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Building a Better Home Town . A Program

of Community Self-analysis and Self-help

H. CLAY TATE

Editor, *The Daily Pantagraph*,
Bloomington, Illinois

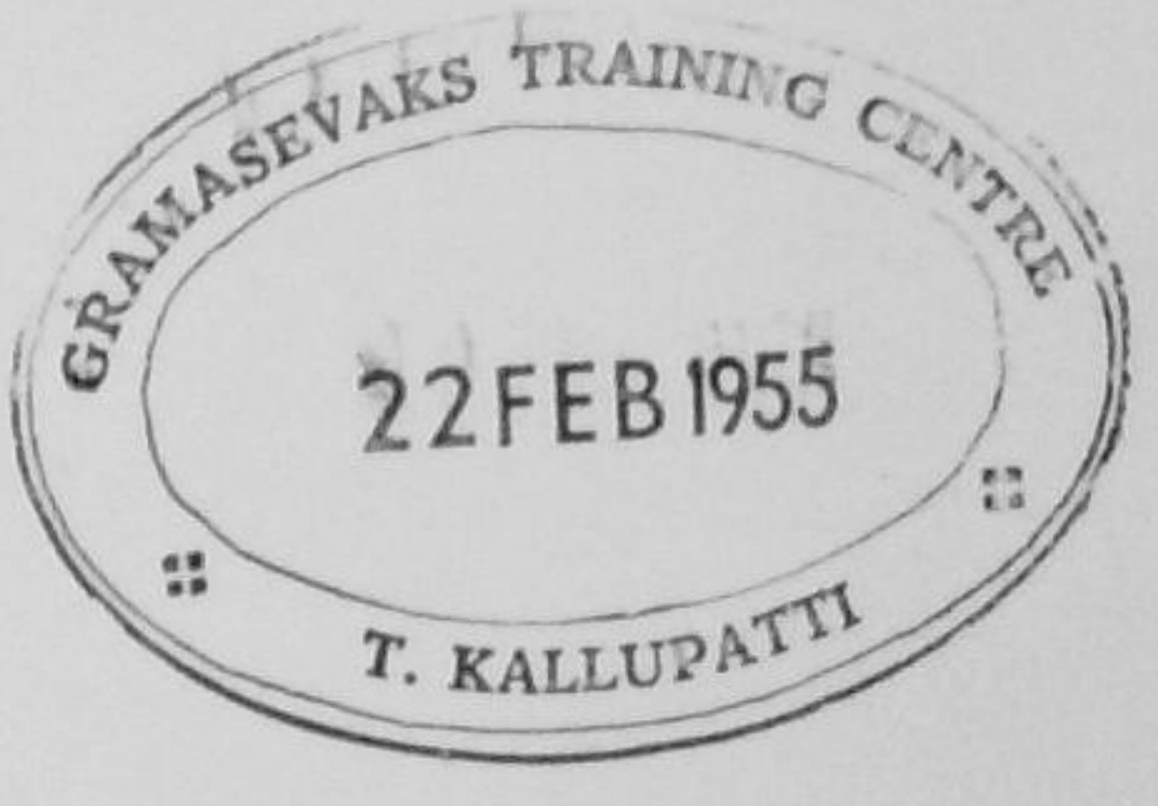


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DEDICATION

TO the intelligent young people who are beginning to turn away from centralization to the non-metropolitan areas of the United States in quest of the good life. They are the guardians of the American dream.

CONTENTS

Introduction, by Baker Brownell ix

Preface xi

PART I

1. Must We Accept Centralization? 3
2. Human Erosion 14
3. Small Town to the Rescue 20
4. Community Teamwork Is Essential 31
5. Too Many Communities 39
6. Small Communities HAVE Recreation 47
7. Small Communities Need Strong Churches 59
8. Bedroom Citizens 68
9. Making Communities Attractive 73
10. Diagnosticians at Work 85
11. What Is Good? 96
12. The Complete Community 106

PART II

13. The Bloomington Experiment 123
14. Community Building Expanded 147
15. Stanford Fights to Live 159
16. Colfax Insures Her School 172
17. Roanoke Would Not Die 180
18. Relaxed Lexington 190
19. The Spunk of Minonk 198
20. The Power of Example 205
21. Community Leadership 210

22. Formula for Community Improvement 217
23. The Next Step 221
Acknowledgments 227
Bibliography 229
Index 231

INTRODUCTION

by Baker Brownell, Supervising Editor

LIKE many other newspapermen, H. Clay Tate seems to have a native resistance to writing books. Presumably, book writing is too high-falutin', theoretical, or academic to appeal to an operating editor. I feel, therefore, that I did well in wearing down that resistance over a period of six years and at last extracting from him this book. As a matter of fact, the book is based on deeds, not proposals. It is essentially a newspaperman's report—and a statesman's—on a project in community stabilization and enrichment in which Mr. Tate, the Bloomington (Illinois) *Daily Pantagraph*, of which he is editor, Alvin Anderson of the University of Illinois, and others took the lead.

