

RURAL COMMUNITY CENTERS  
Agenda Community A Center In The process  
of Development.

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Foreword.

## Foreword.

The subject of Community Centers was suggested by a course in Rural Sociology which stimulated a natural interest in the subject, which I already had. Country life has been in the past a "laissez faire" proposition. It has trundled along in a beaten path which everyone has sanctioned without question. Whatever ills appeared were ignored on the ground that they would automatically right themselves. But of late the discrepancy between country and city life has led students of rural life to question the wisdom of allowing affairs to drift without any attempt to control them. City life has profited by the intervention of human intelligence to control, regulate and initiate social activities, and there is no reason why the life of the country cannot be improved if it is studied thoroughly and its tendencies ascertained. The institution that seems to hold the greatest possibilities for speeding up rural life is the community center. It is fundamentally democratic and in harmony with the trend of social evolution.

This thesis takes up first the problems and needs of the open country and attempts to show that the Community Center meets these needs. The Community Center movement in the United States is then sketched in

broad outlines in connection with a few typical centers. Finally the results of a special study of Agenda community, as a center in the process of development is presented. This study is based on a social survey of Elk Creek Township, Republic County, Kansas, made by the author under the direction of Professor M C Elmer of the University of Kansas, and assisted by the local people. Among the latter great credit is due to the Reverend George Todd, Pastor of the Federated Church of Agenda, Professor A J Brown, Principal of the High School, E E Braird, of the Agenda State Bank, Adar M Nolte, Principal of the Grade Schools in Agenda, C A Moore, Township Assessor, and the teachers in the rural schools.

## Chapter 1

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## The Problems And Needs of Community Centers.

### Growth of Interest in Rural Problems.

Within recent years there has been a remarkable awakening and increase of interest in the problems of country life. This growing interest is the expression of a felt need for a better understanding of the problems of efficient living. An ever increasing number of leaders in our generation are convinced that it is possible so to understand the ordinary relationships in community life, that they may be controlled and made to further the interests of a richer existence.<sup>1</sup> The nation wide scope of the movement is suggested by the Roosevelt County Life Commission, by the Smith Lever law, by the Federal Rural Credits Act and by the emphasis upon rural problems in the programs of the American Economic Association,<sup>2</sup> and the American Sociological Association. Everyone who has given the matter any thought realizes that there are rural problems; that there are tendencies in our country districts which are not wholesome; and people are coming to realize more and more that these tendencies can be controlled if they are properly understood.

1 See Introduction to Rural Sociology Vogt page 6

2 See Social surveys of Three Rural Townships in Iowa.

The changes of attitude on the part of those who take a keen interest in improving the living conditions of mankind is suggestive of the importance which the rural problem has attained. It has been but a short time since country life was thought to be ideal. Many students of social phenomena have assumed that the relations to be found in rural life are relatively simple; and that urban life presents much more serious problems for solution.<sup>3</sup> Forty or fifty years ago no one thought of associating any serious social problems with the open country. On the other hand, it has been lauded as the mainstay of civilization. It has been said that as long as country life remained wholesome, there was no need to fear for the future of civilization. Men pointed to the cities as the festering sores of the social body and failed to read the symptoms of social deterioration that were exhibited in country life.

But now the problems of the country have taken their place along side of the other perplexing problems of social life. Several years ago Theodore Roosevelt said: "There are no two public questions of more vital importance to the future of this country than the problem of conservation and the problem of the betterment of country life".<sup>4</sup> The Rural Question is being thoroughly studied by men who are devoting their lives to its solution. The movement is

3 See introduction to Rural Sociology Vogt page 6

4 See Outlook August 27, 1910 page

manifested in the activities of religious workers on behalf of the country church; in the movement for consolidated schools and in the adoption of a school curriculum suited to the needs of the community; and in the spread of the community center idea beyond the confines of urban or industrial groups.<sup>5</sup>

#### Pathological Social Conditions First Recognized in Cities.

Pathological social conditions first became evident in the cities and industrial centers where large numbers of people congregated together under abnormal conditions and in these places the first efforts were made to control undesirable tendencies. Social reformers were attracted to the congested centers by the pressure of very obvious needs of the slum districts. It was among the outcasts and poor classes of London that William Booth began his work in the latter part of the 19th century.<sup>6</sup> The University or Social Settlement which sprang up during this same period was located in the neglected or "problem neighborhoods" of the industrial cities.<sup>7</sup>

The magnitude of the problems which confronted these pioneer workers, together with the lack of knowledge

5 See Social Surveys of Three Rural Townships in Iowa. (University of Iowa)

6 Darkest England And The Way Out, Booth.

7 See Nelson's Encyclopedia.



of conditions outside of their field of observation, tended to make them feel that the city constituted the social problem of our civilization. The thought of a rural problem comparable in complexity to the one they were facing in the city probably never occurred to them. Under the influence of the prevailing opinion that the country was free from those factors that constituted the peculiar social problems of the city, it is but natural that they should assume that country life was normal, healthy and progressive.

#### Unequal Development of Country and City Life.

It is hardly conceivable that two groups of people living in environments so different as those prevailing in the city and country respectively should participate equally in the remarkable progress that has taken place within the past fifty years. Some groups lead, others follow. The city has always led the way in adopting new ideas, new ways of doing things; the country adopts innovations slowly.

The modern conveniences of home life appearing first in the city raised the standard of living in towns above that of the open country. In fact in some sections of the country the same domestic methods are used as were employed fifty years ago.

Improved school methods were introduced in the cities first and the country is slowly following. Libraries were first established in cities. The city abounds

in facilities for culture, recreation and pleasurable activities, which are not found in the country.

As a result the city came to possess advantages which the country lacked. The city became more desirable and satisfying to a great number of people, and the past fifty years has witnessed a phenomenal increase in the population of cities, as is shown by a few typical urban communities--

Population in		1910 <sup>8</sup>
	1880	
Denver .....	35,629	213,381
Rochester .....	89,000	218,000
Providence.....	104,000	224,000
Louisville.....	123,000	223,000
New Orleans.....	216,000	329,000
Buffalo.....	155,000	423,000
Detroit.....	116,340	465,766
Omaha.....	30,518	124,096

It is idle to attribute this rapid growth of cities to the mere whims of people or to the fact that they leave the country because of a decline in the stability of their character. There must be a more fundamental reason for this preference for city life. The city must hold out the prospect of satisfying human interests more completely than the country.

8 Thirteenth census of united states Pop. of Cities  
Pages 78-99

## Undesirable Tendencies in Rural Life.

Turning our attention to the country, we find a number of facts that are a cause for grave concern for the future of the country. In some sections we find abandoned farms. These are the result either of vicious farm management which has depleted the soil or of economic changes, which have made their operation unprofitable. In either case the effect is a lowered standard of living. In other sections there has been an actual decrease of the rural population. "In six states of the Union, Ohio, Indiana, Iowa, Missouri, Vermont and New Hampshire, the rural population, including village population actually decreased in the decade 1900 to 1910".<sup>9</sup> In all sections there has been a drift to the cities. The most intelligent and energetic, those capable of becoming leaders, answering the appeal of the city, go there to seek their fortunes and as a result the country is deprived of the leadership which it needs. This is true even of the most prosperous farming districts of the middle west.

