rural doctors in these counties have less than ten years more to practise and that there is no indication that their places will be filled by younger men. In Manitoba one rural municipality has employed a physician on full time, and a recent act of the New York legislature makes it possible for towns to employ physicians. It seems probable that country people will be forced to employ physicians on a salaried basis if they are to secure adequate medical service. This does not necessarily mean, however, that the physician will be employed by the local government. Industrial workers are now employing physicians on a salary and farmers' organizations are employing salaried veterinarians. Why cannot a local health association be formed to employ a physician, whose job it will be to keep its people well?

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Two factors prevent the larger use of physicians now available. Chief of these is the cost. Farmers handle relatively less actual money than townsmen, and their income is less frequent so that they have less on hand, while the cost of medical attendance is necessarily higher in the country. Fear of running up a bill deters many a farm woman from calling a doctor, when one call might prevent many more later on. The farm home tends to employ a physician only for serious sickness, rather than as a medical adviser who may forestall illness. Another difficulty is one of the physician's own making. The experience is far too common that in cases of immediate need when the family doctor cannot be located, doctors will refuse to attend a case on account of so-called "professional courtesy." It is time that public opinion be aroused so that such cases be brought to the attention of county medical societies with sufficient public opinion to force them to take suitable action. The ethics of every profession must be shaped to meet the needs of those it serves as well as the pocketbooks of its members.

Lack of medical attendance is most serious for the farm mother during confinement, and the

mortality of rural mothers during childbirth, as shown by the investigations of the U. S. Children's Bureau, is an indictment of our supposed civilization. When we learn that in a homesteading county in Montana there were 12.7 deaths of mothers per 1,000 births, which is twice the rate for the United States as a whole, which is higher than that of fifteen foreign countries for which statistics were available in 1915, we face a condition which cannot be neglected. When we find that in Wisconsin this rate was but 6 per 1,000, and that 68 percent were attended by physicians, and in Kansas it was but 2.9 per thousand and 95 percent had physicians, while in Montana only 47 percent were attended, loss of life due to isolation and lack of medical care is apparent. In sparsely settled regions the solution of this problem seems to demand the provision of local maternity hospitals, for the difficulty is primarily one of isolation.

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Since medical science has shown that sparkling spring water may carry the deadly typhoid germ as a result of distant contamination, that wells are frequently contaminated by nearby privies or barn yards, that malaria is carried by mosquitoes, and that the house fly may carry typhoid fever and intestinal diseases of infants, we have come to appreciate that isolation and pure country air do not insure freedom from infection, and that sanitation is as important on the farm as in the city. Indeed the transmission of disease by flies is much easier on the farm, for too often the manure pile where they multiply is not far from the house, while in many a city the smaller number of horses and the cleaning of manure from the streets prevents their increase. The sanitation of the farm home thus becomes a very large factor in the health of the rural community. Surveys made by health officers in recent years have shown the general need of better sanitary provisions and also the possibility of the direct benefits secured from their improvement. In Indiana the State Board of Health surveyed nine typical rural counties taking only the homes on farms and in unincorporated villages. The average score of 6,124 rural homes in these nine counties was but 56.2 percent, the average for individual counties varying from 43 to 61 percent. In 1914, 1915, and 1916, the U. S. Public Health Service made sanitary surveys of 51,544 farm homes in 15 rural counties scattered throughout the United States, but mostly in the South. Its report<sup>[55]</sup> states that only 1.22 percent of these farm homes were equipped for a really sanitary disposal of human excreta, while in one county in Alabama less than 20 percent of the farm homes had toilets of any kind. "Sixty-eight percent of the water supply used for drinking or culinary purposes was obviously exposed to dangerous contamination from privy contents"; and only 32.88 percent of the houses were effectively screened against flies. A very considerable improvement in farm sanitation has resulted from the educational campaigns conducted during the past decade, but effective rural sanitation awaits the employment of public health officials who will convince the people of each local community of their individual responsibility for the health conditions on their own farms and of their common liability for the health of each other.

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With the above conditions in mind, let us now consider the agencies for health conservation in rural communities. We have already seen that the old-fashioned country doctor is rapidly disappearing. With better transportation now available it seems probable that physicians will live in the larger village centers, but with telephone communication and the automobile it should be possible to secure as prompt medical attendance. We may as well recognize that many a rural community is too small a unit to support a resident physician and that if satisfactory medical treatment is to be secured we shall have to have better hospital and clinical facilities so that the time of the physician can be economized and frequent attention can be given.

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Most rural townships have a local board of health and health officer, who is charged with reporting births and deaths and with the enforcement of quarantines against contagious diseases, but it is notorious that these local health officials are rarely efficient or take any leadership in the betterment of public health. Ordinarily the health officer receives little if any pay, and is a resident physician who is not inclined to antagonize his own clients when the enforcement of health regulations would meet their opposition. Students of rural health problems are now fairly agreed that the only means of securing efficient administration of public health regulations in rural communities is by the employment of a full time county health officer, working under a county board of health, who will have the same general duties as the health officers in our cities. Local health officers would be retained, but their work would be under the supervision of the county health officer and would have the benefit not only of his support and encouragement, but also of his superior technical training. If a county superintendent is necessary for our schools, a county health officer is equally necessary for the supervision of public health, and several states have enacted legislation requiring or permitting the employment of county health officers. The county is usually the best unit for rural health administration.<sup>[56]</sup> The county health officer would have laboratory facilities for the examination of drinking water, and samples of blood, urine, or sputum for the detection of disease, and would give direction for the taking of samples which might be sent to the laboratories of the state department of health for the examination of those specimens for which his laboratory was not equipped. He would have general supervision of the medical examination of school children. In numerous ways he would promote better means for health conservation, as can be done by one who has had special training for such work and who is giving his whole time and thought to its problems.

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Although the county health officer is necessary for the administration of the technical aspects of public health administration, the most important gains in the health of the rural community will come through the personal education of its people on matters of hygiene and sanitation. This is the field of public health nurses, and I believe that the records of their work in rural communities will show that they have done more for health education than any other one agency. A decade ago trained visiting nurses were practically unknown in rural communities. In 1914 the American Red Cross first organized its Town and Country Nursing Service and coöperated with a few rural communities in supervising the work of trained public health nurses, but relatively few

places employed rural nurses prior to the war. The county tuberculosis societies also employed visiting nurses who worked throughout a whole county and whose work inevitably created a demand for visiting nurses for a more general service. The shortage of physicians during the war and the influenza epidemic of 1918 revealed the need for rural nurses and since the war the local chapters of the American Red Cross, which is devoting much of its attention to public health work, have employed hundreds of rural public health nurses.

The success of school nurses in the cities has led to their employment in the smaller towns, and now county school nurses are being employed in individual counties in several states, and in other states school nurses are employed by townships or jointly by several rural school districts. Wisconsin and Ohio have recently enacted laws compelling every county to employ at least one public health nurse, and a dozen or more states have passed legislation making the employment of county or local nurses optional. Under whatever auspices they are employed, rural public health nurses have found that their most effective work may be done at first in connection with the schools. Medical examination of school children is now required in many states, but unless it is followed up by some one who will see the parents and encourage them to secure the necessary medical or dental treatment, the results of these examinations are often disappointing.

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A most interesting and instructive account of the work done by a county school nurse during the first year of her work in typical Minnesota county has been given by Miss Amalia M. Bengtson, superintendent of schools of Renville County:

"Renville County is prosperous; there are few poor people, no child is underfed and no one wilfully neglected, yet our tabulated report shows an appalling amount of physical defectiveness. Out of our school population of six thousand we examined five thousand children, and found four thousand and ninety-five defective, testifying that 81 percent of the children were defective. This seems almost unbelievable, and yet it does not tell the whole story, for I could take you to school after school where there was 100 percent defectiveness, where we sent a notice to every parent in that school. Yet, as I said before, Renville County is a prosperous county, and we have every reason to believe that conditions in Renville County to-day are the same as in other counties where a health survey has been taken. The percentages of the defectiveness found were: teeth, 55 percent; nose, 40 percent; throat, 66 percent; eyes, 22 percent; ears, 17 percent; malnutrition, 16 percent; nervous disorder, 16 percent; neck glands, 14 percent; skin, 13 percent; and general appearance, 12 per cent."<sup>[57]</sup>

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In reply to the question, "What of it? What good came of the health survey?" Miss Bengtson says: "Our records show that about one thousand of the children examined were taken to see either a doctor or a dentist, or both, the first year. Parents who at first opposed the work are fully convinced that a county nurse should be a permanent worker among us when they see how much their children have been benefited by a little medical help.

"Besides examining the children, the nurse has been a great factor in bringing about a general education for better health. In our county to-day you are behind the times if you do not know what adenoids are and the havoc bad tonsils can bring; why eye strain is so prevalent and how to prevent it; why teeth should be taken care of; why we should drink plenty of water and eat the proper kind of food; what kind of clothing is best to wear, and why we should not wear too heavy and too much clothing while indoors (we have induced some little boys to remove one coat and three sweaters while in school); why we need to be clean, etc.

"Another great service the nurse rendered us was to bring about a veritable epidemic of school-house improvement. She proved that the physical condition of the school-house was reflected in the physical condition of the children. For example, a poorly lighted and badly ventilated school-house always housed children with eye strain and nervous disorder, and in a school-house having ill-fitting desks were children of poor posture.

"During the summer of that first year the nurse was with us, we conducted so-called 'baby clinics' in the county, one in every township and one in each village. We urged the mothers to bring their children below school age to the clinics, and much the same kind of examination was given them as was given the children of school age. We found that 60 percent of the children of pre-school age were defective."

This is but a sample of the work and experience of hundreds of rural nurses and shows how the nurse is a health teacher in the most effective manner, for she gets into the homes and gives personal help in bringing about better health. She uses the demonstration method in health work just as the home demonstration agent does with food, clothing, and home management. Furthermore, when the nurse is devoted to her work—and most nurses are or they would not stick to so hard a job—she becomes endeared to the people just as does the family doctor, for the help she gives in cases of sickness, accident, and childbirth, when she is of invaluable service to isolated homes who can secure no other help. A slip of a girl—though a well-trained nurse—who commenced work in a nearby community was introduced to her new work with two confinement cases and an accident case the first day, for none of which was a physician obtainable. The Red Cross Nurse in my own county has spent many a night in a farm home in order to get sufficiently acquainted with parents to induce them to allow her to have needed treatment given to their children, and when the parents come to realize the benefit which their children have received from operations on tonsils or adenoids, the fitting of glasses, and similar services, and appreciate

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the handicap which such defects would have been to them through life, the nurse has a warm place in their hearts and they eagerly support her work.

One of the difficulties of the average country doctor is his lack of facilities for the expert diagnosis of disease and for the care of patients who need to be kept under observation and given supervised care. Medical science has become highly specialized. The human body is so complicated and wonderful a mechanism that we no longer can expect any one man to be expert on all its ailments. If one desires to secure the best medical service, he goes to a large city hospital or a sanitarium, where various specialists can be consulted and where laboratory facilities are available for their aid. In the average village or country town both specialists and laboratories are lacking and the physician is dependent on his own knowledge and resources. The well-trained physician who appreciates his own limitations and that he cannot give many of his more difficult cases the care they ought to have, sends those who can afford it to the nearest hospital, and does the best he can for the others, but he is keenly aware that he cannot always give them the treatment they should have and he envies his city colleague who can take his patients to specialists for examination.

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It is a fear of this professional isolation which causes the average young doctor to start his practice in the city where he has better facilities, and which is largely responsible for the small number of young doctors in rural counties. It is, of course, impossible to have a hospital in every hamlet, but it is possible to have a good hospital and laboratories at every county seat or small city center, so that there will be at least one such medical center in a county. Legislation has now been enacted in several states making it possible for counties to support a public hospital just as the larger cities have done for many years. Here clinics may be held from time to time, to which eminent specialists may be brought for the diagnosis of different cases, to the advantage of both patient and physician. It is quite impossible for a busy country doctor to maintain a private laboratory and to provide himself with all the expensive equipment for making examination and tests of blood, sputum, urine, for X-ray examinations, etc., but the hospital may have all this equipment at his service.

One of the most important features of the domestic program of the American Red Cross is the promotion of so-called "Health Centers," a movement which is also sponsored by the American Medical Association and other national health organizations. Such a health center may include a hospital with well equipped laboratories and clinical facilities, or it may be nothing more than a room in a small village, equipped with scales for weighing children, with first aid kits for accident cases, and used for occasional clinics for the examination of babies and children of pre-school age and for classes in home nursing or first aid; but every community of any size should have some place which will be a headquarters for its local health Service, equipped as may be most practicable to meet its needs, according to the size of the community.

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Curiously enough the local physicians, who would be most helped by such improved health facilities and whose practice would be benefited by them, are often their chief opponents. The leaders in the medical world, who are keen for all practicable means of improving the public health, heartily support the "health center" movement.

We are coming to the time when the maintenance of health will be regarded as a public function just as education is now provided for all the people and supported by them. That country people are alive to the need of better health facilities is shown by a resolution of the recent (February, 1922) Agricultural Conference called by President Harding at Washington. Its committee on farm population reported:

"The safeguarding of the health of the people in the open country is a first consideration. Any program that looks toward the proper safeguarding of health must include adequate available facilities for the people in the open country in the way of hospitals, clinics, laboratories, dispensaries, nurses, physicians, and health officers. This committee endorses the growing tendency through public agencies to maintain the health of the people by means of these facilities and agencies."

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The life of rural people in America is no longer threatened by the invasion of human foes, but it is constantly threatened by disease. It would seem that the first public concern would be for the maintenance of the health—the very life—of its people, but as yet we have given much less thought to health than to education. The New York State Department of Health has as its slogan: "Public health is purchasable. Within natural limitations any community can determine its own death rate." This is no longer theory, but can be demonstrated by official mortality statistics. The death rate has declined more rapidly in cities than in rural communities because the cities have given more adequate support to public health organization. The rural community has all the natural advantages in its favor and will ever have the most healthful environment, but it must recognize that if preventable disease—with all its attendant evils to the family and to the individual—is to be reduced, this can be accomplished only through education and public health agencies. Better health is a matter of the hygiene of the home and the individual, but it has also become a concern of the common life—a community problem.

#### FOOTNOTES:

[54] "A Study of Sickness in Dutchess County, New York." State Charities Aid Association, New York City.

[55] L. L. Lumsden, "Rural Sanitation," U. S. Public Health Service. Public Health Bulletin No. 94, Oct., 1918.

- [56] See Dr. W. S. Rankin, "Report of Committee on Rural Health," Proceedings Second National Country Life Conference, p. 93.
- [57] "An Adventure in Rural Health Service." Proceedings Second National Country Life Conference, p. 47.

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## CHAPTER XIII

### THE COMMUNITY'S PLAY AND RECREATION

The people of most rural communities have an unsatisfied desire for more play, recreation, and sociable life. Opportunities for enjoyment seem more available in the towns and cities and are therefore a leading cause of the great exodus. Economic prosperity and good wages are not alone sufficient to keep people on farms and in villages if their income will not purchase the satisfactions they desire. To a certain extent many of these advantages of the town and city can be brought to the rural community, but only when country people come to appreciate and develop those forms of play and recreation which are possible and adapted to their conditions, and when they are willing to afford ample facilities and opportunity for the play of their children, will the lure of the city be checked. With such a changed attitude the rural community need have no fear of the competition of the city. It may not be able to have as fine commercial amusements, but it can have the best sort of play and recreation at small cost, for which the cities incur large expense.

There is a peculiar need for a better understanding of the place of play and recreation in the open country at the present time. Formerly large families gave better opportunity for the children of one family to play together, and there were more children of similar ages at the district school of the neighborhood. To-day with farms farther apart and fewer children, farm children do not have sufficient opportunity to play together in groups. The better opportunity for group play and team games is one of the advantages of the consolidated school which has been too little appreciated.

We have seen that one of the obvious necessities for the economic progress of agriculture is that its business be conducted on a coöperative basis. The chief obstacle to coöperation is the individualism of the farmer. The training of boys and girls in team games, in which they learn loyalty to the group and to subordinate themselves to the winning of the team, will do much to change this attitude. Boys who play baseball and basketball together, who are associated in boy scouts and agricultural clubs, will be much quicker to coöperate, for they grow up with an attitude of loyalty to the team group as well as to their own family.

Again, the awkwardness and self-consciousness of the country youth in comparison with his city cousin is due to no inherent inferiority, for in a few years he often out-strips him, but it is the direct result of his lack of social contacts. Personality develops through social life, through the give and take of one personality with another, through imitation, and the acquirement of a natural ease of association with others. The country boy and girl who has had the advantage of association with larger groups in the consolidated school or high school tends to become quite the social equal of the city child.

Heretofore many people, and particularly farm people, have regarded play and recreation for adults as more or less frivolous or unnecessary, while for children play has been used as an award for good conduct or hard work, but it has by no means been deemed a necessary phase of the child's life. If Johnnie does all his chores or if Mary washes the dishes and dusts the furniture faithfully, the opportunity for play is held up as a reward for services rendered; but that time for play and proper kinds of play are essential for a child's education has only recently been established by the students of child psychology and is not, as yet, generally appreciated either by parents or teachers.