Can a big-brother community—in this case Bloomington—live in constructive harmony with little-brother communities? Can it add strength and service to their existence and receive strength and support from them in turn without undermining their economy and culture and destroying their identity as small communities? The survival of these small communities alongside of the larger one is central in Mr. Tate's vision. The importance of their continuity, influence, and way of life is the gist of his message. He rejects the urban patterns of anonymous, mass culture that tend to dominate modern times.

This is a radical idea in the best sense; it is deep rooted. In the outstanding success of his community cooperation project it is quietly revolutionary. What town of forty thousand or more accepts as its destiny anything other than the aggressive capture of its neighboring small communities, the absorption of their business houses, their schools, transportation agencies, their hospitals, churches, and indeed their population? Such a town is rare indeed. The larger town usually sucks dry, as if it were a great tick, the blood and life of its smaller neighbors.

But Bloomington is different. Mr. Tate's evangelism has paid off. Both Bloomington and the little towns around it have come to see the advantage in mutual development and the distribution of many general functions among the several members of the cluster. Instead of being suppressed or duplicated unnecessarily, these functions are parceled out to the community advantage of all. In this cluster of communities efficient services are thus possible without the sacrifice of the primary character and intimacy of each group.

Mr. Tate comes from a little town in southern Illinois. He too, as he says in this book, was drained out of his home community, a part of the general erosion of American small communities and rural life. He turned out to be a stubborn migrant, however, and when precipitated in central Illinois he became through the years an important influence in building a firmer community life and democracy in that magnificent region. Along with people such as Arthur E. Morgan, Harry Schacter, the Ogdens, Richard W. Poston, Luigi Ligutti, Granville Hicks, Irwin Sanders, Howard McClusky, John Barton, and Stanley Hamilton, he is a member of that increasingly significant group in America concerned in the rebuilding of our small communities. It is probably the most critical problem of the time.

PREFACE

IT'S strange sometimes how one gets into this writing business. I wanted to be a preacher or a lawyer. Andy Rule, my philosophy professor at Illinois College, didn't give me much encouragement on entering the ministry. My debates with him on religion and individual liberty led him to think, no doubt correctly, that my life in the ministry would make me and those with whom I came in contact rather miserable.

The only way I could be a lawyer was to get a job after college to earn necessary money for continued education. And the most likely job was in teaching. Here again I was balked, this time by the late scholarly and wise Henry Charles Rammelkamp, president of Illinois College. He told me frankly that he could not recommend me for a teaching post. It wasn't because of my grades. They were above average. It wasn't because of my character. I grew up in church and lived a clean life. It was because of my independence of spirit. Teachers were conformists, he said. I ought to write, he advised. I ought to get a job on a newspaper.

Dr. Rammelkamp no doubt held vividly in his memory the disturbance I had caused as editor of the Illinois College *Rambler* in my junior year. The faculty of this conservative and scholarly little college had issued a number of edicts for conduct of the students that appeared to me to be in violation of individual liberty. Among the rules was one denying students the right to be married without faculty permission. Another proclaimed that men students should wear collars and ties to classes at all times. I hardly had time for a date in college and I don't recall ever even thinking of going to class without being properly dressed with collar and tie. But I felt it was my business if I wanted to be married or if I wanted to leave off my tie in order to make an eight o'clock class after working all night as proofreader on the Jacksonville *Journal*. And I said so with all the exuberance and positiveness of youth.

It caused a young revolution on campus. The newspapers picked it

up and tagged it the "Collar and Tie Revolt." I was denounced and chided in editorials from Memphis to Toledo to Chicago. One paper said I should be denied the right of a college education. President Rammelkamp came scurrying back to campus from California and I probably would have been summarily dismissed except for the threat of a student strike if the axe fell. As it was I lost my scholarship, which was deserved punishment, no doubt, and my job as bookkeeper with the secretary of the Illinois College board of trustees.

It was while I was walking down State Street in Jacksonville that the die was cast. A tall man-of-the-world stepped out in front of me.