The rural church has suffered a period of decline. In Missouri there were 750 abandoned churches, in Illinois 1750, in Ohio 800, according to a report made by Warren Wilson.<sup>10</sup> C. O. Gill in his studies of church conditions in Tompkins County, New York, and in Windsor County Vermont, found that after making allowances for the de-

9 intro. to rural sociology vogt. page 131

crease of rural population the church attendance in Tompkins County fell off more than nineteen per cent 1890-1910 and in Windsor County more than twenty-nine per cent 1888-1908.<sup>11</sup>

The social life of farming communities is growing less. The old time community gatherings have been neglected since the advent of the automobile and telephone, but nothing has been developed to take its place. The mental stagnation and narrowness that is the result of the lack of personal contact and social stimulation is a very serious obstacle to rural progress. "Where people do not get together, ignorance, bigotry, narrowness, suspiciousness, and all those qualities that go with provincialism reign".<sup>12</sup>

Tenantry and alien ownership of land is on the increase and very little has been done to control land speculation. Where tenantry prevails, community interests suffer, since neither the landlord nor the tenant takes any interest in the community. Landlordism has a paralyzing influence on country life. It has been found to be universally true that tenants do not take care of buildings or keep up improvements. Neither do they manage their holdings so that the resources of the soil shall be conserved but in a manner that will yield the largest immediate net returns. The result is that the potential

10 Church studies by Warren Wilson.

11 Gill County Church page 16

12 Intro. to Rural Soc. Vogt page 302

resources of the community are depleted. The present lives at the expense of the future. Likewise the landlord fails to provide adequate houses and barns and thereby forces the tenant to a standard of living below his own. To the extent that this policy is followed an efficient country life is impossible. Landlords are proverbially opposed to public and community projects. If we recall that practically all forms of agriculture lend themselves readily to tenantry, the serious consequences of any great extension of the system becomes apparent.

These tendencies in their interrelations constitute the problems which the rural social reformer has before him for solution.

#### Need of a Better Organization of Country Life.

Study of the open country has indicated the need of organization; of greater unity of spirit and action among farmers. They need to study their own problems and apply themselves to the solution of them. Probably the most marked difference between city and country is with respect to personal contacts and social intercourse. Long distances between farm homes have tended to keep social intercourse down to a minimum. It is true that rural isolation is being cut down by the telephone, Rural Free Delivery, daily newspapers, and other agencies. These have greatly

facilitated communication, but something more is needed to reorganize rural life on a more satisfactory basis. Something that will reach across the barriers of distance and bind the individual farmsteads together. The farmers will have to organize if they are to meet the demands of changing conditions successfully. They will have to find some means of co-operating, of pooling their resources.

#### Community Centers-A Device to Organize Country Life.

It is to effect the organization that is needed to bring about this co-operation that the community center is being pushed in rural districts. The community center was first employed in cities to develop neighborhood consciousness and to focus the interests and desires of the people of the neighborhood at a logical center. As defined by Jane Addams in, *Twenty Years At Hull House*, "To provide a center for a higher civic and social life, to institute and maintain educational and philanthropic enterprises, and to investigate and improve the conditions in the industrial districts of Chicago".<sup>13</sup> The purpose of the community center is training for citizenship thru the promotion of the spirit of the neighborhood. In this center all the people are interested in those interests which are common to all.

<sup>13</sup> *Twenty Years At Hull House* Jane Addams, page 112.

It is the peoples forum and permanent headquarters for citizenship and neighborly spirit. In it the people come to know one another, and how to make their government work. The success of the movement in the cities has led to the extension of the idea to the small village and open country. Though the conscious demand for organized community centers is a matter of recent growth, it springs from a realization, long felt, that the sympathies and feelings of rural people need to be cultivated, to be given the largest possible opportunity for development. Because of the isolated residence of the inhabitants and the impossibility of social intercourse in connection with the daily work on the farm, the community center is more needed in the country than in the city.

The underlying idea is to secure common action on the part of those who form a natural group. People need some means of finding themselves. A community center exists to stimulate the social instinct; to promote the desire to know ones' neighbors, to co-operate with them and to learn from them. It seeks to bring all the social agencies already organized together; to act as a magnet for community life; to unify the whole community; to make it more efficient; to help it find itself. To accomplish this a community needs first to study itself, then formulate the highest ideals it is capable of and work consistently for

the attainment of those ideals.

No one can estimate the possibilities of a community that is pulling together and working toward a conscious end; working out a policy which it has formulated.



## Chapter 11

## The Community Center Movement.

The Community Center movement as an organized movement is hardly a decade old. It is the outcome of practical experience and study of men and women, who have been engaged in social work. The Community Center is brought forward as a cure for the tendencies toward the formation of lines of caste and unequal progress in our civilization. To most students of sociology these tendencies seem to be destructive. The sponsors of the Community Center movement hope that it will bring about a more perfect unity among the people by drawing them together and thereby develop like mindedness in the group. It will teach men their rights and duties and how best to utilize their resources-- in short how to live the best life.

## First Community Centers.

The first real community centers were the public school houses. The ancestor of the Community Center was not the social settlement, but the little red school house back home, which in the evenings was used for a common meeting place for the neighborhood. The use of

school houses for this purpose, which was universal in pioneer days and later fell into disuse, is being revived.

Rochester, New York was one of the first cities to work out a comprehensive plan for the use of schools as recreation centers. They felt the need for a common meeting place. Representatives of labor organizations, social and civic organizations and city departments organized a school extension committee which secured funds and started a community center in one of the public schools.

Wisconsin took the lead in opening up the school houses to the public for civic and recreational purposes. Under the direction of Edward J Ward the university of Wisconsin has developed Community Centers in Wisconsin towns. To the university of Wisconsin this idea was the application of its own principle of "Abandoning old standards as to the scope of a university and adopting a new standard; that the university shall expand to include all lines of educational work for which it is the best fitted instrument."

We will now cite the cases of a few typical community centers that are in operation at the present time. They are from widely separated districts and although no two are exactly alike yet the fundamental idea in all is the same.

## spring valley community center.

Fire destroyed the only village hall in spring valley, wisconsin, a village of one thousand people.<sup>14</sup> It was the only meeting place large enough to accommodate a show or popular entertainment. No one ventured to rebuild. As a result, left without any adequate meeting place, social conditions became perplexing and even dangerous. Finally someone proposed that the village meet the emergency by constructing a community building, planned for the exclusive use of the public. A petition was circulated for a bond issue for a hall to be used for social purposes. A special election was held and \$5000. voted for the purpose. In addition many donations were made. The village pulled together and put up a good building, which contained a kitchen, dining-room, library, club rooms and an auditorium. The hall was provided with steam heat and electric lights. Ownership is vested in the village. The Village Board is the board of Directors. It is the people's building, a community enterprise. In building it they have learned what they can do.