It is often said that this is the "age of the child," in that our civilization is more largely shaped by a desire to give our children the best possible advantages. We have come to appreciate, thanks to the insight of such philosophers as John Fiske,<sup>[58]</sup> that the advancement of the human race has been very largely due to the prolongation of the period of infancy. Ordinarily we think of play as an attribute of childhood, but as an incident rather than as a fundamental reason for the prolongation of childhood. Most modern students of child psychology, however, will take the view of Karl Gross,<sup>[59]</sup> an authority on the play of man and animals, who says: "Children do not play because they are young; they are young in order that they may play." Play is a normal process of the child's growth through spontaneous activity. Joseph Lee, the president of the Playground and Recreation Association of America, goes so far as to say: "Play is thus the essential part of education. It is nature's prescribed course. School is invaluable in forming the child to meet

actual social opportunities and conditions. Without the school, he will not grow up to fit our institutions. Without play he will not grow up at all.[60]

I do not mean that a child should have no responsibilities, for that is the misfortune of the city child, but it is important to recognize the truth of old adage that "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," which modern psychology has given a scientific basis. One of the most fundamental needs for the promotion of play in rural communities is to secure a new attitude toward it on the part of many parents. Too frequently—and alas, often from necessity—children are compelled to do too much farm labor. Agriculture is still a family industry, and very often on the poorer farms the older children seem to be considered chiefly as an economic asset. Overwork and little or no time to satisfy the innate tendency of children to play, inevitably produces a dislike of farm life and is one of the most obvious reasons why many of them leave the farm as soon as possible.

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Many parents have forgotten how to play and have lost the "feel" of it. It is important for them to play themselves in order to appreciate the needs of their children, and to have a real sympathy with them. Picnics, play festivals, and sociables, at which every one is compelled to "get into the game," are valuable for this purpose. Many a man recovers his youth in a picnic baseball game. Others have never had much play in their own lives and do not appreciate its value for the best development of their children. Play festivals or demonstrations and local athletic meets in which their children participate may appeal to their parental pride. Furthermore, when such play days are community affairs, they give the sanction of public opinion to the games played and to those participating in them. The play idea is popularized.

*Play in the Home.*—Although the small family does not furnish opportunity for group games, which are necessary for the satisfaction both of children and adults, yet the movement for better play facilities for the community should not overlook the fact that the home is the fundamental social institution of rural life and that play and recreation in the home are essential to its success and happiness. Home games bind the family together, and parents who play with their children find it much easier to secure and maintain their confidence. The community may well give attention to the encouragement of games and play in the homes as well as in the community gatherings. We need a definite movement on the part of pastors, teachers, and especially by such organizations as granges and farm and home bureaus for the promotion of play by young and old in the farm home.

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*Influence of the Automobile.*—One of the values of the automobile is that by its use many a farmer has been given a new realization of the value of recreation. The new desire for recreation thus created is a great gain for farm life. There is no reason why the farmer and his family should not have as much enjoyment of life as town and city people, and if they cannot, then only the poorer class of people will remain on the farms. Occasionally one hears a commercial salesman or some city business man decrying the effect of automobiles on farmers, claiming that they are neglecting their work while chasing around the country having a good time. Doubtless in occasional instances this is as true of the farmer as it is of the townsman, but such farmers will soon come to their senses or get off the farm, and even were there a general tendency of this sort in some communities it must be regarded as the temporary excitement of a new experience. On the other hand, the breaking down of the old stolidity which dominated many a farmer who had become so accustomed to work day in and day out that he was hardly happy when he had a chance for recreation, and the creation of a wholesome desire for a larger experience and more association with others, is one of the largest gains in country life and will not only raise the standards of living, but will be a potent incentive for better agricultural methods. There can be no progress without a certain amount of dissatisfaction. Contentedness has its virtues, but it may degenerate into inertia and the death of all desire for better life.

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On the other hand, the automobile and trolley have made it possible for farm people to easily reach the towns and there attend movies and other commercial amusements and to take part in the social life of the town and city. This may weaken the social life of the rural community, and it also tends to make rural people imitate the forms of play, recreation, and social life of the city, which are not necessarily best suited to rural life. When rural people come to appreciate that those forms of play and recreation which are native or are adapted to the country have many advantages over those of their city cousins, and in many ways may have higher values and satisfactions, they will give more heed to developing those which are most suitable for their enjoyment. Because various kinds of expensive play apparatus are desirable for the small playground of the city, which is crowded with hundreds of children, is no reason why similar apparatus should be thought necessary for the school-yard of the rural school. Many of the present tendencies of recreation in cities are but revivals of rural customs which are receiving new recognition because they appeal to that which is innate in human nature. What is community singing but a variation of the old-fashioned singing school? Folk-dancing originated in the country as an expression of the activities of every-day life, and should be encouraged everywhere. Dramatics and pageantry are native to the countryside. The fair and festival are rural institutions.

*Commercial Amusements; Moving Pictures.*—A certain form of recreation may be secured through amusements which involve mere passive participation upon the part of the spectators, as in various entertainments, dramatics, etc. As long as those giving the entertainment are local people, friends or relatives, the audience takes a more or less sympathetic part in the performance and is not actuated solely by the desire to purchase pleasurable sensations as is the case with commercial amusements. I mean by commercial amusements those which are operated solely for profit, whose advantages the individual purchases for his own pleasure rather than with any idea of participating in a group activity. Commercial amusements have their place and may

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be of great benefit, but they are largely an individualistic form of enjoyment and tend to make the spectator increasingly dependent upon passive pleasurable sensations, and do not have the social value of those forms of play in which one actively participates as a member of a group.

Although commercial amusements have these limitations, yet they have very real values which might be secured for many rural communities if they were operated on a coöperative basis by the people themselves rather than merely for profit by an individual. Motion pictures are now the most popular form of commercial amusement and have unlimited possibilities when operated for the good of the community rather than for profit alone. It is now possible to secure relatively cheap projection outfits and electric plants, so that many small communities are now operating their own motion picture shows. In many places this is one of the leading attractions at the community building and is a source of revenue for its maintenance. In such places the motion picture entertainment is becoming a sort of family affair, and when it can be so operated as to secure the attendance of the family as a group the objectionable features will soon disappear. Indeed, there is a well-organized effort on the part of certain motion picture firms to supply films for just this type of entertainments. Moreover, the picture show may possibly be supplemented with other features which will make a more attractive evening's entertainment, especially in small places where it is practicable to operate but one show during an evening. During the war community singing was tried at the opening and between reels in many movie houses with conspicuous success, and should be encouraged wherever suitable leadership can be secured. The speeches of the "four-minute" men were also an innovation which might well be tried further in a modified form. Would not a four-minute speech on some current topic by a live speaker, given in an uncontroversial manner, be a welcome feature of the movie show between reels, and an effective means of educating public opinion? The community orchestra or community band might well receive encouragement and financial aid by occasional programs at the community movies.

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*Dramatics and Pageantry.*—In the last few years amateur dramatics have become increasingly popular in rural communities. The "little country theater" idea has caught the attention of rural people, and seems destined in one form or another to become a rural institution. Amateur dramatics are one of the most enjoyable and wholesome forms of recreation. The actors not only have a deal of fun as well as hard work, but real acting involves putting one's self into the part and gaining an understanding of various types of people and social situations which is a most liberal education. The audience, on the other hand, takes a particular interest in the acting of its children, friends, and relatives, and it enters into the spirit of the play much more fully than when seeing professional actors. The amateur dramatic club tends to become a community organization in which the people have a real pride and for which they develop a loyalty which affords it a peculiar opportunity and responsibility for portraying various problems and phases of life, giving not only enjoyment but a finer and deeper appreciation of human relationships.

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For special occasions the historical pageant is not only a most delightful entertainment but is one of the best means of arousing community pride and spirit. The pageant grips both actors and audience with a common loyalty to their forefathers. Such an historical picture of the development of a community brings to its people an appreciation of their common heritage and they come to a new realization of their present comforts and their responsibility for the community's future. All sorts and conditions of people will work together in a pageant and enjoy the association. Any rural community which really makes up its mind to do so can produce an historical pageant of its own, which will give new meaning and inspiration to the common life.[61]

*Play in the School.*—The school is commencing to realize the importance of play as a phase of education, but in many cases the one-room country school has too few children of the same age to make it possible for them to play together with much satisfaction. School consolidation is essential for better play. The grounds of most one-room schools are ill-adapted to play and it is not always practicable to have sufficient land attached to them for a suitable playground. It has been assumed that children know how to play, but such is by no means always the case. They have the desire to play, but if they have not had opportunity to play with others, the forms of their play may be very limited. Herein is the opportunity for supervision by the teacher, who may teach them new plays and games, may uphold the code of play, and may see that all have opportunity to participate. Obviously the teachers themselves need training for this which they have not had in the past. New York State has provided that any school district or combination of several school districts may employ a supervisor of physical training, towards whose salary the state will contribute half up to \$600 per annum, who will assist the teachers in developing physical training and play in their schools. Similar plans are being adopted in other states. Maryland has a state-wide athletic league organized by counties. The children of each school are given physical tests, and recognition by buttons and medals is given for the attainment of definite standards of physical development and prowess, graduated according to age and sex. Athletic meets are held by the schools of each county, and the winners then compete in a state-wide meet. [62]

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In many parts of the country the schools of a community, township, or county are now holding play days or play festivals, with which is usually a picnic, at which children and parents from the whole countryside get together for a day of real recreation, and which have a large influence in winning the support of their patrons for the play activities fostered by the schools.[63]

*Boys' and Girls' Organizations.*—Probably a larger impetus to the best types of play for country boys and girls has been given by such organizations as the Young Men's Christian Association, the Young Women's Christian Association, the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, the Camp Fire Girls, and the Boys' and Girls' Clubs fostered by the extension departments of the state agricultural

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colleges and the U. S. Department of Agriculture, than by any other agencies. Each of these organizations has a program of children's activities involving both recreation and education, as well as a definite effort for character building. They are invaluable allies of the home, the school, and the church, for they are the boys' and girls' own organizations and meet their desire for group activities. Just which one or how many of them are needed in any one community is a local problem, and it is impracticable to here attempt any evaluation of their particular advantages. Suffice it to say that every rural community which can find suitable leadership should have such an organization of boys or girls, and will find the assistance of the state and national headquarters of these movements of the greatest help in the development of a local program of play and recreation.<sup>[64]</sup>

*The Church and Play.*—We have already noted (page 133) a changing attitude on the part of the rural church toward play and recreation.<sup>[65]</sup> In the past it has too often been simply a negative condemnation of the so-called "worldly amusements," with no effort to understand the normal cravings of human nature which they satisfy or to furnish any satisfactory substitute for them. It is true that socials of the older classes in the Sunday school and of the young people's societies have done much for the sociable life of the country, but very often they have failed to interest those who would be most benefited by them. Recently, however, church leaders are actively encouraging rural churches to develop such programs of play and recreation as may be necessary to meet the needs of their communities. The Sunday schools are organizing baseball teams and baseball leagues, and are promoting "through-the-week" activities of organized classes. A majority of the troops of Boy Scouts are affiliated with churches, and scouting is becoming a recognized means for the direction of the church's recreational work for boys.

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Just how far the rural church should go in affording facilities for play and recreation, is a local problem and it is difficult to generalize as to the duty of the church in this field. If there is but one church in the community, or there is a community church, and other agencies are lacking, it may be highly desirable for the church which has suitable rooms to equip one as a play room, or to establish a play ground for the children, or to organize a dramatic club. But where there is more than one church in a community, it is obviously difficult to organize recreational work on sectarian lines. In some instances the churches are pooling their interests in the support of a common recreational program. Some of those who most keenly feel the responsibility for the leadership of the church in this field, even go so far as to claim that on account of the moral values involved in the play of its people, play and recreation should be chiefly directed by and centered in the church. There is no question but that the church which does not give attention to this aspect of life and does not have some recreational and social features among its activities will fail to meet the needs of its people, but whether the church can compete with the school, the community building, and independent social organizations, or whether it should seek to do so, is hardly a debatable question. The play and recreational life of most rural communities inevitably crosses church lines, and it is well for the community that it does. People may differ on religion and yet enjoy playing together. So the church may lead and promote better means for play and recreation, but whenever it attempts domination or control it will prejudice its position and will be unable to accomplish its objective.

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*Community Buildings.*—The larger appreciation of the importance of play and recreation in rural life has brought attention to the lack of physical equipment. Every rural community needs a playground large enough to include a good baseball diamond and a basketball court, and a building where indoor sports, gymnasium work and basketball games can be held.

On account of the lack of such facilities many cities have bought playgrounds upon which have been erected special buildings containing gymnasiums, game and club rooms, and often a branch library, which have become known as "social centers." The "social center idea" has spread to the country, for which various forms of social centers have been advocated. Any building which is available for such purposes to the whole community—the school, church, or grange hall—may become a social center if suitable arrangements are made for its operation as such. The U. S. Bureau of Education has urged that every school shall be made a social center, and as far as this is possible, it is most desirable. What can be accomplished through the country school is well shown in the work of Mrs. Marie Turner Harvey in the Porter School at Kirksville, Missouri.<sup>[66]</sup> But the district school will, at best, be only the social center of a neighborhood, and in many cases its district is too small for successful play or social life. Furthermore, the average one-room school is ill-adapted in architecture or equipment for social purposes. The consolidated school or village high school may well be made a social center as far as it is possible for it to so function and new schools should be, and are being, constructed with this in view. The school building and the school playground are naturally the best places for centering the play activities of the children, especially where physical training or play supervisors are employed by the schools. It is a question, however, whether those over school age will use the school for social purposes as freely as some other building, unless the general policy and management of the use of the building for community purposes is in the hands of a community organization formed for that purpose.

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Where there is but one church in a community, which is practically a community church, the church building or church house may be utilized as a social center, and the erection of community buildings by such churches is now being advocated. In some cases such a community building attached to a church may be a means of meeting the need; but in other communities affiliation with the church may not be advantageous. Where there is more than one church, the churches may join in the operation of a community building, but in that case all of the churches must be included or it will not have the support of the whole community—it will not be a real

*community building.*

Many grange buildings are now used but once in a fortnight or so for grange meetings, and remain idle the rest of the time. May it not be possible to devise some equitable and satisfactory arrangement whereby they may be made available for the constant use of all the people as community buildings and still reserve them to the grange for its use at such times as it desires? The average rural community cannot afford to tie up so much capital in buildings which are so infrequently used.

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In any event, the auspices under which a community building is to be operated and the possibility of securing the united support of the whole community for it are essential if it is to be permanently successful as a "community home."

Because of the limitations of school, church, and grange hall, many communities are now planning to erect "community buildings"<sup>[67]</sup> in which all the "leisure-time activities" of the whole community may be centered. The community building will usually include an auditorium with stage for entertainments and dramatics, which is often used for a gymnasium or basketball, a kitchen and dining room, a game room, possibly a library room, and such other features as may be practicable. In older communities there are often more buildings than are being used. Unused churches may well be converted to community buildings with relatively small expense. The advent of prohibition and good roads has driven many village hotels out of business and their buildings are in some cases suitable for conversion into community buildings and may be purchased at much below cost. Some sort of organization must be the owner of a community building and assure its support, and it would seem that if the building is to be truly a community affair it should be operated by the community as such. In some states legislation has been passed permitting the township, or any voluntary tax district, to erect and operate a community building, and many such buildings are in successful operation. In other cases, it will be desirable to form some sort of community organization, which is open to all members of the community and which represents all of the organizations and interests which may use the building, for its erection and control.

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Thus rural play and recreation which formerly centered in the neighborhood, is now being organized on a community basis, and the increased interest in adequate facilities for play and recreation is, in last analysis, an effort of the rural community to defend its integrity against the lure of its people by the city. Just as in their economic life and in their educational system rural people are compelled to act together as a community if they are to compete with the advancing standards of the city, so play and recreation is also becoming a concern of the whole community.

#### FOOTNOTES:

- [58] See his "The Meaning of Infancy."
- [59] "The Play of Man." Translated by Elizabeth L. Baldwin. New York, 1901.
- [60] "Play in Education."
- [61] See Abigail F. Halsey, *The Historical Pageant in the Rural Community*. N. Y. State College of Agriculture, Cornell Extension Bulletin, 54. June, 1922.
- [62] See *Official Handbook of the Public Athletic League*, Baltimore, Md. Edited by William Burdick, M.D. Spalding Athletic Library, New York, American Sports Publishing Co.
- [63] See Galpin and Weisman, "Play Days in Rural Schools," Circular 118, Exten. Div. of the College of Agr., Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison.
- [64] National headquarters are as follows: Y. M. C. A., County Work, 347 Madison Ave., New York; Y. W. C. A., Country Dept., 600 Lexington Ave., New York; Boy Scouts of America, Fifth Ave. Bldg., New York; Girl Scouts, Inc., 189 Lexington Ave., New York; The Camp Fire Girls of America, 128 E. 28th St., New York; Boys' and Girls' Club Work (in agriculture and home economics), States Relations Service, U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., or the extension department of any state agricultural college.
- [65] The best discussion of this topic is Henry A. Atkinson's "The Church and the Peoples Play." Boston, Pilgrim Press, 1915.
- [66] See Evelyn Dewey, "New Schools for Old." New York.
- [67] See *Farmers' Bulletins* 825, 1173 and 1192, U. S. Department of Agriculture, by W. C. Nason, on Rural Community Buildings.

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## CHAPTER XIV

# ORGANIZATIONS OF THE RURAL COMMUNITY

Throughout most of the United States the farmer's sense of belonging to a community is rather vague. The villager has a definite idea of the village because it has a boundary, he can see it, and in many cases it is incorporated; but in most cases, outside of New England at least, the villager and the farmer have not thought of themselves as belonging to the same community. Farmers do, however, belong to many organizations which meet in the village and more and more farmer and villager mingle in the associations devoted to various special interests. The farmer's loyalty has, therefore, been primarily to organizations rather than to the community as such, but as these different organizations have multiplied he has become increasingly aware that most of them, each in its own field, are devoted to the interests of the common good. Through the common interests of organizations in the life of all the people is arising a new conception of the community. As Professor E. C. Lindeman has well pointed out,[68] at the present time the community is more an association of groups than of individuals, and it is these groups and organizations which largely control community action. If we are to understand the relation of the farmer to his community, we can do so only by knowing the organizations and groups to which he belongs, for it is in them and through them that his loyalty to the community arises.

*The Grange.*—By all odds the strongest local organization of farmers throughout the northern and western states is the Grange, which is the local unit of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry. For half a century, from the time of its organization in 1868 until 1920, it had a larger influence upon national legislation than any other organization of farmers, and it was largely through its efforts that many of the more important acts for the benefit of agriculture were passed by Congress.[69] The growth in membership and number of local granges in recent years testifies that the grange meets a real need in farm life. Its maximum membership was in 1875 when 858,050 members were paying dues to the National Grange. From then it declined to 106,782 members in 1889, but in the next thirty years it grew to approximately 700,000 members in 1919. State Granges are now organized in thirty-three states and there are approximately 8,000 local or subordinate granges. In the earlier years of its history there were many granges in the South, but since the decline in the '80's there have been practically no granges south of Virginia and Missouri.

Although the Grange is a secret order or fraternity, with a ritual similar to other fraternal orders, its membership is open to any one of good character, and the local granges frequently hold "open" meetings to which all the people of the community are invited. The strength of the Grange as a community organization is largely due to two factors: first, its broad program, and second, that it is a family organization. Both men and women are admitted to membership and in several states junior granges for the older children are numerous. Although the grange actively supports state and national legislation for the benefit of agriculture, it is strictly non-partisan in politics and is non-sectarian with regard to religion. In the earlier years it undertook to operate numerous coöperative enterprises, including many coöperative stores, and it was the failure of many of these which caused its sudden decline of membership in the late '70's. In recent years, although it has vigorously sponsored coöperation, it has favored independent coöperative organizations, having no organic connection with the grange, with the exception of grange insurance companies whose advantages are usually limited to grange members.

Possibly the greatest service of the Grange is its educational and social work. The "lecturer's hour" is a feature of every meeting, and in this hour a program planned by the lecturer is given by members of the grange, or outside speakers are invited to address it on topics of interest. These programs include both discussion of educational topics having to do with all phases of agriculture, home life, and civic affairs, but also music, recitations and other entertaining features. Special social evenings and suppers are held at frequent intervals and the young people often enjoy an informal dance after the regular grange meeting. The local grange, more than any other organization, provides a forum for the discussion of the problems of agriculture and country life, and is thus a powerful agency for the creation of public opinion on any matters of community concern. The management of its business and the participation in the lecturer's programs furnish the best opportunity for the development of leadership and for training in public speaking, so that the local Grange has been the means of discovering and training much of our best rural leadership.

For many years the attention of the Grange seemed to be directed chiefly toward the support of needed national legislation, but recently grange leaders have perceived that, like all such organizations, its permanent strength and influence depend more largely on the degree to which the local grange is a vital force in the life of its members and of its community. In a recent article on "The Future of the Grange," S. J. Lowell, Master of the National Grange, ably voices this point of view:

"The farm people of America are better informed on all the great questions of the day; are pursuing better agricultural methods; are demanding better roads, better schools, better churches; are doing more effective teamwork for forward-looking projects; and in consequence are more valuable men and women and citizens because of the Grange influence of the past and its presence in their life to-day. Remove the Grange from America and there would be taken out of our progress of a half century one of the largest contributing factors.

"It will be setting up a declaration contrary to the belief of some that exerting legislative influence, important as it is, is not the most valuable function of the Grange; that its coöperative activities, however they may have flourished, will not loom largest in the grange program of the future; that not even its efforts for state and national reform will be recorded as its greatest service to its day and generation. Rather we

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must estimate the Grange value of the future by its quiet, steady, unflinching efforts, continued year after year, in thousands of local communities—many of them far removed from the busy activities of men—to bring the rural people together, to teach them the fundamentals of coöperation, of efficiency, of teamwork, of practical educational progress, and of the value of a forward-looking rural program, into whose accomplishments all the people of a locality may conscientiously enter.... This view of Grange service to rural America is apparent in the extent to which the community-betterment program has been taken up by subordinate granges in nearly every state. Though a secret organization—a fraternity in fact as well as in name—the Grange is more and more making of itself an overflowing institution, seeking to render actual benefits to its immediate home locality. Hundreds of live Granges this year are carrying out some form of community improvement along a great variety of directions."<sup>[70]</sup>

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He then goes on to give a brief glimpse of the variety of these community enterprises. In Massachusetts the State Grange has for several years had a committee which awards annual prizes for the best community improvement work done by the local granges, and this has stimulated a lively interest in community activities.

Although the Grange is primarily a farmers' organization, yet where the local grange meets in the village, and particularly in the older states, a considerable number of the members are village people, so that the Grange represents the life of the whole community. On the other hand, in many neighborhoods which are at some distance from a village center, the Grange hall may be located in the open country, its membership is composed wholly of farmers, and it is solely a class organization. No studies are available to show the proportion of Granges which meet in villages or in the open country and the effect which this has upon the relation of the Grange to the community, but it may be safely asserted that, as is the case with the church and the school, the Grange tends to meet in village centers as a matter of convenience to the largest number of its members, and that, as indicated by Mr. Lowell, it is coming to recognize its responsibility for the general improvement of the community as a whole.

*Other Farmers' Organizations.*—Throughout the South and in Kansas and Nebraska the Farmers' Educational and Coöperative Union is the leading farmers' organization, but it is chiefly devoted to coöperative business enterprises and does but little for the education or social life of its members, who are usually all men. The same may be said of the Society of Equity, which is strongest in Wisconsin, Kentucky, and South Dakota. In Michigan, although the Grange is strong, the Gleaners have a considerable membership.

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In many states, particularly where the grange is not well established, farmers' clubs have been organized. In some cases local conditions make clubs feasible where it would be difficult to enlist a large enough part of the community to make a grange equally successful. In some cases such clubs are open to farmers only; in others they include the whole family; while in recent years many farm women's clubs have been organized. Whether such clubs should be for the whole family, or for men or women only, is largely a local question depending upon the social usages and homogeneity of the population. In Wisconsin and Minnesota family clubs have been most successful. It is doubtful whether this would be equally true in the South. In the South such local clubs have been the local units of the extension work in agriculture and home economics. Where for any reason it is not possible to include the whole community in a club, several clubs may be organized, each including a congenial membership, as is now the case with women's clubs in cities, and these may then be federated for community purposes.

*Lodges.*—In most rural villages will be found one or more lodges of fraternal orders, such as the Masons, Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias, Maccabees, etc., with the corresponding orders of women's auxiliaries. The place and influence of lodges in the life of the rural community have been strangely neglected by students of country life, and we have no means of evaluating their place in the rural community. Not infrequently the regular meetings and special parties and banquets held by these orders form a large part of the social life of the village. In other cases the meetings are but poorly attended and the lodge is maintained chiefly for its insurance benefits. In some of the larger villages and towns the larger and more prosperous lodges have game rooms and reading rooms attached to their halls, so that they serve as club rooms for their membership. Usually the membership is more largely composed of village people, but a considerable number of farmers maintain their membership, even though they do not attend regularly, and in exceptional cases the membership is largely composed of farm people. It is obvious that the lodge as a secret order is devoted to the interests of its own membership and usually it has no definite program of work for the benefit of the whole community. Yet it must be recognized that the assistance rendered by the lodge to its members in sickness and to their families when in distress of any kind, is a considerable asset to the welfare of the community and is a powerful influence in promoting that spirit of brotherhood upon which all community life depends. Usually the lodges actively support and participate in any community activities in which they may appropriately take part, such as Memorial Day or Fourth of July celebrations, community Christmas trees and other festival occasions. The churches, or at least the ministers, sometimes feel that the social life of the lodges absorbs so much of the time and interest of their members as to prevent their activity in church work, which attitude has often obtained between the church and Grange, but it is a question whether this is not often due to the failure of the church to provide such activities as will command the loyalty of the people, and, on the other hand, not infrequently the leaders in lodge work are also most active in the churches. To the extent that the lodges seem self-centered and make no direct contribution to community improvement, this is doubtless due to the lack of any means whereby their support may be enlisted in a program of community betterment. The

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place of the lodge in the community is much like that of a fraternity in a college or university; its primary obligation is to its own membership, but when enlisted in any activity for the common welfare it furnishes one of the best means for developing the community spirit of its members, and its participation is a means of strengthening its own organization.

*The Village Band.*—A good village band is one of the most effective agencies for promoting community spirit and sociability. The village merchants have also found that it is an economic asset, and in many country towns they contribute liberally for its support. A band concert every Saturday night, or twice a week, never fails to bring a crowd of people to town and it is a common sight to see the streets lined with automobiles of farm people who have come in to enjoy the concert and incidentally to do a little shopping and chat with each other and their village friends. Although it may be called by the name of the village, it is usually a community band, for farm boys who can play an instrument are always welcome and frequently form a considerable part of the membership. The community comes to have a real pride in even a moderately good band, and on holiday celebrations and other festival occasions it is an invaluable asset to community spirit. A crowd will always follow a band, for it exercises a sort of group leadership for which there seems to be no substitute.

In one small town in central New York the high school operates a moving picture show every Saturday evening, which is preceded by a band concert and part of the profits of the show goes to the support of the band. Thus the community finances and controls its own entertainment. Another small village in western New York had a fairly good band which had been playing in neighboring villages as the only means of securing an income, and was thus drawing trade of farmers from its own village to those where it played. The first enterprise of the community council which was formed there was to build a band stand and to see that the band was financed so that it played every Saturday night in the home town. In another case a community council was formed for the primary purpose of bringing the support of the whole community to a fine band which had struggled along for several years with little local appreciation.

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Community orchestras are of equal value for indoor entertainments and give opportunity for the talent of the young women as well as the men. The community chorus or choral club has often taken the place of the old-fashioned singing school. If a good director can be secured he will always discover more vocal ability than has been suspected, and the people of many a rural community have been surprised at the musical works they have been able to produce under competent leadership.

The amount of music in a community and the public interest in its musical entertainments are among the most significant indices of its general culture and progressiveness. Where there is music there is life.

*The Fire Company.*—One of the "most ancient and honorable" of the organizations of the village is the volunteer fire company. The fire company makes an appeal to the spirit of adventure and heroism common to all red-blooded young men and furnishes something of Professor William James' "moral equivalent of war." Its drills, exhibits and competitions develop the finest type of team work among its members, while its parties, festivals and entertainments for raising money are always occasions of note in the social calendar of the community. In the older parts of the country the firemen very frequently have a building with clubrooms on the second floor, which form a rendezvous for its members. Not infrequently many of the nearby farm boys belong to the fire company and pay their dues for its support so that they may enjoy its social advantages, although they may rarely have opportunity to do much actual fire-fighting. In several cases community houses have been built with one corner of the first floor constructed to house the fire equipment. In one village I found that the fire company had taken over an old hall, where it had clubrooms and was holding moving picture entertainments every Saturday evening to finance the building.

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*The Women's Christian Temperance Union* is by all odds the strongest non-sectarian organization of women in the rural communities of the United States. In the past it has been chiefly a reform organization and its persistent agitation was a large factor in the enactment of the Eighteenth Amendment to the federal constitution making prohibition national. Although prohibition is, as yet, by no means achieved, and there is still need of upholding and encouraging those charged with its enforcement, yet the primary purpose of the organization seems to be largely realized. In the past it has been chiefly a militant organization, although it has taken an active interest in problems of child welfare, education, recreation, social hygiene, and similar topics affecting home life. Its public speaking contests, picnics, suppers, and sociables have done much for the social life of many a rural community. If the fighting spirit of the past can be enlisted in a well-rounded program for social welfare in every community where there is a Union, this organization will continue to be a powerful factor in uniting the women in many a rural community.

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*The Cemetery Association.*—Finally, the influence of the Cemetery Association as a community organization, should not be overlooked. The "Friendship Village Married Ladies' Cemetery Improvement Sodality," which Miss Gale has made famous in her delightful stories of village life, [71] well illustrates the influences which have been started by many a cemetery association. Not infrequently the one thing which evinces some civic pride in an otherwise stagnant community is its well-kept cemetery. The condition of the cemetery is a good index of community spirit. When people neglect the resting place of their dead they are not apt to do much for the living. But once arouse a feeling of shame for such neglect and the effort to clean up and beautify the cemetery has often brought all elements of the community into a common loyalty as nothing else could do, and the satisfaction from such an achievement may sufficiently stir community pride as to

encourage other enterprises.

The cemetery itself has a not inconsiderable influence in bringing about the integration of the rural community. In early days every farm had its own burying lot. Nothing is more pathetic than the abandoned burying lots—often two or three of them—on many a New England farm. In many cases rural neighborhoods have had a local cemetery by the country church or district school. These, too, are increasingly neglected. On the other hand the village cemetery is more largely used merely because more assurance is felt in its permanent maintenance. It needs no argument from history or from the customs of other lands, to show that the people who bury their dead in the same place are bound together by the most sacred ties, and that the cemetery which serves the whole community is one of its primary bonds.

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#### FOOTNOTES:

- [68] "The Community," p. 119. New York, Association Press. 1921.
- [69] See T. C. Atkeson, "Semi-centennial History of the Grange." New York. Orange Judd Co.
- [70] In "The Country Gentleman." Oct. 8, 1921, p. 17.
- [71] Zona Gale, "Friendship Village"; "Friendship Village Love Stories"; "Peace in Friendship Village." New York. Macmillan Co.

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## CHAPTER XV

### THE COMMUNITY'S DEPENDENT

The neighborliness and hospitality of farmers is proverbial in every land and clime. Throughout much of the old world where farmers still live in village communities the poverty or distress of any family is at once apparent and the more fortunate members of the village in one way or another give such assistance as is possible. The more primitive the people the more binding is this obligation for mutual aid, and one cannot but feel that our so-called advanced civilization has failed to develop as keen a sense of responsibility for the unfortunate. In rural America this is possibly due to the fact that our farms are scattered and the condition of needy families may not be noticed. The average rural community will usually inform an inquirer that it has practically no poverty and no need of a social worker. Yet investigation will almost always show that tucked away in some hollow, back on some hill, or even huddled near the outskirts of the village are a few unfortunate families, of whose needs the community is unaware. These families, for one reason or another are "disadvantaged," they do not commonly associate with others, they may be foreigners, or in some way they are "queer" and are more or less avoided, or possibly they are merely isolated and so are unknown. From the standpoint of the social welfare of the community such families, or individuals, have been called the "unadjusted"; they do not mix freely and are not up to the local standards of life. In short, such families or individuals are abnormal, and are a social liability of the community.

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These "disadvantaged" or "unadjusted" people may be roughly grouped into four classes: the dependent, the defective, the delinquent, and the neglected. In one sense they may all be called the "community's dependent," for they all require some sort of assistance from the community if their relationship to it is to be satisfactorily adjusted.

*Poverty.*—In a narrower sense the "dependent" are the poor; those who are unable to support themselves and who must be aided by the community if they are to exist. If this condition becomes chronic they are paupers; but in most cases their dependency is temporary and has been due to some unusual drain on the family's resources, such as, sickness, fire, crop failure, or inability to secure employment. There is a very natural aversion on the part of the latter class against becoming stigmatized as paupers and of having to secure public relief, of "being on the town"; whereas the habitual dependents have frequently lost all pride in their social status and are quite willing to continue to receive all the help they can secure. In both cases, if assistance is to be of permanent value, the problem is not only that of furnishing immediate relief in the form of food, clothing, or shelter, but of ascertaining the causes of the dependency and giving such assistance and sympathetic encouragement as will enable the family or individual to again become self-supporting and regain a normal status in the community. Obviously this is a delicate task which requires the best knowledge of human nature as well as genuine sympathy which will inspire confidence and faith, and in so far as possible is likely to be more effective if it can be done privately. On the other hand, a large proportion of the chronic dependency also involves mental or physical defectiveness or moral delinquency which cannot be remedied by the mere giving of alms. Much of the poor relief given by rural communities is practically wasted because

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of a failure to ascertain the real cause of poverty or by lack of knowledge or means for its treatment.