The vast amount of pent up energy released by this community enterprise finds outlet in activities that

14 Social Life in the Country, World's Work Apr 14, p 614

are constructive and progressive. It is used for plays, moving pictures, the entertainment course of the extension division of the State University, for banquets, church suppers, for nearly every activity of the community that calls for a place of gathering. The example of Spring Valley is characteristic of an invaluable movement that is under way in hundreds of communities throughout the country.

#### The Tamalpais Center for Community Life.

An Association has been formed at Marin County, California, just across the bay from San Francisco<sup>15</sup>, which promises to mean a great deal in the interest of community life to the people in the vicinity of Tamalpais. It is called Tamalpais Center, and the plan is that it shall radiate the community social life, organized in turn into outdoor Sports, Playground, Literary Clubs, Manual Training, Domestic Science, Natural History and the Arts. Provision is also made for a Lyceum which will provide a platform for honest thought.

Tamalpais Center is the result of the interest and gifts of W. Kent of Chicago. It consists of twenty-nine acres of land surrounded by mountain, forest and

sea and is very well suited for the purpose in view. The whole undertaking is an attempt to solve the problem of village life. There are a number of towns on that side of the bay within easy reach of Tamalpais Center, that will be influenced by it. The work will be absolutely without caste or creed or politics except as these things have to do with the broadest outlook of life and building up healthy minds and bodies. It is a center where every man can work for the good of all.

#### social center work In The Southwest.<sup>16</sup>

The community center movement in the southwest may be said to date from the southwestern social center conference held at Dallas, Texas in February 1911. For several years previous there had been agitation in favor of the movement by farm papers and educators. At last the time seemed ripe for a general conference. Delegates representing people from all walks of life met in Dallas and threshed out southwestern problems. A "great-get-together" movement was begun.

Since that first meeting a systematic campaign of education has been waged. Press notices are sent to the daily and weekly newspapers. Speakers are sent to

important conventions and teacher's institutes. The subject of social centers has been kept before practically every educator's and farmer's convention that has met in the southwest within recent years.

The conference in co-operation with the Texas Federation of women's clubs has published and distributed community center literature. It has aided communities in placing libraries before the schools. Since very few schools possess a library this was a very substantial service. Over three hundred schools have aided themselves by this community plan.

Some landlords have recognized the social responsibility involved in ownership and have responded to the social center movement. One of the first to respond to the community center idea was Col R E Smith, owner of a two thousand acre estate near Sherman, Texas. He built an auditorium and farm families have been using it two or three times a week every since. Affiliated with the community center are a local farmer's institute, a boy's corn club and a boy's hog club. The building is used on Friday evenings for general gatherings. The programs usually take up some phase of agriculture though very often they are more in the nature of a literary lecture or a Lyceum number. This center has been very successful. The Friday evening audiences fill the house. Since the

Dallas conference, Fort Worth and Houston have opened their school buildings to the public for social uses and community centers have been started in fifteen other Texas counties.

In the mosquito lands of South Texas, Bee County with Miss Lida Daugherty in the capacity of county superintendent, has taken a lead in social center work. The new school buildings are being built with an eye to the future. They are planned for community gatherings. Miss Daugherty has inaugurated a country Lyceum with five attractions.

Tuleta, a small village in this county has a high school with Agricultural and Domestic Science departments. This high school gives extension courses in Domestic Science for farmer's wives within a twenty mile radius. Other country high schools are being organized along the same line. Miss Daugherty herself has given stereopticon lectures in the district school houses. She has organized in every school district a boy's hog and corn club, and a girl's sewing and cooking club. She has organized a number of country women's clubs, which are doing a great deal in spreading social center thought. She wrote in 1911, "We now have seven hundred books in our schools, a year ago we didn't have any. We have five Farm and Ranch Libraries and it is my ambition to put one in every school. Our people are at the



point where it is easy to organize social centers. I dare make this statement: that we have more entertainments to the square inch than any other county in Texas".

The Social Center and Welfare Community work  
of The Lasalle--Peru--Oglesby Center.<sup>17</sup>

Since March 1914 the Lasalle Peru Township High School has attempted through its social center department to provide for the township of 28,000 people, healthful and rational recreation of all sorts through the wider use of a large and well equipped high school plant. A real community center for all the people is the ideal set. Though the work to date has partaken rather of that of a recreation center, the other lines of community work are not neglected. The work of the center includes educational conventions, farmer's short courses, scientific and literary lectures, concerts, dramatic performances, neighborhood clubs, and any other legitimate social activity.

From the start the aim has been first and foremost to interest the children and young people of the township, that is to lay especial emphasis upon adolescent and juvenile activities and only secondarily on

17 Extracts from a Report by the Lasalle-Peru Township High School.

those of adults. As a matter of fact, however, the older folks have in no wise suffered from a lack of appropriate activities although considerable less supervision and leadership have been afforded them. The co-operation of the older men has been splendid. The business and professional men have given the movement both material and moral support.

In October 1912, the Hon. F. W. Matthiessen submitted a proposition to the Township Board of Education in which he offered as a gift certain real estate and the sum of \$75,000.00 for a recreation building to be run in connection with the Township High School and to serve as a Community Center. The Township Board was to maintain the work. It was also stipulated that the township was to vote a bond issue of \$25,000.00 for High School improvements and by a public election to declare its willingness to support the Center. The Board immediately took action and the election resulted in the almost unanimous acceptance of the proposition. The plans provided for a recreation building, for many improvements in the main building, including a large auditorium and other needed facilities.

The principal feature of the recreation building is the Gymnasium, which is 55 x 106 feet, and contains a playing space for basket ball-70 x 35 feet. Above this

floor is a balcony which is used both for spectators and a running track. The swimming pool which is 60 x 25 feet is in the basement. Here also are the shower baths and lockers.

The organizations outside of the immediate school group are an important feature of the community center work. Being composed of older people and having other purposes in view than recreation, their development has been slower. The young men of the three towns have organized a Glee Club with headquarters at the social center. It really acts as a community club and its services are available at all public gatherings. The young men's Club is composed entirely of young men from the neighborhood and has over thirty members. This organization is the old neighborhood gang who are now applying their efforts to athletic and club activities. The social workers' Club studies local problems and secures speakers from other cities.

The need of a complete and efficient health department for Lasalle, Peru and Oglesby is supplied in the Tri-City Hygienic Institute. The expense would have been too great for any one of the cities to do it alone, but through co-operation they did it easily. The institute is housed in a building near the High School Center. Close co-operation is maintained with the High School and

the work is practically coextensive with that of the social center, covering as it does the two townships of Lasalle and Peru.

The foregoing outline of typical social centers gives some idea of what is characteristic of the purposes and scope of rural social centers and Community work that is being carried on in the United States at the present time. These centers are past the experimental stage and the work that they are doing is constructive and permanent. As an institution for meeting the demands of the changing social order the Community center is full of promise in that it will unify society and bring about co-operation between all classes.

## Chapter 111



Cuba



Wayne



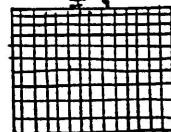
Brantford



AGENDA

ELK CREEK

ELK creek



Clyde

## Agenda Community A Center in The process of Development.

### Introduction.

The following study of Agenda community is based on a social survey of Elk Creek township made by the author with the help of others mentioned in the foreword.