*Defectives.*—In most cases the care of "defectives" cannot be undertaken by the rural community itself, because they usually require the care of institutions which can only be supported by the county or state. Furthermore, a family is usually able to take care of one of its members who is so afflicted or will assume the burden of sending him to an institution, so that only in the case of dependent families does the responsibility rest on the community. There is, however, a duty on the part of the community to see that the afflicted are given necessary care, so that they may not have to go through life so handicapped that they are unable to be self-supporting and thus may become wholly dependent.

The physically defective are largely cared for by state and county institutions. We have learned that the deaf and blind may become largely self-supporting if given the advantages of a specific type of education, for which the state maintains special schools. County and state hospitals provide for the care of those afflicted with tuberculosis and a beginning is being made in the provision of state hospitals for crippled children where they may receive necessary surgical and orthopedic treatment. Likewise the more helpless mental defectives, the insane, the imbeciles and idiots, are cared for in state institutions.

One of the most serious menaces to the social health of the rural community is from those mental defectives who are able to care for themselves but who are mentally incapable of rearing a normal family and of conforming to the customary standards of morality. These "feeble-minded," are far too numerous in rural communities and their proper care and education has been neglected because they have been commonly regarded as merely "simple minded" or "foolish"; to be pitied, and the subject of many a jest, but entirely harmless. A large number of the feeble-minded are so nearly normal that they are considered merely shiftless or stupid. Nearly every rural community has one or more families, and not infrequently a small slum neighborhood, who are ne'er-do-wells, more or less delinquent and frequently requiring aid from the town. Thanks to modern psychology, we now know that many of these adults have the intelligence of only a seven or nine-year-old child and that they are incapable of further mental development. Furthermore, carefully conducted studies in the heredity of these families show that feeble-mindedness is congenital; that where both parents are feeble-minded all the offspring will be so afflicted; and that when one of the parents is sub-normal that some of the children will be feeble-minded and that those who appear normal may transmit the defect to their children. Psychological tests have now been developed so that adults with a mentality of nine or ten years or less may be definitely diagnosed as mentally deficient.

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It must be obvious that an adult with fully developed sexual desires but with the mind of a child is incapable of conforming his or her behavior to the standards of society and will be incapable of giving proper parental care to children. So a considerable percentage of our petty criminals, vagrants, prostitutes, and dependent are found to be feeble-minded. They are unstable, suggestible, easily victimized.

The farm and the village have a considerable amount of routine work which can be done by these sub-normal people and they therefore have opportunity to maintain themselves and to multiply to better advantage than in the city where the competition of life is keener. Although they are best off in a rural environment, when unrestricted and unsegregated they are a constant menace to the community and often involve it in considerable expense. As soon as farmers become aware of what the feeble-minded are costing the community, how they endanger its moral and physical health, and that when unrestricted they continue to reproduce incapables and thus perpetuate the burden, they will demand that some practicable and reasonable measures be taken for their control. The difficulty is that at present in most states there is no method whereby the feeble-minded can be committed to state institutions or be otherwise segregated unless they are paupers or unless they go voluntarily, nor is there any means of preventing their marriage and reproduction. Dairy farmers have learned that it pays to weed out the "boarder" cows from their herds and that if they breed from a scrub sire they will have scrub stock; but if the boarder cow was also inclined to become vicious and to corrupt the habits of the rest of the herd and the farmer knew this trait to be hereditary, he would invariably send such a cow to the butcher. I believe that as soon as farmers appreciate the biological significance of feeble-mindedness they will insist upon reasonable legislation for its control.

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*Delinquency.*—The third class of abnormal citizens are the delinquents, both adult and juvenile. Almost every rural community has a certain number of adults and children who, although not definitely criminal, are constantly committing various misdemeanors, are vicious, or incorrigible, and there are occasional rural communities and neighborhoods which are as true slums as are found in the cities.<sup>[72]</sup> Drunkenness was formerly the greatest cause of delinquency, and the tavern and saloon were responsible for the prohibition movement whose staunchest supporters were rural people. The bootlegger and the illicit still continue the illegal traffic in liquor, but where prohibition has been in force for some time liquor has ceased to be an important factor in delinquency.

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We have but few definite studies of delinquency in rural communities upon which to base any generalizations. One of the best of these is a study of the juvenile delinquents in 21 average rural communities in New York state, made under the auspices of the U. S. Children's Bureau in 1917. <sup>[73]</sup> In these 21 communities 185 delinquent children were found, 41 of whom were classed as "incorrigible," 68 were involved in sex offenses, and 75 had stolen, or were guilty of fraud. The number of boys guilty of incorrigibility and theft exceeded that of the girls by six to one, but among the older sex offenders 41 were girls and but 9 were boys. This study is of particular value

in showing that almost every rural community, however prosperous and progressive it may be, has its problem of delinquency, and in its analysis of the responsibility of the home, the school, and the church, for wayward children.

*The Neglected.*—The fourth class which require the care of the community are the neglected. Although the aged occasionally require neighborly assistance, even though they have means for their necessities, most of the neglected are infants and children. Orphans and foundlings for whom homes must be found, children who are over-worked or abused, or who are living with dissolute parents, all of these must be given proper guardianship and a chance for healthful growth and education, or they are likely to become delinquent and thus become a permanent liability to society. It is true that in the country the home is at its best (see chapter II), but it is also unfortunately true that some of the most shameful and almost unbelievable cases of neglect and abuse of children are frequently found in out-of-the-way places in rural communities. Where compulsory school attendance laws are strictly enforced such cases may come to the attention of school officials, but in many instances no one seems responsible for discovering neglected children and ensuring their proper care. Most of the cities and larger towns have Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children whose agents investigate rural cases reported to them and bring them to the attention of the courts when necessary, but there is a need for some local agency in every rural community which will see that neglect is prevented or stopped.

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*Agencies for Rural Social Work.*—When we examine the means for dealing with these "misfit" members of the rural community, we find that in most of our states there are few agencies either public or private, and that as a rule they are poorly adapted to render the service needed.

For the care of the poor there is the township or county poor officer, and the county poor farm as a last resort. But the poor officer, however upright and well-intentioned he may be, usually conceives his job as one for doling out sufficient groceries, clothing, and fuel to keep a family alive, and of keeping the cost to the taxpayer as low as possible. He feels little responsibility for furnishing sufficient aid to give the family a fair chance to get on its feet or for advising them or bringing such influences into their lives as will ensure their rehabilitation. He is charged with a most difficult task for which he has had no experience or training, which he must handle with the greatest economy and for which he receives little compensation either in salary or public esteem. Very commonly his election is due to political strength rather than special personal fitness. The case of the poor is commonly regarded as a necessary evil to be handled with as little trouble as possible, rather than as an opportunity to give such help to the unfortunate that further assistance may be unnecessary and that they may become an asset to the community.

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Cases of delinquency involving only misdemeanors or minor offenses are tried before a justice of the peace or local magistrate. Usually these officials are men with no legal training and with little understanding of the causes of delinquency or of how delinquents should be treated in order to give them a fair chance to become normal citizens. The usual attitude is one of determining the offense and meting out just punishment for it. Furthermore, the local justice frequently avoids handling a case which may involve him in difficulties with his neighbors, unless he is forced to do so. Not infrequently juvenile offenders are sent to reformatories where they come into contact with worse characters and are hardened rather than reformed, whereas if they had been placed on probation under proper supervision and under satisfactory home conditions they might have lived decent lives.

In most of our cities juvenile cases are now handled in special juvenile courts, which have shown the futility of the old methods of legal procedure in the treatment of juvenile offenders. In this court the judge is assisted by probation officers who are trained as social workers and who investigate the home conditions and other influences surrounding the child for the information of the judge, who then handles the case in whatever manner seems best in order to get at the facts and to bring the child to a real desire to "make good." The case is heard privately, without the ordinary rules of legal procedure, and the whole attitude of the court is more like that of a father than of the ordinary judge who inflicts punishment according to the gravity of the offense. It must be evident that one person handling numerous cases of this kind will soon gain an experience with them which will enable him to act more intelligently and with greater justice both to the offender and to the interests of society than can be done by a local official who may have but one or two such cases to handle during his whole term of office. In several states legislation has been passed creating juvenile courts in each county, which have jurisdiction over all juvenile cases and which can deal not only with the children but also with their parents or guardians. The general adoption of such a system seems to be the most important step in the intelligent treatment of juvenile delinquents in rural districts.

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Very often the first waywardness of a child is in truancy from school, which, if it cannot be handled by the teacher, is turned over to the local truant officer. In many cases the truant officer is appointed because of his availability for such work rather than his special competency, and the enforcement of the truancy law is handled in a most perfunctory manner, whereas an intelligent investigation of home conditions and an effort to gain the coöperation of the parents and the confidence and interest of the child are the only means of securing any real reform. In several cities truancy is in charge of what are known as "visiting teachers," who not only look after truants but visit the homes of those children who are not doing well in their school work, in order to determine whether home conditions are responsible and how they may be improved. Usually the country school teacher is more in touch with the homes of her pupils, but some of the more progressive rural counties are providing an assistant to the county superintendent of schools, who acts both in the capacity of truant officer and visiting teacher, assisting the local teacher in the more difficult cases which require a considerable amount of time to develop proper relations

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in the home. To be of most service such a person should not only have experience in school work but should have had the training of a social worker, so that she may understand the best means of dealing with the wayward child and with unfavorable home conditions. It seems probable that more may be done toward the prevention of delinquency through such social workers connected with the school system than by any other means.

In many states there seems to be no definite system for the supervision of children for whom the state is responsible. They may be boarded or adopted by families or placed in institutions by any one of several local officials having jurisdiction, but none of them have the means of determining whether the children are being properly cared for, nor does the county or state provide any agency for this purpose. In several states the registration and supervision of such wards of the state is placed in the hands of a state child welfare board or a state department of charities or public welfare, but in other states the supervision of their welfare is wholly dependent upon private philanthropy. Experience has shown that where a trained social worker is employed to look up the relatives of such children and to assist in finding homes for them and in visiting the homes and institutions to which they are committed, a considerable saving in the cost of their maintenance to the county is frequently effected. In order that all of the care of children may be centralized under one county office which can employ competent persons for its work, several states have created county boards of child welfare which are charged with the whole responsibility for the care of dependent and neglected children, which is then taken entirely out of the hands of local officials. In a few states, county boards of public welfare have been created which have supervision not only of children but of all dependents, defectives, and neglected, and in some cases also have charge of the public health administration. The centralization of such authority in a county board which can employ executives who have had special training and experience for such work is not only good business, but it is the only method by which the state can satisfactorily fulfil its obligation to those who are dependent upon it.

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Usually the rural community has few if any private agencies or associations devoted to the assistance of its dependent. The churches and the lodges assist some of their own members. Here and there are isolated groups of King's Daughters or similar societies which devote themselves to the care of the poor and the sick, but they are comparatively rare in the country. The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children often prosecutes rural cases, but it is usually a town or city organization and has practically no rural membership. Over the United States as a whole, the American Red Cross has probably done more to introduce the idea of social work into rural communities than any one agency. During the war the local chapters of the Red Cross were authorized to give assistance to soldiers' families in any way possible. This involved rural as well as town families, and the need of organized social work became apparent in thousands of rural communities. When peace was declared, the local chapters were authorized to extend the Civilian Relief work to civilian families in territory where there was no other organization doing welfare work, which meant practically all of the rural United States, providing the work was carried on by trained workers on a basis approved by the division headquarters. The family welfare work of the Red Cross was happily named "Home Service" and has been organized in many rural counties where its value has been repeatedly demonstrated. The work is directly in charge of a social worker employed by the county chapter but the local branch in each community is encouraged to form a Home Service Committee which looks after the local work as far as it is able, calls in the county worker when needed, and gives her all the assistance possible. Thus the work is localized and each community has a definite group of workers who feel responsible for looking after those needing the community's assistance and who are learning how to do this in an intelligent manner. No other agency organized on a national basis has attempted any systematic organization of social welfare work in local rural communities.

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*Social Education of Rural Opinion.*—The primary need for the care of the dependent of the rural community is for a better understanding of their needs by its more intelligent and public-spirited people. It is a matter of social education. Social work so-called has had a rapid development in our cities to meet the situation caused by their sudden growth with large numbers of foreigners having different standards of living and unable to adjust themselves to strange conditions with congested districts where housing and sanitation is poor and with poverty due to unemployment, sickness, and with the many factors which result from the complexities of city life. The city slum first challenged the humanity of the better people and numerous philanthropic organizations grew up in an effort to give assistance to needy families and children. For the most part this work has been financed by the wealthy, has been carried on by social workers who have had special training for such service, and is commonly known as charity. What social work has been done in rural communities has been introduced by city organizations and has usually been fostered by organizations of as few of the more progressive people at the county seats and the larger towns or small cities which have worked out into the rural communities from these centers. Though the purposes and work of these organizations are excellent, they will never be able to effectively meet the needs of rural communities until their people appreciate the need for such work and actively support it.

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Much of this sort of work is regarded by rural people as "uplift" and without local interest and support has little permanent value. The average rural community has little use for charity in the ordinary sense of the word. If relief is needed within its borders, it will provide, but it fails to appreciate that more than relief is needed to prevent the recurrence of dependency, and that punishment will not correct or prevent delinquency. The fact is that at present country people have not seen the social situation in their own communities and so are not concerned with it. Most of them are of the opinion that the less government the better, and have not come to realize that an increasingly complex society—even in the rural community—makes it no longer possible

for the farm family to live to itself, but that for self-preservation it must look to the social welfare of the whole community with which its life is bound up.

The need, therefore, is for the education of rural people with regard to their social responsibilities, which must be largely accomplished through existing local rural organizations and local leadership. Any system of rural social work which is to be permanently successful must be one which is established by the people themselves from a realization of their needs, and progressively developed as they appreciate its worth. As Dean A. R. Mann recently said, "In dealing with rural affairs it has long been a common mistake to underrate the validity of the farmer's own judgment as to what is good for him." "Superimposed organizations are usually doomed to failure because they express the judgments of those without the community rather than those within whom they are intended to serve." "Ordinarily the most serviceable rural organizations will be built out of the materials of the community."<sup>[74]</sup> It is for this reason that the advance of rural social work will depend upon arousing an active interest in the welfare of the community's "disadvantaged" through discussion by such organizations as the church, the grange, the farm and home bureau, lodges, women's clubs, instruction in high schools, etc. The work of the public health nurse will reveal many family problems with which she is unable to deal and which demand the help of one experienced in social work, and the nurse will be of service in educating the community to the need of such work.

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It seems obvious that by itself the rural community is too small a unit to employ a social worker who is professionally trained for dealing with the more difficult social mal-adjustments, and that it must cooperate with other communities for the organization of such work on a county basis. Experience has shown that trained social workers actually save the county the cost of their salaries and expenses, without considering the greater efficiency and permanent value of the work done. The social worker has been well termed a "doctor of domestic difficulties." Every county and community needs such a doctor who is skilled in treating social disease, but one of her chief functions will be to act as an educational director in promoting the study of local social conditions by the existing organizations in every community and in discovering and training leadership for carrying out a constructive program as it is evolved. In some way there should be a volunteer committee or worker in each community associated with the county social worker to advise concerning policies and to carry on much of the local work under her supervision and training. For it must be recognized that the economic resources of rural communities are limited and that they cannot afford several social workers for different lines of effort, as is common in cities. But more important is the fact that social welfare depends more largely upon a proper understanding of its problems by the local community and a willingness to grapple with them intelligently and sympathetically, than upon the remedial treatment afforded through professional workers, courts, institutions and other public agencies. Social welfare is like health, for which sanitation and hygiene are more important than doctors and medicines.

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What is needed in the rural community is a transformation of the old-time family hospitality and neighborliness into a feeling of responsibility for the unfortunate within the community with whom there may not be immediate contact, but who nevertheless affect the moral and social life of all its people. It needs the spirit and devotion of the Good Samaritan on the part of the people, but it also needs the public health nurse and the social worker who, like the inn-keeper of the parable, can give adequate care to the unfortunate.

#### FOOTNOTES:

- [72] See Charles E. Gibbons, "A Rural Slum Community." *The American Child*. February, 1922. pg. 343.
- [73] "Juvenile Delinquency in Rural New York." Kate Holladay Claghorn. U. S. Dept. of Labor, Children's Bureau. Publication No. 32. Washington. 1918.
- [74] "Social Responsibilities of the Rural Community," p. 129. *Cornell Extension Bulletin* 39. Rural Community Conference Cornell Farmers' Week. 1919.

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## CHAPTER XVI

### THE COMMUNITY'S GOVERNMENT

Local self-government is a well-established tradition in the United States, but as far as the rural community is concerned it is more tradition than fact, for outside of New England the rural community has no legal or political status. In New England the townships were originally created as community units, for they were modelled after the European village community. The meeting house determined the site of the village where the farmers and craftsmen resided, and the

boundaries of the township were coincident with the limits of their lands. The origin of the New England township has been well described by John Fiske in a famous chapter on this subject:<sup>[75]</sup>

"When people from England first came to dwell in the Wilderness of Massachusetts Bay, they settled in groups upon small irregular-shaped patches of land, which soon came to be known as townships. There were several reasons why they settled thus in small groups, instead of scattering about over the country and carving out broad estates for themselves. In the first place, their principal reason for coming to New England was their dissatisfaction with the way in which church affairs were managed in the old country. They wished to bring about a reform in the church, in such wise that members of a congregation should have more voice than formerly in the church-government, and that the minister of each congregation should be more independent than formerly of the bishop and of the civil government.... Such a group of people, arriving on the coast of Massachusetts, would naturally select some convenient locality, where they might build their houses near together and all go to the same church. This migration, therefore, was a movement, not of individuals or of separate families, but of church congregations, and it continued to be so as the settlers made their way inland and westward....

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"In the second place, the soil of New England was not favorable to the cultivation of great quantities of staple articles, such as rice or tobacco, so that there was nothing to tempt people to undertake extensive plantations. Most of the people lived on small farms, each family raising but little more than enough food for its own support; and the small size of the farms made it possible to have a good many in a compact neighborhood. It appeared also that towns could be more easily defended against the Indians than scattered plantations;...

"Thus the early settlers of New England came to live in townships. A township would consist of about as many farms as could be disposed within convenient distance from the meeting-house, where all the inhabitants, young and old, gathered every Sunday, coming on horseback or afoot.... Around the meeting-house and common the dwellings gradually clustered into a village, and after a while the tavern, store and town-house made their appearance."

When the Mormons settled Utah they established a very similar form of community government centering around the church. Elsewhere, with rare exceptions, throughout the North and West the township is the primary unit of local government, save for school administration, but it is by no means identical with a community. When the lands west of the Alleghanies were surveyed for settlement they were laid off in blocks six miles square, which were known as congressional townships, for Congress gave each township a square mile of land the proceeds of which should form a permanent school fund. In discussing the development of the township in Illinois, Dr. Albert Shaw writes:

"To give effect to this liberal provision, the state enacted a law making the township a body corporate and politic for school purposes and authorizing the inhabitants to elect school officers and maintain free schools. Here, then, was a rudiment of local government. As New England township life grew up around the church, so western localism finds its nucleus in the school system. What more natural than that the county election district should be made to coincide with the school township, with a school-house for the voting place? or that justices of the peace, constables and road supervisors and overseers of the poor, should have their jurisdiction determined by the same township lines?"<sup>[76]</sup>

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Thus in many of the North-central States the township came to be the local unit of government for certain minor purposes, though in other states it is little more than an election district, and in none of them is there preserved the old town meeting which gave the New England township its fundamental democracy.

Owing to the large plantations and the economic and social conditions prevailing throughout the South, it has had practically no units of government smaller than the county, other than incorporated villages.

Until very recently our conception of society has been mostly in terms of political units, largely on account of the lack of any local unit which had social significance to rural people. In recent years, however, students of rural government have become aware of the artificiality and the anti-social character of the township unit. There may be two rival villages within a township, each competing for trade and the support of its associations, and striving for the political domination of the township, while some of the farmers in a far corner of the township may trade in a village in the next township. Or a village may be on a township line, which must be observed in all matters of government although there is no real division of interests between its people.

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Outside of New England villages were located at points of geographical advantage, or along through roads or railroads, primarily as business centers. There was no particular relation between the village and the farming area surrounding it. But as the village grew it often desired modern improvements such as water systems, pavements, street lights, etc., for which the farmers were unwilling to be taxed and which were thus prevented as long as the village was controlled by the township. This has led to most of the larger villages becoming incorporated, so that they may administer their own local government and tax themselves for such improvements as they desire. This separation of the village from the township has been inevitable where the farmers take no pride or interest in it, and has often been necessitated by their parsimony or

conservatism. This is well illustrated by an incident related by Professor Herbert B. Adams:

"In my native town, Amherst, Mass., the villagers struggled for years in town-meeting to secure some system of sewerage for 'the center,' but the 'ends of the town' always voted 'no'. On one occasion, in order to allay suspicion of extravagance, a leading villager moved that, whatever system of sewerage be adopted, the surface water and rainfall be allowed to take their natural course down-hill in the ordinary gutters. The farmers sniffed danger in this wily proposition and voted an overwhelming 'No.' Accordingly by the local law of Amherst, water had to run uphill until the next town-meeting! Such is the power of Democracy."<sup>[77]</sup>

This separate incorporation of the village has been a large factor in making a distinction between villagers and farmers and preventing their recognition of their community interests. Not infrequently, however, it will be found that some of the more progressive villages are not incorporated and that they have the loyalty of the farmers. Numerous examples of unincorporated villages might be cited to show that where a spirit of pride in local village institutions has been developed among the farmers of the territory tributary to it, that village improvements not only are not impeded, but the community is much strengthened. This is more likely to be true, however, where the township boundary and the natural community area are practically the same.

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On the other hand, the progress of a rural community, i.e., a village and the territory tributary to it, often is prevented if it cannot command a majority of the votes in a township. In a nearby village is a town hall which might be used as a community house and be a social center for the whole community. But the borders of the township belong to other communities and do not come to the township center, and these people on the edge of the township very naturally take the position that if the village and neighboring people wish to use the town hall, let them rent it of the town, but why should the whole township be taxed for advantages which only half of it can enjoy. The same line of argument arises with regard to the location of schools, roads, libraries, and the districts for public health nurses. Unless the whole township can be equally well served, a community which forms but part of the township is unable to secure these advantages unless it can command a majority of the votes, or except as the village incorporates, and then it loses the support of the taxes from the farms of the community which share the benefits.

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As long as farm life was on the neighborhood basis, its interests largely centering in the district school and the country church, its roads maintained by the labor of its citizens under a local road supervisor, and trips to the village were made only once or twice a week for mail and supplies, farmers did not feel the need for a unit of local government other than the township. But when the church, the grange and the lodge are in the village, when they desire consolidated schools, libraries, and community houses, which are most convenient to all at the village center, and when they desire the improvement of local roads so that they will best connect with state and county roads, then the interests of the farmers and the villagers unite them in these common enterprises, and the community comes into conflict with the rest of the township if the township is composed of more than one community.

On the other hand, it must be recognized that for many purposes the community, or even the township, is too small a unit to secure the greatest efficiency in administration of public agencies, and so there has been a distinct tendency toward the centralization of many functions of local government in county officials. Thus the county superintendent of schools is assuming more and more control over the local school system, the county supervision of roads is increasing, and we have shown (p. 145) the desirability of a county health administration, the need for county juvenile courts (p. 188), county boards for the administration of welfare work (p. 191), and a county library system. The county tends to become a rural municipality very similar in function and organization to the city, and the logical outcome seems to be the employment of a county manager under a commission or county council, which has already become possible in Maryland and California.<sup>[78]</sup> That this centralization makes possible a greater efficiency in administration can hardly be doubted, but that it tends to destroy the initiative and responsibility of the local community is equally apparent. With an over-centralization of administration, whether in the county or the state, the local community loses the very ties which have bound it together. The adjustment of the desires for efficiency and for local democracy is one of the unsolved problems of government. Experience shows clearly that the local community or township is too small a unit to secure efficient administration; but it is also evident that without some degree of local responsibility and control, centralized administration tends to become bureaucratic and the people are deprived of that participation in government which is essential for the life of a democracy.

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Thus the need for the local self-government of rural communities has become apparent to rural leaders. It is interesting to note that this is becoming appreciated in the South, where on account of social and economic conditions local government has been almost entirely lacking in the past, but where new conditions give rise to new desires which cannot be realized except through some means whereby a locality can be free to work out its own salvation. This point of view has been vigorously expressed by Dr. Clarence Poe, editor of the *Progressive Farmer* and a recognized leader of rural life in the South:

"The chief task of the man who would help develop a rich and puissant rural civilization here in the South—the chief task perhaps of the man who would make an agricultural State like North Carolina the great commonwealth it ought to be—is to develop the rural community."...

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"Consider the fact that the country community is the only social unit known to our civilization that is without definite boundaries and without machinery for self-expression and development—without form, and void, as was chaos before creation."...

"But for the country community there is no organic means of expression whatever. There is, of course, that shadowy and futile geographical division known as the Township—but it is laid off utterly without regard to human consideration, and serves no purpose save as a means of defining voting boundaries and limiting the spheres of constables and sheriff's deputies—a mere ghostly phantom of a social entity that we need not consider at all."<sup>[79]</sup>

And he then goes on to show the advantages of the New England township.

*Community School Districts.*—The most significant beginning toward the creation of self-government for the rural community is in the laws which have been passed by several states permitting redistricting for the establishment of community high schools or consolidated schools, irrespective of township or county boundaries and according to the desire of the prospective patrons of the schools. Thus in 1919 Nebraska passed a state rural school redistricting law under which every county has a redistricting committee which determines what seem to be the natural boundaries of the district, which are then subject to petitions from the people for their alteration, and the whole plan is then submitted to a vote of the county. "The law does not explicitly state that the proposed districts must correspond to a natural community in the social sense; it only says that they must be very much larger than the old ones, approximately twenty-five square miles. The inevitable result, however, of opening the question and of freeing community choice from old political boundaries is to settle on new areas approaching social units with self-conscious community ties."<sup>[80]</sup> Kansas and Illinois have somewhat similar legislation and a community unit is proposed by the Committee of 21 which has recently conducted a survey of the rural school situation in the State of New York.

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*Community House Districts.*—Wisconsin has passed an act whereby the people of any local area may vote to erect and maintain a community house and may establish the boundaries of the area in which the citizens shall have the right to tax themselves for this purpose, and to elect trustees of the house, in much the same manner as community school districts are established. It seems probable that when a natural social area has thus been determined it will probably be the same for both school and community house, and that it might be the best unit for the support of such community agencies as a public library, or a public-health nurse, and thus a real community government might gradually arise and might ultimately displace the arbitrary township government, although the township might be retained for its original purpose of land registration.

*Rural Community Incorporation.*—The most advanced step in giving the rural community self-government is An Act to Provide for the Incorporation of Rural Communities, passed by the legislature of North Carolina in 1919.<sup>[81]</sup> This act gives authority for the incorporation of rural communities including definite school districts, which may or may not include hamlets or village centers, but which must be at least two miles from any town or city of five thousand or more inhabitants. It gives such incorporated rural communities the general powers and privileges of an incorporated village, except that they cannot lose their identity as a part of the school and road systems of the county. Taxes may be levied for various public purposes, but they must be voted at an annual meeting at which a majority of the registered voters must be present, or be submitted to an election, and the amount of taxes and bonds are limited. Although about a dozen communities have incorporated under this act, but few of them seem to be actively functioning, due to various local causes. The act itself, however, is well conceived and is worthy of study by those interested in better rural government.

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Another method of accomplishing the same end is by a special act of incorporation for a particular community, as was passed by the Legislature of New Jersey for Plainsboro Township in 1919.

Concerning the organization of this community, Hon. Alva Agee, State Secretary of Agriculture, writes:

"Every voter within its boundaries signed a petition to the legislature for the creation of a new township embracing the territory belonging to the community, and this was granted. The community then met, made a declaration of its purposes and adopted a constitution providing for control of all township and community affairs. It is a return to direct government by the people, and places responsibility upon every individual. It is the old New England town-meeting made effective. Patient study of every detail was given by members of the community."<sup>[82]</sup>

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The declaration of purposes and constitution<sup>[83]</sup> are so unique that they should be studied by all interested in community government.

#### "A DECLARATION OF PURPOSES

"We, the residents of Plainsboro Township, New Jersey, declare our purpose to accept all the duties of American citizenship.

We are forming an association to secure all the benefits of community life, and affirm the right of our community to each one's best effort.

We support all individual rights just as far as their use does not harm our fellows.

We agree that the public good is superior to any private gain obtained at the expense of community welfare.

We recognize and acknowledge the gracious influences of practical Christianity in community life.

We ask that our homes be guarded by right social conditions throughout our community.

We declare the duty of the community to provide good schools, means for community recreation, safe sanitary conditions, improved highways, and encouragement to thrift and home-ownership.

We purpose to make the neatness and attractiveness of our homes and farms assets of distinct value to the township.

We agree to do our share in the creation of public sentiment in support of all measures in the public interest.

We agree to put aside all partisan and sectarian relations when dealing with community matters.

We state our conviction that the best rewards from this organized effort lie before each one in a deepened interest in others and in an increased ability to cooperate the one with the other for the good of all.

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We, the citizens of Plainsboro Township, incorporated by act of the Legislature of the State of New Jersey, approved April 1, 1919, and accepted by us on May 6, 1919, subscribe to this declaration."

If such a Declaration of Purposes were adopted by every rural community, and were taught the children as a civic oath of allegiance, would it not have more immediate effect on practical patriotism than even the Declaration of Independence, and what new meaning would be given to local government? Here is an example of rural civic spirit which, if it could become general throughout the rural communities of the United States, would remold the political and social organization of the whole country; for it provides both the mechanism and the spirit which are essential for making democracy a reality rather than an ideal.

*Community Government and Democracy.*—The local community is indispensable as the primary political unit for the maintenance of true democracy, both because it is small enough that there can be personal relations between its members, in which a real consensus of opinion can be formed, and also because only in it can the masses of mankind have any personal experience or participation in government. Unless the individual has a social consciousness of the community in which he lives, he can have but a feeble and hazy realization of larger social groups. Unless the community through its individuals is self-conscious, it cannot take its rightful place in the larger community of which it forms a part. If democracy does not obtain in the local community, the voice of such a community in the affairs of the county or state will be that of its self-chosen leaders. It is difficult to conceive how any real democracy can be secured in State or Nation where it does not obtain in their constituent communities. It is entirely possible to have a government democratic in form and theory, but actually a political or economic feudalism, supported by local chieftains who represent not the people, but themselves or some business or other special interests. The very life of true democracy is in the participation of individuals in the government of the local group and in the organization of the locality groups, so that there may be a fair discussion and expression by those who are bound together by common interests through some form of self-government for the rural community.

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#### FOOTNOTES:

- [75] "Civil Government in the United States," pp. 17, 18. Boston, 1890.
- [76] "Local Government in Illinois," p. 10. Johns Hopkins Univ. Studies in History and Political Science. Vol. I, No. 3, 1883.
- [77] Editor's note, p. 51. "Penn. Boroughs," by Wm. F. Holcomb. Johns Hopkins Univ. Stud. in History and Pol. Sc. Vol. IV, No. 4, 1886.
- [78] See E. H. Ryder, "Proposed Modifications and Recent Tendencies in Rural Government and Legislation," p. 112, Proc. 3d Natl. Country Life Conference.
- [79] "Why Not Local Self-Government for Rural Communities," pp. 4-48. North Carolina Club Year Book, 1917-1918. "County Government and County Affairs in North Carolina." The University of North Carolina Record. No. 159. Oct., 1918. Chapel Hill, N. C.
- [80] H. Paul Douglas. "Recent Legislation Facilitating Rural Community Organization," p. 124, Proc. 3d Natl. Country Life Conference.
- [81] Public Laws of 1919, Reprinted as Appendix A, p. 116, of A. W. Hayes, "Rural Community Organization." Chicago, 1921.
- [82] "A Community Organization." National Stockman and Farmer. July 26, 1919.
- [83] For the constitution see Appendix A, page 247.

## CHAPTER XVII

### COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION [84]

From one standpoint the whole progress of civilization is but a process of social organization, the establishment of those relationships which best promote the largest measure of human welfare. In the previous chapters we have noted the various aspects and problems of rural life which have necessitated the community as a unit for social organization. As a result of the growing conviction that the conditions of rural life can be made satisfying only through the collective efforts of definite communities, there has arisen a widespread movement for the better organization of community interests and activities, which has come to be known as community organization. Although this movement is being encouraged by many agencies, its greatest significance and importance arises from the fact that, for the most part, community organization of many diverse types is springing up in rural communities throughout the country as a means of meeting their local needs. This spontaneity of the movement is the best evidence that changing conditions have brought about a real need for some better machinery for community development.

In order to understand community organization so that we may intelligently encourage its development, it will be well to consider (1) the underlying causes, (2) the process of organization, and (3) the forms of organization.

1. *Causes.*—Usually the immediate cause of attempting community organization is the common desire to meet a need which cannot well be realized except through the united effort of the whole community. Improved roads are needed, a library or playground is desired, a Liberty Loan must be raised, a Fourth of July celebration or a pageant is to be undertaken, a band or baseball team needs financial support and patronage to prevent its disbanding, hard times or a fire make unusual aid necessary to certain families, an influenza epidemic compels a united effort for the care of the sick. In all such cases a citizens' committee is usually organized which represents various organizations and interests so that the support of all the elements in the community may be enlisted. When any common need is of such a magnitude or of such a nature that it is not within the field of any one organization or agency, then some form of at least temporary community organization is necessary. When some of these needs, such as a community house or a public health nurse, require permanent maintenance, and the coöperation of various organizations is essential for the success of the enterprise, then some permanent form of community organization becomes desirable. If a community organization is to be permanent and is to really function, there must be work for it to do which cannot or will not be done by existing agencies.