Elk Creek is the southeast township of Republic county. Agenda is the only village in the township. It is situated a little to the northwest of the center. There are four other small towns within easy reach of the community; Cuba seven miles northeast; Wayne five miles west; Clyde eight miles southeast and Brantford about five miles northeast. The country is rolling prairie. Elk Creek flows through it from northwest to southeast. The geological formation is Dakota sandstone. The north one-third is very hilly with outcroppings of limestone. This soil is very fertile and has high moisture retaining qualities. The soil in the valley produces excellent crops.

## History And Development.

The first settlement in what is now Elk Creek township was made in 1868. In that year a score of families took up homesteads and began the struggles of pioneer life. Year by year new settlers arrived and joined their fortunes with their predecessors in the virgin valley of Elk Creek.

In 1871 a township organization was effected and an election held in the Spring of 1872 determined the personnel of the first official body in the township. Of these first settlers one still is living in the township.

The early years of the settlement were strenuous ones in every respect that pioneer life is strenuous. There were the hard struggles incident to life in an undeveloped country, the difficult means of transportation and communication made more serious by long distances. Railroad facilities were far away. A journey to the nearest station meant danger and suffering. The streams were without bridges. They had no home conveniences and very little farm machinery. They were ignorant of the adaptability of the country and what crops could be raised to advantage. There were no schools or churches. Everything that ministers to the wants of civilized man had to be provided for; everything had to be created as it was



needed.

The early settlers also had the Indians to contend with. The Redskins stole cattle and plundered. The settlers had to organize for protection of property and life, and co-operation in all forms of activity was a positive necessity.

The steady influx of settlers added rapidly to the population and contributed to the social resources of the community. Besides increasing the number of residents, the growth of the population occasioned a demand for those institutions which the pioneers of Kansas established, almost universally, at the earliest possible opportunity, the school and the "meeting house". No sooner did the pioneer Kansan provide a shelter for his family and livestock than he turned his hand to provide for the education of his children. Though crude and inefficient compared with our standards, these first schools served the needs of the people quite effectively. For many years the school house was the meeting place of the religious bodies in the community. In later years two churches were built one west of the present site of Agenda and one in the village of Agenda.

The life that developed in this environment was thoroughly democratic. Among the early settlers there

were no class distinctions. One person was as good as another. No one had more than the other. All associated together on terms of equality. In this fertile soil a splendid type of social life developed that has not been equaled since. Without organization or formality the people mingled together in simple neighborhood parties, community picnics, literary societies and church services. Each participated in the life of the group and benefited thereby. They helped each other with their farm work. The spirit of co-operation and interdependence persisted as long as primitive farm methods prevailed.

With the building of the Rock Island railway through the township in 1887, a new era opened. New markets were made accessible to the region and a revolution in the type of farming took place. A more diversified farming came into existence. Hitherto it had been unprofitable to raise grain that had to be hauled a long distance to market in wagons over abominable roads. They raised stuff that could walk out of the country on its own feet. Cattle raising predominated.

#### Situation Prior to The Community Center Movement.

The mixed farming that was taken up proved more profitable. The one crop system is uncertain in that it is subject to frequent failures where rainfall is

uncertain. The mixed farmer hardly ever has a bad year. About this same time the introduction of improved machinery tended toward specialization of industry on farms. Those crops were raised which were most suited to climatic conditions and which could be most easily handled.

The period following was one of prosperity. with the accumulations of the previous years as capital the farmers were in a position to begin to make money. in a short time some of the more successful had accumulated more wealth than their neighbors. They built finer houses and drove a fancy team or later perhaps purchased an automobile. they began "putting on airs". this was the beginning of class distinctions. People became more individualistic and less dependent on their neighbors for help. The well-to-do got the idea that they were better and more intelligent than their poorer neighbors, and were not backward in assuming an attitude that plainly indicated their feelings. The less successful found themselves shut out in the cold.

This social cleavage, based on wealth, worked a blighting effect on all community enterprises. It was most noticeable in church and social activities. The formation of class lines broke up the old neighborhood social life. The day when everyone was welcome in every home and at every meeting was over. People began to choose their associates with care and looked beyond the

confines of their neighborhood or limited their intercourse to a constantly narrowing group. They have come at last to be without social inclinations. The feeling that brought about class cleavage has also decreased their genuine sociability. They had no desire to mingle in social relationships with people outside of their clique.

The result has been that the purely social and recreational life of Elk Creek township is reduced to a minimum. The Fourth of July picnic is no more. This big neighborhood affair, which used to be a great factor in the life of the country side is a very rare occurrence now. The neighborhood party where all kinds of games were played does not have the vogue it formerly enjoyed. In some parts of the township there has not been a social party for two years.

The effect upon organized religion has also been destructive. Twenty years ago there were religious services in several of the school houses. Today there are none. As one woman said when asked what church she belonged to, "I used to belong to the United Brethren, but the church has gone away and left me". The same can be said of Presbyterian and Congregational classes that formerly held services in school houses. Their abandonment is certainly due in a large measure to the half-hearted support of a class conscious membership.

Before Agenda was located there was a Methodist

Protestant church one and one half miles west of the present site of Agenda. After Agenda was started the Methodist Episcopal people erected a church in the village. As the village grew it became obvious that there were advantages in having a church centrally located. So the Methodist Protestant people moved their church into the village though without some opposition. As one resident who lived near the church said, "we all used to go to church. My father gave one-hundred dollars to it. I guess it was all right to move it to town but they have been fighting ever since." It is clear that its removal was the cause of more or less hard feelings.

With two churches in the village there began a period of bickering and quarreling. The two churches were rivals for members. The place was not large enough to support two churches properly. They did not grow but fell into a religious competition. They could not afford resident pastors. Someone from the outside who already had more than he could do came on alternate Sundays and held services. Both churches used this plan. Much bitterness was caused on occasions when either of the churches disregarded the others preaching day and held services in their own church. Each congregation was jealous of the membership of the others' Sunday school, Christian Endeavor and other activities. This church strife divided the social life of the entire community with respect to

those activities which required the support of those not affiliated with either factor.

such in broad outline were the conditions existing in Elk Creek township prior to the community center movement at agenda which began in the form of a federated church movement.

#### Movement Toward Federation of Churches.

The first real step in the community movement was an agreement between the Methodist Protestant and Methodist Episcopal churches with respect to which should have preaching services on the odd Sundays of the month and which should have the even Sundays. This agreement was observed by both sides. The next step showed a beginning of toleration. It was not studied but a spontaneous movement. Certain individuals of both groups began attending the preaching service of the other and later assisted in the choir and with the collections and socials. The social factor exerted a strong pull to bring them together. Then followed an attempt to hold union Sunday School services. These were held one Sunday at the Methodist Protestant church and the next Sunday at the Methodist Episcopal church alternating with and accompanying the preaching service. Methodist Protestant song books and literature were used at the Methodist Protestant

church and Methodist Episcopal books and literature at the Methodist Episcopal church. Each Sunday school had its own officers and teachers.

The disadvantages of this method led to the use of the same Sunday School literature at both churches and the election of a common superintendent and corps of teachers, thereby doing away with the duplication of officers. The fraternal spirit was manifested in all religious and social work as far as possible. They divided the honors.

The next step was a union Sunday school held at the same church Sunday after Sunday. One Sunday school organization served both congregations and it met in the same church continuously. But each congregation maintained its own preaching services at its own church on alternate Sundays according to the old plan. The success of the union Sunday school naturally suggested the question: Why can't we have a union Church? Why can't we arrange to have one pastor for both congregations and hold services Sunday after Sunday in the one church just as we do our Sunday school? We could then afford to have a full time resident man who would be a part of our social life.

The proposition was agitated and discussed and the final outcome was that plans for federation were formulated. It was found impossible to arrange to have

a regular pastor for either of the churches so they advertised for a pastor to take charge of a federated movement. In the meantime they secured speakers who were familiar with such movements and in sympathy with them.

The Sunday school continued to grow without the oversight of a pastor. It grew so large that the one building was not able to accommodate it, and had to be divided. The primary department was established in the other building. The teen age boys and girls and the adults remained in the first building. The primary department joined the others for the closing exercises.

Other things shaped themselves for the final step in federation. The success of the Sunday school itself was compelling. The Articles of Federation were submitted to the membership of the two churches and then to other professing Christians in the community. They were signed by a good strong majority. These articles were very liberal and comprehensive. Among other things they provided for eight directors who compose the church board. These were to be elected two from the Methodist Protestant congregation, two from the Methodist Episcopal, two from other professing Christians, who held their membership elsewhere, and two from the group not belonging to any church, but citizens of good standing in the community. The board was empowered to employ and dismiss the



pastor.

The first pastor was employed in 1916. At the end of the year he was dismissed. The reason given being that he did not fit into the social life of the community. He lacked the vision of what a Community center is and the common touch of humanity. The present pastor is especially fitted for work in a federated church. He has the breadth of vision and the tact which the delicacy of the position demands. The church is now allied with all the worthwhile social interests of the community and the people are coming to feel that it is a community church.

#### The Agenda Rural High School.

Another feature that shows the existence of a community spirit in the township is the Rural High School. The Agenda Rural High School is a product of the community center movement. It reflects the desire of the people for education. It is an example of what the people have done as a community.

The need for higher education had long been felt. The value of more specialized training than that afforded by the grade schools was recognized by all. Most parents hope and wish that their children will be better equipped for life than they themselves were and recognize the fact that in this age education is a necessity. Therefore

they are anxious to have good schools as near their homes as possible. The residents of Elk Creek Township and Agenda, especially felt the need of a high school very keenly, because of the distance to other high schools. It is seventeen miles to Belleville, six miles to Cuba, eight miles to Clyde. Most parents could not afford to send their children away to school. Many would go if there were a high school in Agenda. Consequently there was a real demand for a high school.

The campaign for a high school resulted in the organization of the Agenda rural high school in 1916. It was not accomplished without considerable opposition and hard feelings at the time. But now most of those who opposed it bitterly are enthusiastic supporters for the simple reason that their children are going to school there and they are finding out what an asset it is to the community.

The high school district embraces all of Elk Creek Township and one section in Grant Township to the west. The district coincides with the trade territory of Agenda. It is not an Agenda institution but belongs to the whole district. It does however help to focus the interests of the people on Agenda as a community center. The present board of directors is made up of two farmers and one village man.



The Rural High School At Agenda Kansas.

The High School building is well suited to present needs but an addition will soon have to be made if the present rate of increase continues. It is a two-story building. On the second floor is the auditorium, two recitation rooms and three rooms used for laboratory purposes, besides the office, library and cloak-rooms. The assembly room is so situated that by rolling back the partitions separating them the two class-rooms, one on either side, may be thrown into one with the assembly

hall. This gives ample room for public programs and lectures. The Manual Training and Agriculture Departments are on the ground floor. Five rooms in all are used for laboratory purposes.

From the beginning it was determined that the course of study should be one that would fit the graduate for life first and only secondarily for college. It was desired to improve the life of the community, to fit the students for the life around them. With this purpose in view the authorities of the school built up a course intended primarily to fit students for farm life. Agriculture and related subjects are required of all boys and domestic science of all girls. English, history, mathematics, political science, sociology and Economics are taught from a community standpoint. Farm shop as suited to the needs of the farm boy rather than the technical aspects of Manual Training are emphasized. In domestic science the girls are taught to use the kind of equipment that they will be likely to have in their own homes.

An attempt is being made to make the Agenda Rural High School a real factor in the life of the community. During the past year over fifty samples of seed corn were tested by the Agriculture classes for farmers of the community, and over one-hundred samples of milk were given the Babcock test. A large number of farmers

are availing themselves of the opportunity of having milk from individual cows tested so that the unprofitable ones may be culled from the herd.

The influence of the High School reaches out through the Lecture Course, School Entertainments, Programs and Athletic activities. The Lecture Course was well attended and yielded a profit which goes to the Library fund. Plays and Programs draw crowds from the remote corners of the township and even from beyond. A patriotic program this spring brought out a record breaking crowd. The High School quartette frequently appears at Rural School programs and box socials.

Every year the High School holds a track and field meet for the rural schools of the community. The high school students act as officials. Competition is very keen, over one-hundred and fifty students participating in a single meet. The annual meet is very popular and tends to weld the people of the community together. It brings many students to the High School who have learned to like it for the interest it takes in the rural Schools.

The Agenda Rural High School is helping to develop a community consciousness that will lead the people to work together. Through its influence the people are becoming less individualistic. Their children are going there to school and their interests will center there more

and more. They speak of it as "our school". The essentially community spirit of the enterprise is shown by the display of the Agenda Community Service flag in the front window of the building.

#### The Agenda Community Commercial Club.

A movement of very recent origin, which shows clearly that the community spirit is making headway among the people is the organization of the Agenda Community Commercial Club. The object of the organization is to boost Agenda and Elk Creek township from a community standpoint. It will support every enterprise that will be beneficial to the community as a whole. It is organized strictly on a community basis which in this case means that anyone in the township may be a member. The leaders desire to have as many farmers in the club as possible. It already has ninety members.

#### Growth Of Community spirit.

The leaders in Agenda community now are definitely planning with a community Center in view. When the spirit of toleration first began to bear fruit in the

disposition of some of the people to overlook sectarian differences and work for the good of religion in the community, no one thought of a community center. They had in mind, rather, the solution of the church problem. But the church problem proved to be a community problem and in solving it the whole community had to co-operate. This was the germ of the movement. Then a few got the vision and started after a high school. The discussion and agitation required to get it opened the eyes of a few more people to the possibilities of community action. And finally in the commercial club we have a group of men definitely committed to the principle of community action, of building up a social center and solving the problems of better living through co-operation.

## Chapter 1v



## Social Conditions And Activities In Agenda Community.

(Additional Data From The Survey.)