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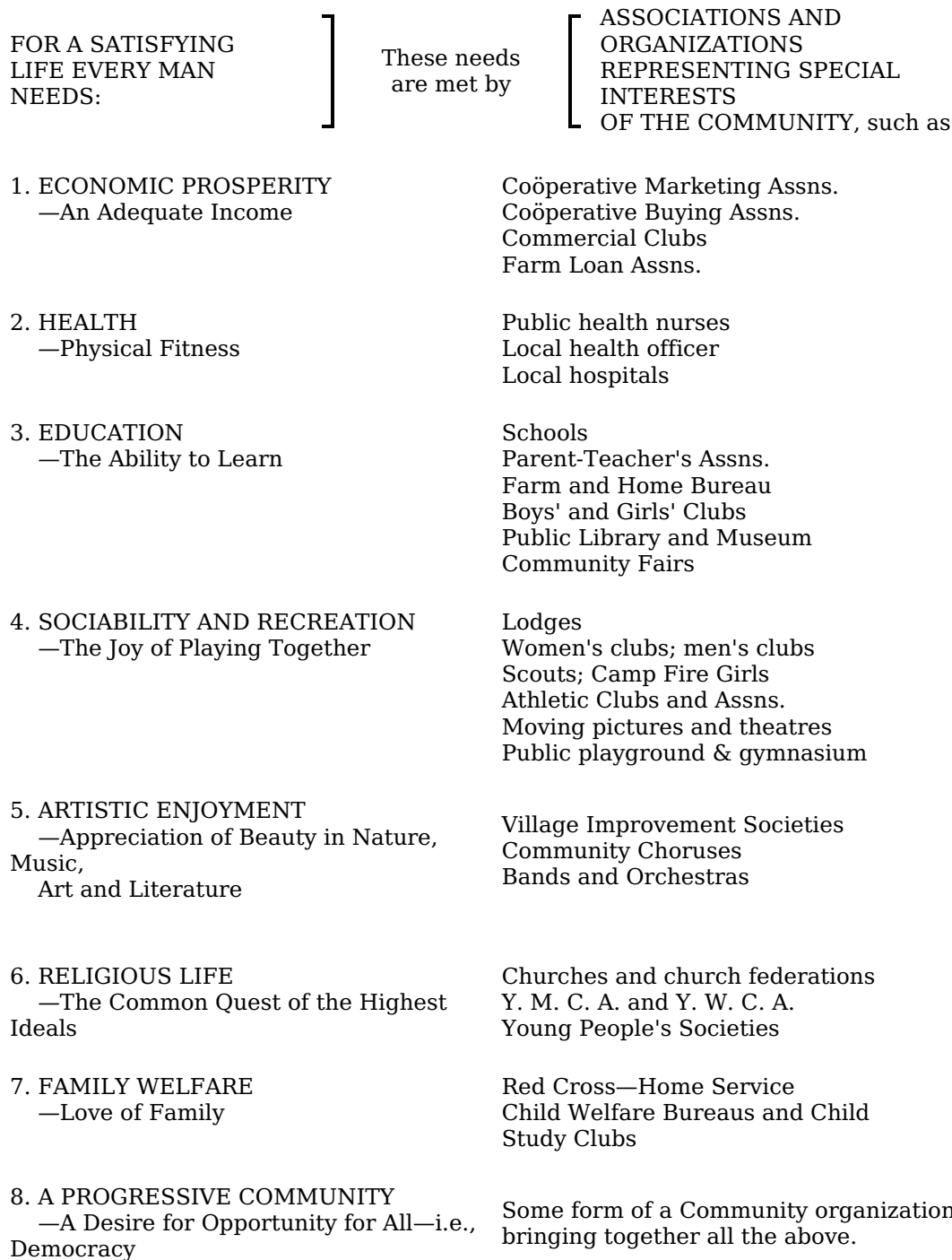
A second cause for community organization arises from the increasing complexity of human relationships, even in a rural community. We have observed that in recent years there has been a rapid increase in the number of associations each of which is devoted to some one special interest. The life of simpler or more primitive communities is a unit with regard to all phases of their life, religion, government, and social affairs. Such was the township of colonial New England and many a community in the pioneer stage. But in modern times a multiplicity of voluntary associations have sprung up and have spread from one community to another. In many cases the members of such organizations become more loyal to them than to the community; organizations become self-centered and divisive rather than being devoted to the community good. Religion, government, economic life, and education have become more or less separate spheres of life, each having a code of its own, whereas human problems involve all of these aspects of life and cannot be successfully solved while there is conflict of standards between religion, business, government, and social life. Not infrequently more than one organization undertakes the same or similar work, or the demands of one clash with those of another, and social confusion arises. When this occurs in a large city between organizations which are supported by the wealthy or by different groups, each may go as far as its resources will permit; but in the rural community where organizations must be of the people and supported by all of them, such a situation cannot be tolerated for both funds and leadership are limited.

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Organizations arise to meet recognized human needs, but no one organization can meet all the needs of the whole community. Nor do all organizations appeal to all people. Men associate according to their special individual interests, some are more interested in religion and business, others in social life or athletics, or what not. As the organizations representing these interests become more and more specialized, each individual belongs to several organizations, whose interests sometimes conflict and members of a community are arrayed against each other. Thus an individual is sometimes involved in a divided loyalty between two groups, and finds himself with a conflict of purposes which lessens that personal unity which is essential for character and personal peace. The character of the individual is developed to the extent that he is able to resolve this conflict of his interests in one dominant purpose. So the welfare of the community

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can be secured only by a unity of purpose among its organizations in their loyalty to the common good. This tendency to form associations for special interests is shown in the following diagram:



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On the other hand we must recognize man's gregarious tendency, his desire for the support of public opinion, his craving of a feeling of "togetherness." The elation which comes to a people engaged in war or in meeting any common disaster comes chiefly from the satisfaction they experience in being united in a common cause and enjoying the sanction of their fellows without division among them. The individualistic philosophy of the more sophisticated may enable them to find satisfaction in more or less socially segregated groups under ordinary conditions, but when they face calamity, when the most fundamental and deepest issues of life are involved, then they enjoy association with those who surround them—they become "neighbors."

This desire of men to associate in groups which represent their special interests, and their equal desire to be *en rapport* with all their fellows with whom their life is associated in community life, is one of the paradoxes into which many of our basic human problems resolve, and furnishes one of the primary reasons for some form of community organization which will unify the increasing complexity of associations.

A third underlying motive for community organization, which is just coming to receive recognition, is the need of defending the interests of the local community against the domination of national or state organizations, of maintaining a necessary degree of local autonomy. All organizations which become associated in state or national federations inevitably develop a central administration which tends to become more or less of a hierarchy or bureaucracy. The national organization seeks to achieve its special objects and to emphasize their supreme importance. It tries to secure efficiency of the local groups through standardization, and very naturally encourages their loyalty to the state or national aims and purposes. This tendency is more or less inevitable and is an inherent weakness of all large organizations which do not constantly place their emphasis on strengthening their local units and encouraging devotion to

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community service. But in many cases the larger organization has lost a true perspective of its relationship to its local units and of their primary duty to their local communities. The most flagrant instance of this principle is in the domination of local government by national political parties, whose policies have nothing whatever to do with local administration, but who maintain their "machines" so that an efficient organization is available for mobilizing the vote in state and national elections. The resulting reaction has given rise to citizen's tickets, commission government and city managers, and in the more progressive smaller communities a growing tendency to vote for the best man irrespective of party. Wherever a community votes independently of national party lines on local affairs, there will be found healthy local government. For the same general reasons we have observed the growth of the community church movement (p. 127) as a protest against sectarian rivalries, the new emphasis of the master of the national grange (p. 172) on the community responsibilities of the grange as more important than its legislative activities, and the effort to prevent an over-centralization of school administration through the creation of community school districts under local control. A striking example of the reaction of local communities in self-defense against the demands for support from many organizations was the rapid spread of the "War Chest" movement among our cities during the war as a means of raising funds for various national organizations carrying on war work. Subsequently the same idea has given rise to the organization of "Community Chests" or "Community Funds" for financing various community and national welfare agencies, so as to ensure adequate support for those which are necessary, but to discourage a multiplicity of competing organizations, and to furnish a mechanism whereby the community may exercise some definite policy with regard to its social work.

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Such are some of the fundamental causes which have given rise to various experiments in community organization. They commenced about a decade ago, but increased slowly prior to the war. The war brought about a new realization of the community, as it was necessary to organize war activities, "war drives," etc., on a community basis. Under the National Council of Defense were organized State and County Councils of Defense and finally President Wilson issued a letter encouraging the organization of local Community Councils,<sup>[85]</sup> to bring together all organizations and interests of the community not only for war purposes but with a view to their future usefulness in times of peace. In this letter, President Wilson said:

"Your State, in extending the national defense organization by the creation of community councils, is in my opinion making an advance of vital significance. It will, I believe, result when thoroughly carried out in welding the Nation together as no nation of great size has been welded before. It will build up from the bottom an understanding and sympathy and unity of purpose and effort which will no doubt have an immediate and decisive effect upon our great undertaking. You will find it, I think, not so much a new task as a unification of existing efforts, a fusion of energies now too much scattered and at times somewhat confused into one harmonious and effective power. It is only by extending your organization to small communities that every citizen of the State can be reached and touched with the inspiration of the common cause."

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The organization of community councils was actively pushed by the National and State Councils of Defense, and thousands of them were organized. This was in the summer of 1918, but owing to the early declaration of the Armistice they had but little opportunity to become thoroughly established. As they had been created primarily for war purposes, most of them ceased to function with the cessation of hostilities, but the idea had taken root and the experience of common effort in war activities had brought about a new sense of the value of some sort of community organization.

2. *The Process of Community Organization.*—As corollaries of the motives for community organization which we have just discussed, there are certain fairly obvious principles concerning the process of organization which deserve emphasis.

The first essential is to determine whether there are unsatisfied desires which cannot be met except by community action and whether they are sufficiently desired to command the united support of the community. Only as individuals and associations have common desires which cannot be satisfied without their united activity can community organization be effected. The mere logical desirability of coördination of effort, however rational it may appear, is too abstract an objective to inspire enduring devotion. The allaying of antagonisms between special interests makes no appeal to any of them until they are unable to achieve their ends without joint action. Therefore, the primary consideration in community organization is to determine what is the most important unmet need of the community which requires united action for its satisfaction, and to enlist all possible elements in the common enterprise.

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A community must be thoroughly convinced of the need of some definite form of community organization before it can succeed. Sudden enthusiasm due to the power of a persuasive speaker or a community meeting may result in the formation of a community organization, but unless a considerable proportion of the people representing various interests are firmly convinced of the need and are willing to pool their interests in community activities, such an organization will be like many a convert of a revival meeting, it will soon "backslide." To secure the recognition of the need for concerted action by all elements of the community will usually require time and education, and is a process which cannot be forced too rapidly—all education or learning involves time.

Even when an outstanding need is apparent it may not always be possible to gain the support of a sufficient portion of the community to justify an immediate effort for its achievement. It may be necessary to first arouse good feeling and community spirit by some activity which, though

relatively less important, will command more general interest and participation, and may pave the way for other enterprises. The first and essential step in community organization is to get the community to act together, for only through collective activity is community spirit and loyalty developed. It is for this reason that Old Home Weeks, family reunions, athletic or play festivals, baseball teams, picnics, pageants, dramatics, community fairs, community Chautauquas, holiday celebrations, and kindred events are often the best means for creating better community spirit. [86] It should be remembered that the objective of community organization is not *an* organization, but the active coöperation of all the people and organizations of the community for the common welfare. The essential is common ideals and loyalties; the mechanism whereby these may be achieved is incidental.

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Until genuine local leadership is available, community organization will be impossible. It is true that often where the need for community activity is sufficiently great that the very necessity develops new leadership. Herein lies the value of beginning the process of community organization by some enterprise which enlists the enthusiastic support of the whole community, for in such activities new leadership is often developed.

Any form of community organization which is to be permanent and effective must represent the actual life of the community, which is largely dominated by existing organizations. Most individuals are loyal to certain of these organizations and these loyalties are the social realities which must be recognized in any attempt to unite them in larger aims. Unless most of the leading organizations of a community can be affiliated for community progress, any so-called community organization will be but another organization. The League of Nations hardly represents the world community as long as the United States, Germany and Russia are not affiliated with it, nor would our federal government be representative of our national life if it were responsible only to the direct vote of the people and did not give recognition to the states as states. It is for this reason that community organization will proceed most efficiently where it is initiated by the joint effort of several of its leading associations, the churches, the grange, the farm and home bureau, the Red Cross, the business men's association, etc., for without their support a divided loyalty will persist.

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For the same reason, a community organization cannot be under the auspices of any one existing organization as a chamber of commerce or farm bureau. Both of these and others are community organizations, but they are for specific purposes. Proponents of both of these have advocated making them community-wide and all-embracing in their functions, but it needs but little reflection to show the impossibility of such a plan. To cite but one objection. The rural church is the most deeply-rooted and in many ways the most powerful of rural institutions. It can coöperate with these other organizations for community purposes, but neither of them can enter into the religious field. The same is true of lodges, schools, health organizations, government, etc. Community organizations, such as the Chamber of Commerce or Commercial Club, the Grange and the Farm Bureau for agriculture and homemaking, the Red Cross for its activities, Church Federations, and others should all be encouraged where needed, but although each of these has certain community functions, no one of them can do or can direct the work of another. The community organization must bring them together so as to best coördinate their work for the good of the community, not through the power of an organic federation, but through the influence of conference, good will and devotion to the common weal.

3. *The Community Council.*—Community organizations are, as yet, in an experimental stage and their formal constitutions or by-laws are of many different types.[87] The Community Council, as suggested by the National Council of Defense, has been adopted in many communities with various modifications to meet local conditions. A community council consists of one representative from each general organization which affiliates with it and of a variable number of members-at-large elected by the annual community meeting. All citizens are entitled to vote for the members-at-large. The usual officers may be elected by the community meeting, or, preferably, be chosen by the council itself. Thus the council represents both the existing organizations and the community as a whole. The council does not attempt any control over existing organizations, but merely provides a means for their voluntary coöperation and is an agency for promoting community activities. In many cases where there are a large number of organizations, and it is surprising how many are found in many average-sized rural communities, the council will be too large to be an effective working body. Furthermore, the members who represent various organizations may not always be the best persons to carry on the particular enterprises which the council desires to promote. The council may, under such circumstances, devote itself to the consideration of policies and enterprises, and may create committees of citizens who are best qualified and most interested in particular projects to have charge of their execution. Thus if the council decides to get back of a movement for a playground, a public health nurse, and a band, committees would be appointed to take charge of organizing each one of these enterprises. These committees should be selected so as to represent the various organizations most directly concerned with or interested in the particular project as far as possible, but they should be chosen primarily for their ability to produce results. Committees should be appointed only for those projects which the council decides to undertake, although one or two committees may be appointed merely to investigate suggested projects and to report their findings for further consideration. Where the council is large, and it is not practicable to have it meet more than once a quarter, it may be well to have its work carried on in the interims by an executive committee consisting of the officers and the chairmen of the committees.

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There can be no one best type of community organization adapted to the widely varying conditions of all sorts and sizes of rural communities; each community must have a form of

organization adapted to its needs. The important thing is not the creation of another new organization in the community, but to afford the means for the better team play of those which already exist. The mechanism must therefore depend upon the character and stage of development of the community and will be modified from time to time as its experience, or that of similar community organizations, warrants.

Finally let us remember that community organization is not an end in itself, but that it is merely a means whereby conditions in the community may be made such that every individual in it may have the best possible chance to develop his personality and to enjoy the fellowship of service in the common good. The aim of all social organization is personality, but personality is achieved and can find its own satisfaction only through fellowship. The ideal community but furnishes the social environment in which the human spirit realizes its highest values.

#### FOOTNOTES:

- [84] Much of this chapter is a revision of parts of an article by the author entitled "Some Fundamentals of Rural Community Organization." Proceedings Third Natl. Country Life Conference, pp. 66-77.
- [85] See Elliott Dunlap Smith, Proceedings first National Country Life Conference, pp. 36-46 and Appendix C.
- [86] In this connection, Dr. N. L. Sims in his "The Rural Community" (p. 640. New York. Scribners, 1920), has propounded a most interesting "Law of Rural Socialization":—"Coöperation in rural neighborhoods has its genesis in and development through those forms of association which, beginning on the basis of least cost, gradually rise through planes of increasing cost to the stage of greatest cost in effort demanded, and which give at the same time ever increasing and more enduring benefits and satisfactions to the group."
- [87] See pp. 74-5, "Some Fundamentals of Rural Community Organization." Proc. 3d National Country Life Conference; and, E. C. Lindeman, "The Community," Chap. X. New York, Association Press, 1921.

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## CHAPTER XVIII

### COMMUNITY PLANNING

So far we have been considering the community with regard to how its people associate, with community psychology and behavior. But we must not forget that the community has a physical basis. The buildings which house these associations at the community center, the church, the school, the grange hall, the stores, with the roads which radiate from it and the farmsteads which they serve, these are the structures which, with the natural topography of stream and hill, give material form to the community and condition its life.

One of the chief difficulties in the development of rural communities in the United States is that, like Topsy, they have "just growed." Village centers have sprung up here and there and gradually the surrounding countryside becomes associated with them. As a result little consideration has been given to planning the community either for efficiency or attractiveness. Sinclair Lewis' description of Gopher Prairie in "Main Street" may be overdrawn and unjust to many a rural community, but it describes conditions which are so common that it has aroused the public conscience concerning the lack of civic spirit in rural communities.

A community is much like an individual. The man who is slouchy and careless of his personal appearance is rarely a strong character. The community whose cemetery is neglected, whose school grounds are a mass of mud and the outhouses a disgrace, whose lawns are unkept, where ash-piles and neglected puddles fill the vacant lots, whose roads are tortuous and unimproved, whose farm houses are unpainted and whose barnyards are more prominent than the door-yards—such a community is usually weak. It has little pride in itself or desire for improvement. In the case of the man who is "down and out," if we wish to give him a new start, we encourage him to take a bath and a shave and we then furnish him clean clothes, so that looking more respectable he may act the part. Likewise in community improvement a "clean up day" is often one of the best means of starting a new pride among its people.

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But improving its looks will not remedy the more fundamental structural defects which frequently handicap the rural community. Utility as well as beauty is essential in community arrangement. If the community is to escape ugliness and inconvenience, it will sooner or later come to the time when it must definitely plan the arrangement of its streets and roads, its public buildings and its open spaces, so as to best serve all parts of the community. Community

planning is as essential to satisfactory "community housekeeping" as the plan of a house is for the convenience of the home. An architect is needed to plan a home for the community, a community structure which is mechanically sound and efficient and withal both beautiful and comfortable, just as much as for designing a house. So the art of "town planning" is extending from the cities to the country and some of our landscape architects who love the countryside and appreciate its life and problems are giving their attention to rural community planning.[88]

This is not the place to enter into any extended discussion of the art of community planning, but we may well consider a few principles which are essential for realizing the ideals of community development.

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As the community center is the nucleus of the community life, let us first consider the village plan.

One enters the community at the railroad station or by a main road. It is, of course, impossible to prevent the property adjoining a railroad from being the least attractive, because it is the most undesirable for residence purposes; but it is entirely practicable to have a neat railroad station with well-kept surroundings. Some of our more progressive railroad companies have perceived that it is good business to make their stations and grounds attractive and most of them will be willing to meet the local people halfway in an effort to improve their appearance. In far too many cases the grounds of the railroad station and the adjoining properties are the most neglected spot in the village and give an unfavorable impression of the community. Certainly we would think a man queer who placed the back-door of his house to the street, but the railroad station is usually the back-door of the community instead of the main entrance as it should be. On the other hand, on alighting at a well-kept station, with a neat lawn, good walks and roads, which is not surrounded by the village rubbish heaps and dilapidated buildings, the newcomer feels that here is a place which invites further acquaintance, while the native has a sense of satisfaction rather than of apology.

The same principles apply to main road entrances to the village. The automobile has greatly increased highway travel. Where a village places a sign at its entrance "Welcome to Smithville," and at its exit "Come Again," as is now frequently done, it not only makes a favorable impression on the tourist, but it gives the community a sense of identity. In New England these signs are frequently placed, at the township line rather than at the village boundary. In a few cases villages have erected dignified stone pillars or arches at the entrance points.

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The building of state roads between village centers has almost necessitated paving or hard roads in the village, for people resent traveling over a good road in the open country and then plowing through mud holes in a village. Not infrequently the streets of the incorporated village are much poorer than the state roads outside the village and although incorporation formerly enabled the village to do its own paving and make other public improvements, the unincorporated village now has the advantage of having its main roadways constructed as a part of state or county road systems at less expense to the villagers. In any event the paving of the principal streets of the village should be considered an obligation of the whole community, not only of the village but of the farm area surrounding it—*i.e.*, the township, for on them the traffic of the whole community centers and in many cases the farmers of the community do more actual hauling over the village streets than do the people of the village. It is, of course, entirely proper, where state laws permit, to assess part of the cost of village pavements on the abutting property, but it is short-sighted economy for farmers to object to sharing in the cost of such improvements in their community centers.

When we come to a consideration of the general plan or layout of the village, it is obvious that in older communities it is hardly practicable to make material changes. In the old New England villages a part of the original town common has often been preserved as a "common" or park in the center of the village with a broad expanse of lawn and stately shade trees, while newer communities have frequently been laid out around a central open square. Here is the flagpole and the Soldiers' Monument or other historic memorials, and possibly a fountain or watering trough, and sometimes a band stand. It is a place where open-air meetings of all sorts, band concerts and community singing, may be held. It is the modern substitute for the forum of the old Roman town. When one compares a village which is merely strung along a main roadway, or two crossroads, with one which has such a civic center, he cannot but feel that the latter has a physical structure which gives it an identity and a common interest which is lacking in the former and which must mean much in the maintenance of community pride and which must give much better opportunity for outdoor gatherings of all sorts. In planning a new community such a public square should be a central feature. Around it may be built the school, the town hall or community house, the churches, the library and other public buildings. If large enough it should include tennis courts and a playground. Where the main streets are already occupied with business blocks and residences, it may be possible to secure a square not far from the village center where a new school building or community house may be erected and which may include a playground, bandstand, and whatever features are desired, even if it is necessary to place it at the edge of the village. Wherever possible the playground should adjoin the school building or community house, or both. Either as a feature of the playground or adjoining it, there should be a baseball diamond and bleachers or grandstand. Such a civic center will be found to be a powerful factor in the maintenance of community pride and loyalty.[89]

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The growth of automobile touring has encouraged the provision of camping sites for tourists on the edge of the village. Wherever a suitable grove or other natural setting can be found nearby a village it should be reserved as a public picnic ground or park. A part of this might also be made available for a tourists' camp, and often it will be a good location for a ball diamond. There has

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recently been a steady growth of interest in community fairs and such a picnic ground or park might well be arranged with an open space adjoining it for fair and festival purposes.

These general features and facilities of the village plan are not simply for the advantage or beautification of the village, but they benefit the life of the whole community and should be considered as features of the community's plant.

When we leave the village center and survey the farming area of the community, the most fundamental feature of its structure is the road plan. In hilly regions the location of roads is necessarily largely determined by topography, but over most of the Middle West the roads were laid out on section lines at the time of the original surveys and their location has never been changed. One who has grown up in that section feels a sort of pride in the straight roads and looks askance at the crooked roads of the East, but as a matter of fact the latter are in many cases much better located as regards their utility, for they were laid out to reach certain centers by the most direct route. On the other hand, the location of the village centers of the Middle West was largely determined by the railroad stations, and the roads were located without regard to them. As a result it is almost always necessary to traverse two sides of a square in order to reach the community center. This means that such a route is forty percent longer from the corners of the community than it would be by a straight line. This was bad enough with dirt roads, and if all the roads could be hard-surfaced, the automobile would, of course, lessen the time required for travel. It is, however, economically impossible to improve all minor roads and with the high cost of macadam, concrete, brick, or other hard-surface, not only for original cost but for upkeep, it seems absurd to continue to build the main roads on rectangular lines rather than by the shortest route between the most-traveled points. The saving in cost of construction and maintenance would much more than pay for the cost of all land which it would be necessary to condemn for their right-of-way, and the saving in time and cost of transportation for the whole community would amount to a large sum every year. Far too little attention has been given by road engineers to community planning, and with the vast sums which are now being expended by the federal, state and county governments on permanent roads, it is of the utmost importance that this matter of road location with regard to directness of access to the community centers should receive much more careful study and better supervision by all the authorities concerned, not only with regard to topography, but with regard to the social and economic welfare of the areas concerned. The newer sections of the country, and particularly western Canada, have become aware of this lack of economy in road location and are giving it consideration. In a report on Rural Planning and Development prepared for the Canadian Commission on Conservation, Mr. Thomas Adams, the town planning adviser of the commission, has outlined several plans for the better location of roads so that they will radiate from the community center and has shown that it is entirely possible to retain rectangular farm plans with radial roads.<sup>[90]</sup> He summarizes his discussion of this matter as follows:

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"The main points of contention in this chapter are:—That the present system of surveying land for the purpose of securing accurate boundaries to arbitrary divisions and sub-divisions of land, while satisfactory for that purpose, is not a method of planning land, but only a basis on which to prepare planning and development schemes; that no definite or stereotyped system of planning can be satisfactory for general application; that all plans should have regard to the physical and economic conditions of the territory to which they apply and should be made for the general purpose of securing healthy conditions, amenity, convenience and economic use of the land; and that more complete and adequate surveys and a comprehensive classification of land is essential to secure successful and permanent land settlement." (p. 71)

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Another feature of community planning which is coming to receive larger attention is the preservation of unusual geological and scenic features for the use of public. One of the scenic attractions most commonly neglected is the land along waterways. Sometimes the land on one side of a stream is occupied by a road, but in many cases it is private property. If reserved to the public many of these watercourses might be most attractive parkways. In many cases the control of waterways has been necessitated for the maintenance of the purity of the water supply and the advantage of having the adjoining land—usually more or less wooded—available for picnic parties has encouraged the extension of public control of waterways. Several states now have legislation permitting counties or towns to acquire such areas for park purposes, and the Province of Ontario and some other Canadian provinces require that a width of 66 feet be reserved around all lakes and rivers.

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In order to utilize the waste land of the watersheds and to protect the shores of reservoirs and streams which furnish public water supplies, many cities have reforested considerable areas, which will be maintained as public forests and will be cut as the timber becomes merchantable. This movement has called attention to the practicability of establishing town or community forests on cheap land unsuitable for tillage, as a source of income to the community. Communal forests have existed in Europe for many centuries, and at the present time form 22 percent of the forests in France. A movement has now commenced for the planting of town forests in this country,<sup>[91]</sup> and the better utilization of the community's waste land by planting it in timber should be considered a feature of community planning.

The improvements effected in cities through city planning commissions, both with regard to street location for the better routing of traffic, and the laying out of parks and the location of public buildings, have been so apparent, that the idea has been taken up by rural communities and a few states have passed legislation for the creation of special agencies for rural community planning. Thus Massachusetts has for several years had a Town Planning Commission and in

1919 Wisconsin passed an act<sup>[92]</sup> creating a division on rural planning of the State Department of Agriculture, and creating rural planning committees in each county. In 1920 thirty-six counties had organized such committees under this law and had already accomplished much under its authority.<sup>[93]</sup> Some of the more progressive land companies which are colonizing new lands in northern Wisconsin are making definite community plans to encourage settlement,<sup>[94]</sup> and in California the State Land Settlement Board has done much to encourage better rural planning by the demonstrations which it has made in its farm colonies at Durham and Delhi.<sup>[95]</sup> The Extension Services of several of the State agricultural colleges have experts on landscape art who give assistance in the improvement of public grounds and in community planning.

A system of numbering farms has recently been invented which is based upon the relations of farms to their community centers and which therefore makes necessary the definite location of rural community areas and their boundaries. This is known as the "Clock System" rural index and is now in use in four counties in New York State. The county map published in the directory shows the different communities outlined by heavily shaded lines and the farm numbers radiate from the community centers. On the map each community is divided as a spider's web into a number of small spaces by twelve dotted lines that extend from each village on the same radii as the hour-marks on the dial of a clock, and by concentric circles which are a mile apart from each community center. Each set of lines and circles extends to the community boundary, and the farm is given a number which shows the sector in which it is located with reference to the distance from the community center. In front of a farm will be found a number, usually just below the mail box, such as Alton 3-2-K. This indicates that the farm is in the direction of the 3 o'clock mark on a clock, or east, of Alton; the second term, 2, shows that it is between two and three miles from Alton and the letter K enables one to locate the individual farm on the small area between the 3 o'clock and 4 o'clock radial lines and the two and three mile circles. In the directory accompanying the map the names of all householders are arranged alphabetically and also serially by their numbers, so that the name of the householder at a certain number of his location on the map may be readily ascertained. This system not only makes necessary a definite determination of the center and boundary of every community, but the number itself relates the farm to its community. This is a matter of considerable importance, for since the abolishment of many rural postoffices the farmer's mail address may be on a rural route starting from some railroad station or larger town which he visits only occasionally, and has no reference to the community in which he lives. The system was invented by a Colorado farmer, Mr. J. B. Plato, who devised it so that it might be possible for buyers to find his farm. As he claims, such a number "puts the farmer on the map" and gives his home a definite location just as does the street number of the city house.<sup>[96]</sup>

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Finally, in any effort toward community planning it must be remembered that most rural communities are, in a way, but parts of what, for want of a better term, we may term larger communities. Not every small rural community can support a library building, a hospital, a high school, a moving picture theater, or a public health nurse. As has been pointed out in the previous chapters, these agencies can be maintained only at such centers as can command the support of several smaller communities. Obviously they will tend to be located at the larger towns, such as the county seats. Roads should be planned with regard to making these larger centers most readily available to their tributary territory. It would seem to be advantageous to the smaller communities to definitely relate themselves to one of these larger centers in the support of some of the more costly community services which they are unable to maintain, and an understanding should be developed between the smaller and larger centers, whereby the latter will not attempt to displace the former. The larger villages and towns must recognize that the smaller nearby communities are an economic and social asset and that the maintenance of their village centers is essential to successful community life. On the other hand, the smaller communities should recognize their own limitations and should utilize the advantages of the larger centers without jealousy of them. The county library system and the county hospital illustrate the advantages to be obtained through the larger community, but which are impossible without the support of the voters of the smaller subsidiary communities.

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With the growth of the community idea, and as communities become so organized that they have some mechanism for self-examination and self-expression, more study will be given to the physical structure of the community as essential for economy and utility, and more pride will be taken in making it beautiful and satisfying. Community planning is essential for the highest type of community development.

#### FOOTNOTES:

[88] For a most suggestive introduction to this whole field see Prof. Frank A. Waugh's "Rural Improvement." New York, Orange Judd Co., 1914.

[89] Many plans for ideal rural community centers have been published. Among them see N. Y. State College of Agriculture, Extension Circular No. 1, "A Plan for a Rural Community Center"; Peter A. Speck, "A Stake in the Land," Plate facing page 252; plans of Durham and Delhi, California, in reports of Calif. Land Settlement Board.

One of the most comprehensive studies in rural community planning is "Town Planning for Small Communities," by Walpole (Mass.) Town Planning Committee. Edited by C. S. Bird.

[90] Thomas Adams, "Rural Planning and Development." Canada Commission of Conservation, Ottawa, 1917, pp. 53-64, with illustrations.

[91] Samuel T. Dana, "Forestry and Community Development." Bulletin 638, U. S. Dept. of

Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

A. B. Recknagel, "County, Town, and Village Forests." N. Y. State College of Agriculture, Cornell Reading Course for the Farm, Lesson 40, 1913.

John S. Everitt, "Working Plan for a Communal Forest for the Town of Ithaca, N. Y.," Cornell Univ. Agr. Exp. Station, Bulletin 404.

- [92] Chapter 693, Wis. Laws of 1919, Creating section 1458-11 of the Statutes.
- [93] See "The Survey," Dec. 25, 1920, p. 459.
- [94] See Peter A. Speek, "A Stake in the Land," p. 53. New York, Harpers, 1921.
- [95] See Elwood Mead, "Helping Men Own Farms." New York, Macmillan, 1921.
- [96] The "clock system" is described in detail in the writer's bulletin, "Locating the Rural Community." Cornell Reading Course for the Farm, Lesson 158. Information concerning it may be secured from the American Rural Index Corporation, Ithaca, N. Y.

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## CHAPTER XIX

### COMMUNITY LOYALTY

Just as we know a man by his bodily presence, so we recognize a community by its location and its physical structure. Yet the man is more than a body and the community is more than its material basis; the real community consists of the men, women, and children living together in a restricted environment. Dr. R. E. Hieronymous has well expressed the most fundamental aspect of the community when he says that its people "are coming to act together in the chief concerns of life."<sup>[97]</sup> The life of the community consists of the common activities of its people. There can be no community where there is no devotion to a common cause. The cause may be now one thing, now another, it may be worthy or debasing, but in so far as the people of a locality are acting together in the support of various common causes they are living as a community. Just as the character of an individual is determined by his life purposes and the degree to which he conforms his behavior to them, so the highest type of community is that in which its people are consciously loyal to the common welfare and are "coming to act together" for the common good. Like the character of an individual, the community is in process of becoming; it necessarily exists on an unconscious basis, due to locality and heredity, but the strength of the community is measured by the degree to which its members become voluntarily loyal to common purposes.