We will next take note of some of the data secured of conditions and resources as they exist in the community today, and consider them in their relation to the Community Center movement in Agenda.

### Economic.

Elk Creek Township is a rural community and will be for years to come barring the discovery of oil\* or some other natural resource. The economic basis of the growth of the community is the soil. Even in Agenda there are no enterprises that are not dependent entirely on the farm community for support. In short, as was discussed in the preceding chapter the township is a purely agricultural community in the fertile Elk Creek valley.

\* At the time this survey was made they were drilling for oil on a location one mile west of the township line. According to reports the prospects were good.

## Ownership And Tenantry.

Of the 168 householders interviewed, 111 owned their homes and 57 are renters. A larger proportion of farmers are renters than of villagers. Of the farmers 74 are owners and 47 renters, of the latter 37 are owners and 10 renters. Practically all the land is owned by people living in the township, so the question of alien ownership does not enter. Many of the renters are children of the owners.

## Farm Products.

Mixed farming is carried on. The soil is adapted to a great variety of crops but failures are frequent owing to the irregularity of the rainfall. Wheat and corn are the staple crops. Wheat seldom fails entirely, and has been the leader in the past. The short crops of the past two seasons, however, has led to an increase in the acreage of corn. Corn does well on the lime soil in the northern part of the township. Alfalfa is raised extensively and is a profitable crop. Republic county is one of the leading alfalfa producers in the state. Oats, barley and sorghums are raised on a smaller scale. Live stock is an important item. The live stock interests are represented by horses, cattle and hogs.

## Farm Methods.

The methods of farming are similar to those used in Kansas generally. Scientific methods have not been introduced. No commercial fertilizers are used, but practically all the stable manure is spread over the fields. One vicious practice of landlords is to require a certain amount of land to be sown to wheat. This often works a hardship on the renter. The practice, if long continued, will impoverish the soil. Carelessness in handling farm machinery is very evident. The farmer who has a machine shed is an exception and not the rule. The common occurrence was to find the machinery scattered about the yard, and in some cases in the field where it was last used the season before. To allow expensive machinery to lie out in the weather is a costly proceeding.

## Agenda As A Market.

Agenda is ideally located to secure the trade of the township. Besides having a central location, it has the reputation of being the best grain market in the vicinity. The trade map of Agenda shows that all the farmers of Elk Creek Township sell their grain there. Besides many from outside the township bring their grain to the mills and elevators. Prices range from two to five cents

per bushel more for wheat and corn than in the nearby markets of Cuba and Clyde, which is due to the fact that the Agenda dealers can and are willing to do business on a smaller margin of profit. As a consequence Agenda is known as a good business place and her merchants are enjoying a good trade. This feature is an important factor in community enterprises and qualifies Agenda as the logical center for Elk Creek Township.

The natural resources of the region are of such a character as to furnish a good physical basis for a progressive society. From an economic standpoint the people are well situated, and have reached a place where they are able to provide for a richer, more satisfying life than has as yet been achieved. A greater economic return and a higher standard of living is possible through improved methods of farm management and the application of science to agriculture. This can be done through co-operation with the extension division of the State Agricultural college.

There is no organized co-operation among the farmers. Only six members of a Farmer's Union were found and they belonged to a union outside the township. The lack of co-operation is a serious drawback to the economic, as well as, the other interests in the community. A movement should be made to establish a Grange or some

# Rural Schools in Elk Creek Township.

Name of School.	Number attending	Leave School before finishing	Stay out to work	Length of Term in mo.	Salary of Teacher	Number of Books	Remarks
Mt. Pleasant	32	2	Occasionally	8	\$75 <sup>00</sup>	75	Library meets the state requirement for a standard library. Building quite new.
Manning	15	None	1	8	\$35 <sup>00</sup>	27	Play ground has a basket ball court and teeter boards. Building put up in 1916.
Stony Point	12	None	1	8	\$50 <sup>00</sup>	75	new Building Standard Library
Prairie Center	15	None	Occasionally	8	\$50	150	Old Building
Harper	32	—	Occasionally	—	\$45 <sup>00</sup>	—	Old Building Few Books. but a set of charts
Dillehay	35	Few	Occasionally	7	\$60 <sup>00</sup>	—	Library Small Playground has a basket ball court and teeter boards.

similar organization. Such a society would be not only a source of profit but would minister to the educational and social wants as well.

#### Schools in Township.

There are six public grade schools wholly or in part within the township not counting the graded school in Agenda. All parts of the township are within easy reach of a school, except the northeast one-third, where the distance between schools is greater than in the other parts.

#### Enrollment And Attendance.

The total enrollment for the six schools during the past year was 141; the average enrollment was 23. The largest number in one school was 35 and the smallest 12. The figures on attendance were not secured, but the teachers reported that the attendance was excellent; only occasionally is a boy kept home to work, and then only in an emergency. They also testified that practically all children of school age were in school. Female teachers are employed exclusively. They are all young ladies, whose preparation consists of High School and Normal train-

ing. none have had any special training in rural problems. It was not learned how long the teachers had been employed in the various districts, but at least three have held their present positions longer than one year. The salaries paid ranged from \$45.00 to \$75.00 per month and averaged \$50.00 for the six schools. The highest paid teacher has had several years experience.

#### School Houses And Equipment.

The school houses are of the conventional one room "box-car type". Four are comparatively new. One was built in 1916 to replace the old one destroyed by a tornado. Two are very old buildings. Three have entryways and cloakrooms. This type of building is proverbially hard to light and ventilate properly. Cross lights from windows opposite each other are a bad feature. Two of the schools have a basket ball court and teeterboards. The rest have no play equipment whatever. No attempt has been made in any instance to beautify the school grounds. In the matter of libraries some of the schools are up to standard. Three meet the requirements of the state board of education for a standard library. One has no books beyond a dictionary and an out of date encyclopedia and perhaps a chart. The number of books of the remainder varied from 27 to 100.

## Co-operation Between Schools And Parents.

The teachers were unanimous in saying that the school boards gave them hearty co-operation and support. As one teacher expressed it, "They've given me all I asked for". A teacher with a Bohemian constituency stated that the Bohemians are very anxious to have their children go to school. "No one can say Bohunk to me anymore", she said. County and state officials visit the schools and make recommendations for improvements, which are generally acted upon favorably. The attitude of the local boards is to make improvements as fast as they feel able to do so. It must be stated, however, that the average country school board does not have an adequate notion of what improvements are needed. They are inclined to let well enough alone.

The number who do not finish the eighth grade is not as large as it formerly was. Only a very few now leave school without a diploma, and they are growing less. One girl sixteen years old said she was "crazy for school", but her folks needed her at home, and now she doesn't care to go back. A boy just past the compulsory age, living within a mile of Agenda was out of school and seemed to be glad of it. Evidently his parents are responsible. As stated before the children who fail to finish school



as well as, those of school age who do not attend are the exception, but there should not be any. Every parent should be made to realize the fundamental importance of education both for the individual child and the welfare of the neighborhood.

#### Consolidation.

Several years ago an attempt was made to secure consolidation of the rural schools. One of the buildings had been destroyed by a storm and the time for such a movement seemed quite opportune. But the people were not ready for it. The chief obstacle in the way of consolidation is the transportation problem. It will remain an obstacle until good roads are provided so that auto trucks may be used. A primary teacher in the Agenda school said, that a consolidated school would be good for the older children, but the little folks could be taught best in separate schools. A rural teacher said, that there were advantages and disadvantages; that the country child will lose something through consolidation. She contends that country children have more respect for the teacher than city children, and are easier to discipline. Consolidation will probably carry in the near future. The leaders in the community favor it. If not complete consolidation,

partial consolidation and redistricting of the township could be done to good advantage.

#### Agenda Grade School.

The grade school at Agenda is a new building of two rooms, thoroughly up-to-date. It is not large enough, however, to accommodate the children now attending. The past term there were 80 pupils. The overcrowding makes it impossible to deal with backward children or repeaters. Two teachers comprise the teaching staff. A third is needed to bring the school up to standard. The library contains 200 volumes of high grade books. The school also has a victrola and forty records. The playground is a half acre plot, which is entirely too small for eighty children. The only play apparatus is a basket ball court.

The school tried out a new plan for the closing three weeks of the year. It is half day sessions. The 2d, 3d, 7th, and 8th grades attend school in the forenoon, and the 5th, 6th, 1st and 4th in the afternoon. With this plan only two grades are in a room at the same time. They expect to do intensive work the half day they are in school and thereby eliminate sleepy, listless school work. It will also give the children time for club gardens.

## Agenda High School.

Mention has already been made of the work of the High School. It will suffice here to mention the university Lecture course that will be put on under the auspices of the High School. The Lecture course is a part of the Extension Division of the University of Kansas. The Course is composed of five high class numbers. It is given absolutely without profit to the university at a cost to the local community of approximately \$200.00. Already 250 people have promised to support the course. This is a feature of public education that needs to be emphasized in a community like Agenda. It is a very effective way of reaching the adult population, and can be used to advance any propoganda for community progress. This is a legitimate field for the university and Agriculture college.

## Home Libraries.

In regard to the number of books in the homes, it was found that the number per family was rather low. When it is taken into consideration that school books were included, the number is surprisingly low. Some, when asked about the number of books replied point blank that

they didn't have any, or just a few story books. Many people in the community would read more books if they were available. Reference was made to one family, who had a considerable number of books, to the effect that their books were loaned out among the neighbors all the time. The need of a library at Agenda is obvious.

In the township 38 families had less than 10 books; 39 families from 10 to 25; 41 families from 25 to 100; and 17 families more than 100. Two reported 500. Among the families who reported more than 100 books, there was usually an exschool teacher.

It was not learned what papers and magazines are read. An old resident said, "The farmers read the newspapers and are as well posted on current topics as the average town man, but they do not take to books. I think the generation that is growing up now will do more reading than their fathers." Some say they don't read any, that they are too tired at night to read. Others claim it is all they can do to read the papers. One farmer stated that he studies the mail and breeze, and derives great benefit from it in his farming operations.

## Religious.

The religious situation in Agenda community is not complicated by the presence of an excess number of organized churches. The Federated Church of Agenda is at present the only organized religious body in the township. The organizations that in years past met in the country school houses have disbanded because of lack of support, as was shown in the preceding chapter, leaving the Federated Church a clear field, without a competitor.

The plant of the Federated Church consists of the two buildings formerly occupied by the Methodist Episcopal and Methodist Protestant churches. Both buildings are used in the Sunday School work and even with this expedient they are cramped for room. Preaching services are held in the larger building, but it is too small when the weather is fair and large crowds come out. The church is growing fast and requires more room. An up-to-date church plant is needed very much. With more room and equipment it could be organized as efficiently as an up-to-date city church.

## Denominations.

The denominational distribution is set forth in the following table,

Denominations.	Agenda village	Open Country.
None	13	46
U B	2	
M P	3	
F M	1	
D ref	1	
Red	16	14
Cath	3	10
Luth	1	4
S Luth	1	
Evang.	1	
Bap.	2	
Ch.	2	
B Com.		2
M E		3
Pres.		3
S Miss		7

Fifteen sects are represented. Fifty-nine families have no church affiliations. In regard to the number of denominations represented there is considerable difference between the village and the country. Eleven different sects have members in the village, and only seven in the country. If sectarianism is an obstacle in the way of church federation then the task of bringing the rural population into the federated church should on the face of these figures, be much easier than in the case of the village.

#### Activities.

The preaching services and the Sunday school are the most important activities of the church. The pastor

gives his entire time to the work of the church. There is a midweek prayer service and a Ladies Aid Society. A Christian Endeavor has been developed by the young people. There is also a church choir. The Christian Endeavor provides for most of the social activities in connection with the church. The boys of the community have a boy's scout organization. The pastor of the Federated Church is their leader. The boys under twelve are in a wood crafter's club, which is taking up garden work.

### Obstacles.

The chief obstacle to the success of the Federated Church in Agenda is the indifference of a large number to the movement. Many of the country people, it seems, do not understand what the Federated Church is trying to do. A man, living not more than two miles from Agenda, when asked what he thought of the community movement said, that he didn't know any thing about it and wasn't interested. Another said, "People used to go to church a great deal. Nowadays scarcely anyone goes except on special occasions. Something is wrong but I don't know what it is. There has been trouble ever since they built the second church at Agenda."

"Oh, I belong to the "Big Church" was the reply

of a great number who have no church affiliations. It was spoken with respect and sometimes shamefacedly. It seemed as though they felt that the church has something good which perhaps they lack and ought to have. What these people need is to be made to realize that the church needs them and their help; that in helping the church they are allowing a deepseated desire of their nature to be satisfied and that association in religious activity is perfectly natural.

There are a few who are not satisfied with the church as it is organized at present. One man is opposed to the Federated Church "because the Methodist Protestant and Methodist Episcopal people keep their organizations intact and send their contributions to their own boards." He would have them "drop their old organizations entirely and unite in a new body without any outside connections." However, most of the people who really understand the situation are favorably disposed toward federation. They feel that it will be a fine thing if the people work together wholeheartedly.

An element in the community that may cause trouble at any time is a small group of holiness people. While they are not in a position to exert much influence they are regarded as potential trouble makers. If they are not antagonized and are kept out of positions of



power, they will soon disappear as a factor in religious life. This sect stands for excitement with little ethical content. Their emotionalism is disapproved of by the majority of people.

The church leaders are planning to erect a new building as soon as conditions will warrant the undertaking. They have in view an up-to-date plant with ample accommodations for all the Sunday school classes and a gymnasium, and equipment for social affairs.

The big job of the church in Agenda is to get in touch with every person who is not now actively associated with some other church. To accomplish this, it will have to do constructive work. It may find it necessary to emphasize some things not usually considered as legitimate church work. It should stimulate every desirable interest in the community. If it can teach the people how to farm better; if it can enrich their social life; if it can educate the people along lines of better living, and do these things in the name of religion, there can be no doubt of its success as a church, or of its accomplishments for religion in Agenda community.