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Outside of early New England the circumstances of settlement of the United States were not conducive to community development. Most of the country west of the Alleghenies was settled by individuals who secured their land from the federal government and whose prime allegiance was to the nation. The federal government was the outgrowth of a revolution for the right of self-government. Liberty and Freedom were its watchwords and the conditions of life of the pioneer settlers and their rapid spread over one of the richest natural areas in the world favored individual independence. It was the natural reaction from the previous domination of a feudal aristocracy. For over a century our national philosophy has been dominated by a doctrine of rights, and only recently have we come to perceive that if democracy is to function in a complex modern civilization, there must be an equal emphasis on duties. This is the significance of the present interest in instruction in citizenship in our schools.

Most of us hardly appreciate how complete a reversal of the organization of rural life was involved in this sudden domination of individualism. Primitive agriculture was made possible by men associating in small village communities for defense and mutual aid. Their whole system of agriculture, until very modern times, was controlled and directed, not by the individual or family, but by the community. The typical peasant community of Russia or India was in many respects but an enlarged family and its economy and social control were based upon the customs of the family. Indeed, historically the community was the outgrowth of the enlarged family or clan. It is not surprising, therefore, that the peasant's first loyalty is to his community. The nation or state is far away and beyond his ken; his patriotism is for his home village. So Park and Miller in their discussion of immigrants' attitudes say: "The peasant did not know that he was a Pole; he even denied it. The lord was a Pole; he was a peasant. We have records showing that members of other immigrant groups realize first in America that they are members of a nationality: "I had never realized I was an Albanian until my brother came from America in 1909. He belonged to an Albanian society over here."<sup>[98]</sup>

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Prior to the last century the whole social organization of rural life in the Old World was built up around the community. The family, the community, and the state were the primary forms of human association. Obviously, therefore, when families dispersed over the new territory of the United States with no community ties and with but few contacts with the national government,

there was a lack of that social organization to which the people had been accustomed and through which their whole mode of life, their customs and moral code had been built up. These forms of human association, the family, the community, the state, have been built up very slowly through centuries of human strife and suffering; they represent the experience of the race as to the best means of adjusting human relationships. Break down an essential feature of the structure of human society, as was done when American settlers abandoned community life, and men are compelled to find new methods of meeting their common needs and of maintaining standards of conduct essential for their common welfare. Had it not been for the influence of the school and the church, rural life over most of the United States would have inevitably degenerated, for wherever there is no form of associated control there humanity reverts to the level of the brute. Human life is what it is because for countless generations mankind has been learning how to adjust itself through association so that larger opportunity for the individual is secured through a larger measure of well being for all.

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The devotion of the American settler to his family eventually necessitated his association for advantages which could be secured only through collective action. When he had subdued the land and established his home, when he commenced to raise farm products for market rather than primarily for support of the family, when better communication gave more contacts with the town and city, the farm family developed new wants and interests which could only be satisfied through association with others. We have already indicated the processes whereby the economic situation, religious life, public education, the need of local government, and the desire for recreational facilities, are inevitably drawing the people of the countryside together at the natural centers into communities. The locality group is again recognized as essential for the best organization of rural life. But the new rural community is a voluntary group, it is not determined by common control of the land or by common subjection to a feudal lord as was the village community of the old world; its people are free to come and go where and when they will. The community can compel only through the power of public opinion and its success must depend upon the voluntary loyalty of its people.

Thus the strength and the weakness of the community lies in the loyalty of its people. No community can permanently succeed whose people associate in it merely for the advantages which they may gain. There must be a genuine willingness to give as well as to receive, a real desire to do one's share for the common life. Human association cannot succeed on a basis of organized selfishness. The joy of family life arises from the fact that each member is devoted to all and is willing to sacrifice personal interests for the family; without such devotion and sacrifice the true home is impossible. Just because human nature has arisen through long ages of association, man finds no permanent satisfaction in pursuing his own selfish interest; his greatest joy is found in his devotion to others. All human association therefore depends upon loyalty and the higher and more complex the association, the more essential is the loyalty of its members. As Miss Follett has well said, "Loyalty means the consciousness of oneness, the full realization that we succeed or fail, live or die, are saved or damned, together. The only unity or community is one we have made of ourselves, by ourselves, for ourselves."<sup>[99]</sup>

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Here social science and religion agree upon the ultimate objectives of life. Professor Josiah Royce has shown<sup>[100]</sup> that the ideal of Christianity, the Kingdom of God, is but a universal community, what he calls the "beloved community," which is made possible through the loyalty of all to love and service. There is a fundamentally religious sanction to community loyalty and only an essentially religious motive will inspire men to sublimate personal interests in devotion to the community. Only through loyalty to the highest ideals of community life can the Kingdom of God be realized on earth. No conceivable cataclysm could make its existence possible without the voluntary allegiance of mankind, for the Kingdom of God is the kingdom of love; it can exist only as the minds and hearts of men are devoted to it. Nor can the community universal, the "beloved community," be achieved except each local community adjusts its own life to the highest social values. The community movement is but a means whereby the ideals of democracy and religion may be given concrete expression in a definite locality. Unless these ideals can be applied to local areas where it is possible to achieve some measure of common life, of community, there is little probability of their realization in the world at large.

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But these higher values of human life cannot be brought about by a mere process of organization. They require the dynamic of a religious conviction in the hearts of men. The Gospel and life of Jesus of Nazareth furnish the essential inspiration for that spirit of loyalty without which all organization is in vain. Professor E. C. Lindeman has ably expressed this in his discussion of the relation of the Community and Democracy:

"The most formidable foe of Democracy, however, is the confidence which people place in schemes and plans and forms of organization. What the social machinery of our day needs is spiritual force to provide motive power. The modern Community Movement will fail to give Democracy its practical expression if it is not motivated by a spiritual dynamic. Such a dynamic force was unloosed with the message and life of Jesus of Nazareth. He lived his life on the basis of certain basic democratic assumptions, and He scientifically demonstrated those assumptions. In His eyes all individuals were of value; through the social implications of His message sin became democratic and the burden of all; in His aspirations all humankind were included. He assumed that Love would solve more problems than Hatred. He even assumed that to have a human enemy was a social anomaly. And He believed that religion was essentially a system of behavior by which the individual need not be swallowed up in the group, but by which the individual must find ultimate satisfactions in spiritualizing

Community loyalty will give rise to a true provincialism which will do much to give smaller communities a satisfactory status and to make them more independent in their standards and purposes. It is common to deride provincialism, but what we deprecate is the inability of the provincial to associate with the outside world, and the city man may be as "provincial" as the farmer from the back hills. True provincialism, on the other hand, is essential to the progress of civilization. The tendency of city life is toward imitation and reducing life to a dead level. Eccentricity may be objectionable, but without individuality of persons and communities life would be stupid and monotonous. There is probably no greater need for strengthening rural life than a community loyalty which will prevent the unthinking imitation of urban life and will take justifiable pride in local ideals and achievements. The need of a larger appreciation of the value of a true provincialism has been well described by Professor Royce in his essay on "Provincialism":

"Local spirit, local pride, provincial independence, influence the individual man precisely because they appeal to his imitative tendencies. But thereby they act so as to render him more or less immune in presence of the more trivial of the influences that, coming from without his community, would otherwise be likely to reduce him to the dead level of the customs of the whole nation. A country district may seem to a stranger unduly crude in its ways; but it does not become wiser in case, under the influence of city newspapers and summer boarders, it begins to follow city fashions merely for the sake of imitating. Other things being equal, it is better in proportion as it remains self-possessed,—proud of its own traditions, not unwilling indeed to learn, but also quite ready to teach the stranger its own wisdom. And in similar fashion provincial pride helps the individual man to keep his self-respect even when the vast forces that work toward industrial consolidation, and toward the effacement of individual initiative, are besetting the life at every turn. For a man is in large measure what his social consciousness makes him. Give him the local community that he loves and cherishes, that he is proud to honor and to serve, make his ideal of that community lofty,—give him faith in the dignity of his province,—and you have given him a power to counteract the levelling tendencies of modern civilization."<sup>[102]</sup>

Community loyalty is largely dependent upon leadership. There is a reciprocal relation between loyalty and leadership; leaders inspire loyalty and loyalty incites leadership. Thus the amount of leadership in a community and the willingness of its people to assume leadership are good indices of community loyalty, and the willingness to work under leaders is its crucial test. The leader is essential to group activity. Without a leader group activity is difficult or impossible. If men are to act together effectively some one must be spokesman and director.

Lack of leadership has ever been one of the chief handicaps of rural life as compared with that of the town and city, and with the growth of organization the need of rural leadership is increasingly apparent. Until very recently the vocation of agriculture has had but little call for leadership. Successful farming required strict attention to the work of the farm and leadership brought no pecuniary advantage to the farmer as it did to the business or professional man. Furthermore there seems to be an innate desire for equality among farmers and a disinclination to recognize one of their number as in any degree superior, which discourages the development of leadership among them. The town and city place a premium on leadership and a position of leadership gives a status which is coveted; but for the farmer any position of leadership is a burden or a public duty rather than an opportunity. For this reason the control of government, education, religion, and all the larger associations of life has been largely in the hands of urban leaders. This has been inevitable and the lack of representation of the farmers' interests has been incidental to the nature of his vocation.

Whenever the need of adjustment to new conditions becomes sufficiently acute as to demand action for the preservation of interests of any group of men, the cause creates leadership; leaders either come forward or are drafted and the successful leaders survive through a process of natural selection and receive recognition and support. This is what is now occurring in American agriculture. New conditions have forced farmers to organize for coöperative marketing and are necessitating the better organization of the whole social life of rural communities for reasons which have been previously indicated. With better education and with more contacts with city life, farmers have come to appreciate that if they are to compete with other industries and if the rural community is to have a satisfactory standard of living, they must develop their own leadership and that those who are qualified for leadership cannot be expected to devote their time to the business interests of their fellows unless they are adequately compensated. On the other hand, there is gradually developing a new sense of responsibility for assuming *voluntary* leadership in community activities, and a larger appreciation of the need of leadership and the duty of supporting it.

One of the greatest benefits of the Extension Service and the Farm Bureau Movement is the definite effort to develop local leadership and the large measure in which this has been successful. The demonstration work and coöperative organizations produce a new type of leader, for he must be one who is successful in his own farm business and who understands the better methods of agricultural production and marketing if he is to be able to interest others in them and to wisely guide the policies of his group. The successful agricultural leader must first of all be a good farmer, for the basic ideal of his group is the best agricultural production. Not infrequently an unsuccessful farmer who is a good talker comes into prominence because he is willing to devote more time to public affairs, but he rarely attains a position of real leadership in

his own community, for being unable to manage his own business he is unable to wisely direct that of the community.

Unselfish leadership is the highest form of community loyalty and is essential for permanent community progress. There are obvious satisfactions in leadership, but the true leader must have a clear vision, a strong purpose, and intense faith in his people, if he is not to become discouraged by the lack of loyalty in others and their slow response to his ideals. For the true leader must always be thinking in advance of his community. It is his function to see what is needed for the common good and then to gradually convince the group, and he must be willing to withstand the criticism and rebuffs of those who are as yet unwilling to sacrifice temporary personal advantage for the common good. The real leader will not attempt to do everything himself but will constantly seek to discover leadership in others and to inspire them with his own enthusiasm and faith in their ability. Not infrequently this involves the supreme test of leadership, for the leader must be responsible for the failure of his helpers, and although he may feel that a given undertaking would be more certain of success were he to assume direct responsibility for it or place it in the hands of some one who has demonstrated his ability, yet because of his belief in the distribution of responsibility as essential for a strong community and because of his faith in the individual and in the undertaking, he takes the risk and lends his influence to the success of the other. The discovery and training of leadership is one of the chief concerns of the true leader. Witness the devotion of the Master to the chosen Twelve and his willingness to leave his whole cause in their hands.

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The willingness to assume leadership is the acid test of community loyalty, for only through the development of a maximum of leadership can the best life of the community be achieved. Every citizen has some ability which qualifies him to lead some group, however small it may be, or however humble the cause. Indeed the highest type of community is one in which there is a conscious direction of community purposes through a body of leadership which is divided among all its members, so that each feels responsible to the whole community for the success of his share of the common enterprise and has satisfaction in his contribution to the common achievement. In last analysis the success of the community rests upon the loyalty of its people as measured by their willingness to assume leadership in whatsoever capacity may best serve its interests.

As the farm people of the United States have more contact with towns and cities and as through better education and means of communication they come into a larger participation in all the ranges of human culture, they come to realize that only through collective effort can they secure many of their new desires. Although many associations for special interests attract their allegiance, their attachment to a locality and their common relation to the existing center of social activities, give rise to a devotion to the community, for only through the united effort of all interests can they realize their highest desires. Loyalty to the family is broadened into loyalty to the community, which finds its incentive and dynamic in devotion to the family. The family becomes less self-sufficient, but through its wider associations in the community, the relations of the members of the family to each other assume new and—because they are more largely voluntary—higher values, and the family attains its highest development through the larger fulfilment of its members.<sup>[103]</sup>

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The farmer no longer glories in his isolation, or magnifies the virtues of independence, for new conditions require the coöperation of the whole community if farm life is to be made satisfying. Willingness and ability to work with others for the common good win social approval. Next to devotion to the family, loyalty to the community is essential for the realization of the best possibilities of rural life.

#### COMMUNITY SERVICE<sup>[104]</sup>

"Strong, that no human soul may pass  
Its warm, encircling unity,  
Wide, to enclose all creed, all class,  
This shall we name, Community;

"Service shall be that all and each,  
Aroused to know the common good,  
Shall strive, and in the striving reach  
A broader human brotherhood."

#### FOOTNOTES:

[97] "Balancing Country Life," p. 60. New York, Association Press, 1917.

[98] "Old World Traits Transplanted," p. 145. New York, Harpers, 1921.

[99] Mary P. Follett, "The New State," p. 59.

[100] "The Problem of Christianity."

[101] "The Community," p. 74. New York, Association Press, 1921.

[102] Josiah Royce, "Race Questions and Other American Problems," p. 65.

[103] For "through the process of limitation the family attains a completeness impossible before. Its members may not realize within it what is in truth the life of the family, for it now retains alone within its limits that principle of mutual affection of husband, wife, and children which alone is its *exclusive* possession."—R. M. Maciver, "Community," 2 ed. p.

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## APPENDIX A

Constitution of Plainsboro Township, New Jersey.[105]

### CONSTITUTION

#### ARTICLE 1.—NAME

The name of the organization is the Community Association of Plainsboro Township.

#### ARTICLE 2.—OBJECT

The object of this Association is to carry out the Declaration of Purposes as subscribed to by the residents of Plainsboro Township, New Jersey.

#### ARTICLE 3.—MEMBERSHIP

Every resident of Plainsboro Township has the right to membership in this association and to participation in discussion at its meetings, and every citizen has a vote.

#### ARTICLE 4.—COMMUNITY COUNCIL

A council of seven members shall be elected to carry out the will of the community as expressed in open meetings and to act for the community in minor matters and all emergencies. But all decisions affecting the material welfare should be made in open meetings of the community.

The council shall designate one of its members as president, another as secretary, and another as treasurer, and these persons shall serve respectively as community president, secretary and treasurer.

The members elected at the first community meeting shall serve until their successors are elected at the first meeting in the month of January, and thereafter members shall be elected for one year and serve until their successors are elected.

#### ARTICLE 5.—MEETINGS

There shall be an annual meeting in the month of January, ten days' notice of the date being given by the council.

At this meeting reports shall be made by all township officers of their respective duties.

At this annual meeting, and at all other meetings when requested, the council shall make report of its proceedings.

A regular community meeting shall be held at a date conforming to the law respecting the nomination of candidates for Township offices.

Other meetings shall be held upon call of the council, or upon notice signed by ten citizens and posted at the usual place of meeting ten days prior to the date of meeting.

Twenty voting members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

#### ARTICLE 6.—DUTIES OF THE COUNCIL

The council shall advise with all township officials in the performance of their duties. It shall determine and initiate matters concerning health, thrift, home ownership, community protection, village improvement, coöperation with outside organizations, and all other matters of community interest.

It shall prepare and propose township and community budgets from time to time for consideration.

It shall suggest a ticket for nominees for township offices, posting the same ten days prior to meeting of community when nomination shall be made.

It shall also make provision for posting of nominations that may be made by groups of ten or more citizens.

The council shall faithfully carry out the will of the community as determined in public meeting.

The word "citizen" and "citizens" as used in this constitution, shall be interpreted as referring to any person and persons who would have the right of suffrage if equal suffrage prevailed.

ARTICLE 8.—AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended at any community meeting by a three-fourths vote of the members present, provided an exact copy of the proposed amendment has been properly posted at the usual place of meeting ten days prior to the date of meeting.

**FOOTNOTE:**

[105] As given by Alva Agee in the National Stockman and Farmer, July 26, 1919.

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## **THE FARMER'S BOOKSHELF**

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Typographical errors corrected in the text:

Page 8 necessarily changed to necessarily  
Page 48 parisitc changed to parasitic  
Page 52 enterprisng changed to enterprising  
Page 85 considerbly changed to considerably  
Page 183 hispitals changed to hospitals  
Page 214 dominaton changed to domination  
Page 251 Bengston changed to Bengtson

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