## Social And recreational.

The residents of Elk Creek Township depend almost entirely on Agenda and surrounding towns for recreation and amusement. Occasionally programs are given by the rural schools, but these are mostly annual affairs. The village it seems has usurped the function of providing amusement. The social life of the country folk is not full enough to satisfy normal human demands. They are so much taken up with their daily work that they neglect social intercourse with their neighbors. Neighborhood and group picnics are a thing of the past. Instead of having a neighborhood celebration on the Fourth of July the people go to Cuba or Clyde or elsewhere. Neighborhood parties are also very rare. In some parts of the township as long a time as a year passes without a real social party. As a result the opportunity for social intercourse among the farmers is restricted. Neighbors do not get acquainted as they might. They do not really know each other or how to sympathize with each other. The effect of the curtailment of social opportunities is that, that they have become stubbornly independent and suspicious and are averse to co-operation.

As near as could be learned there are no country baseball teams, such as were a feature of country life a generation ago. No other recreational games are

played to any extent except in connection with the High School. The social life of the High School students indirectly affects the parents and is an opportunity the teachers should improve.

### Dancing.

Dancing is popular among the Bohemians in the north and west parts of the township, but is frowned upon by the Swedes, who are grouped in the east part toward the county line. Dances have been held in Agenda but none during the past year. Those who favor dancing do so on the ground that the young people need some place to go. Most of the dances are held at Cuba.

The dearth of social and recreational activities in country life is due in large measure to the introduction of the telephone, Rural Free Delivery, and the automobile. With easy and ready communication, it is not necessary to leave home to chat with a neighbor or exchange ideas. The automobile makes possible more extended visiting at the expense of near neighbors, especially if they are ungenial. The next door neighbor is neglected. As a woman said, "We can visit our friends who are congenial. We can revise our visiting list and do not have to associate with uncongenial neighbors." The community is passing

through a transition period in which the center of social, religious and educational activities of men is shifting from the small neighborhood group to the larger village group. It is highly important that all the people should recognize the signs of the times and work in harmony with this tendency.

## Conclusion

## Conclusion.

In developing the subject of Rural Community Centers, we called attention first to the growing interest in rural problems and the changing attitude of leaders toward them. The country was for a long time neglected owing to the fact that morbid social conditions first became serious in the large cities and completely overshadowed conditions of a similar character in rural districts. That it is now brought to the fore is due more than anything else to the unequal progress of town and country during the past fifty years. During this period the city has developed a higher standard and has become more attractive to humanity in a number of ways than the country. The spell of the city drew the energetic and capable individuals away from the country leaving it without the efficient leadership it needed. In this same period we find that country life has made very little progress, indeed in some cases it has deteriorated due to the negative tendencies of decrease of population, decline of the church, increase of tenantry and mental and moral stagnation.

Careful study of the issues involved has led to the conclusion that country life is backward because

of isolation and lack of personal contacts, and that it must be organized on a more efficient basis if it is to keep step with the city. If it does not keep step with the city it will continue to deteriorate until none but a dependent peasantry will occupy the land. In order to avoid such a state of affairs and to meet the ills of isolation, co-operation is necessary. As a means for securing the desired co-operation we suggested the community center to develop community consciousness, unify the people and teach and facilitate co-operation. The movement to organize rural life into community centers is becoming general with centers already established in every section of the country. The centers do not take the same form in every instance but the underlying idea is the same in all; that of getting all the people of a neighborhood to participate in the common life of the neighborhood to make it better. Greater participation results in a common bond of sympathy that makes people willing and desirous of co-operating with each other.

The study of Agenda Community shows how that community went about to organize its life on a new basis. The early history of the township shows the type of society that develops in a pioneer civilization. It is one of equality and co-operation in which all live the same kind of a life. The institutions are simple but suited

to the needs of the time. Then after a time when certain individuals had succeeded in accumulating more material possessions than some of their neighbors, class distinctions arose. The successful men were able to live in better fashion than those who barely made a living and came to look upon the latter as inferior. The introduction of modern means of communication lessened the demand for personal intercourse. These changes were followed up by a breakup of the old social relations. The old institutions were no longer suited to the changing social order and began to lose their vitality. Country life divided by class lines entered upon a process of decay, from a sociological standpoint, and grew continuously less satisfying. This continued until Agenda in virtue of its size and importance assumed the leadership in the township.

The movement toward a reorganization of the life of the community began with a federation of the churches. The amalgamation of the various religious elements into the federated church has put the religious life on a firm basis. A move to improve the educational facilities of the township began with the establishment of the Rural High School. These two projects have shown the people what they are able to do by working together, and they have come out boldly for community action in all things that affect the community as a whole. Through their



Community Commercial Club they are going to boost Elk Creek Township along progressive lines and center the economic, educational, religious and social interests at Agenda.

The outlook for the future of Agenda Community is promising. The spirit with which the work has been carried on thus far is sound. If a comprehensive view of the situation is kept in mind and the center is made to function in the interests of the entire community, it will continue to grow in influence and it will be able to bring about a richer, larger life.

The study of the community has suggested the following things which may be done to make life better. These should be kept in mind as a part of the program that will be put across. The economic resources as they exist are of a character that is capable of maintaining a growing and progressive society. But these resources can be utilized more efficiently by the application of scientific methods to agriculture. In this connection the extension work of the Agricultural College should be used to educate the farmers. Better agriculture should be an important part of the community program.

The educational facilities of the township can be greatly improved without overburdening the taxpayers. The desire for education is strong. It needs only to be directed in the proper channel. Since the interests of

of the community are rural the teachers should have special training in rural problems. The courses too, should be correlated with rural life as far as possible. Better equipment for all the schools is needed both inside and out. Play is an important phase of education if properly conducted. Finally the place where the children spend a large part of their time should be beautified, so that school life would be a joy and an inspiration. Education for the adults should be provided in the shape of lectures, organized discussion clubs, and the like. A public library that will serve the needs of all the people and be readily accessible is needed to build up their intellectual life and give them a broader outlook; more to look forward to. Their intellectual poverty is one thing that retards the growth of community consciousness.

The religious situation as a whole points to better things. The Federated Church is growing and needs a larger building in order to do effective work. One of its tests will be to provide the needed equipment. Service to the community should be given prime importance. Everything seems to indicate that the people are ready for a really constructive religious program.

Social intercourse and recreation should be given very careful consideration. Because of the absence of socializing agencies the people are kept apart and

differences are emphasized. The village's opportunity is to draw the country unto itself socially.

While the Rural Community Movement is still in its infancy, enough has already been done, as shown in the examples given to prove it is more than a theory. It is meeting real needs in a practical way. We have attempted to show how the processes of change are taking place in Elk Creek community in the transformation of a typical unorganized rural township into an organized progressive community conscious group. It seems to the writer that the example of this community offers a partial solution for the rural problems which were outlined in the first part of this paper.

In conclusion the leaders of the Community Movement should study the people, learn their needs and appeal to those interests which will touch their lives in a vital way. As leaders they should give voice to and embody the desires and aspirations, the deep felt, inarticulate longings of the very common people.