"I'm Murphy from the Illinois *State Register*," he said. "You're Tate, aren't you?" I confessed and he said someone out at the college had recommended me to be Jacksonville correspondent for the *Register*, which was published in Springfield thirty-five miles away. Was I interested, he asked. The answer to that question was one of the simplest of my life. I hadn't the slightest idea what the job involved in time or talent, but with fifteen dollars total assets at the beginning of my senior year in college, I accepted on the spot.

It was against this background that Dr. Rammelkamp refused to recommend me for teaching but volunteered to do all he could with his newspaper acquaintances to help me land a reporting job. By coincidence E. N. Witaschek of the *Register* called a week before graduation and advised me that there might be an opening on the *Register*. I hurried over to see Bob Stubbs, hard-driving self-made managing editor, and got the job. I still fully intended to continue with law later, but there were strokes of fate that intervened. One was when Stubbs sent me out to interview petite Jo Trowbridge, who had been elected Miss Springfield. The interview netted me a five-dollar raise and eventually a bride. Despite efforts of the late Federal Judge Louis FitzHenry to persuade me to enter night classes in Lincoln College of Law at Springfield, jurisprudence gave way to romance and I've been in the writing business ever since.

That brings us to the subject of community. Before going to work on the *Register* I had been offered what appeared to me to be a good opportunity in my home town of Eldorado, Illinois. The town of about 4000 population had two struggling newspapers, one a daily and one a weekly. The owners of the weekly were eager to get it off their hands. They were willing to turn the whole plant over to me for

$3000, which they knew I didn't have. They said I could pay it whenever I got the money.

I took the week end off and interviewed various citizens of the community whom I respected. I talked to a lawyer, a minister, a businessman or two, my old school principal, and others. To a man they said in effect:

"Don't waste your life here. This place offers no opportunity. You'll get kicked in the teeth every time you try to do anything. Go to a city where there is opportunity and where you can live your own life."

I say this not in criticism of these good people. They were reflecting the Horatio Alger philosophy which has permeated our society. Their counterparts in any other community would have given the same advice, and they would have been just as sincere. In fact the same advice could be expected in hundreds of communities throughout the country today. The accepted thing for talented young men and women to do is to go to a *big* city, get a job with a *big* company, draw a *big* salary and spend the rest of their lives trying to simulate the simple pleasures they left back in their home towns.

The climax to this saga is a letter I received almost a quarter century later. It came from Mayor John D. Upchurch on official city stationery. It read:

DEAR MR. TATE:

The city of Eldorado continues to claim you as a home-town product and much pride comes to the entire community through the article appearing in *Collier's* July 2nd, 1949 edition, in a story built around your accomplishments entitled "The Old Home Town Fights To Live."

We compliment you for gaining nation-wide recognition in the development of a plan for small town betterment and we are happy to realize that much personal satisfaction comes to you through such wide publicity given your successful program.

The council of the city of Eldorado in their regular session of June 27th, attempts to pay you honor by naming you one of our outstanding former citizens and we are having our expression recorded in the minutes of the meeting of that date.

Very sincerely yours,
The Council of the City of Eldorado, Illinois.
JOHN DAVID UPCHURCH, *Mayor*

I don't think it has ever occurred to the fine people of my home town that the best tribute they could pay me or any other "former citizens" would be to establish a civic-economic-cultural climate which would make today's youth want to stay at home and help build a better community. I say this not in criticism, but to point up one of the blind spots in community life today.

Just by way of anti-climax, I might say that my brother, Ernie, who did not heed the advice to go to the *big* city and get a *big* job with a *big* salary, stayed at home. He eventually became mayor, head of a business, and bank president, and is more successful financially than I ever hope to be. He knew that opportunity is where you are. Most people are still chasing rainbows. The purpose of this book is to help find that pot of gold in the hundreds of small communities throughout this great country.

There are no hard feelings against Illinois College, either, for forcing me into the writing business. Many of her students are married today, one seldom sees a tie in a classroom—and the college is still among the best in the country. I later served on its board of trustees and thought enough of it to let my daughter attend. She became editor of *The Rambler* in her junior year and I kept my fingers crossed all year for fear another student revolt would develop. It almost did, but both students and faculty were wiser than in my day and the emergency passed.

It is strange about this writing business. When Joan was a tot I used to take her with me on assignments throughout Central Illinois. I called her one day and invited her to go with me up to Pontiac.

"No," she said, "I don't think I'll go."

"That's quite all right," I said to the five-year-old, "but would you mind telling me why?"

"Well," she said, "If I keep going with you I'll want to be a newspaper woman—and I *don't* want to be a newspaper woman. I want to be a nurse."

Now she's a newspaper girl.

Writing gets in one's blood and one's thinking. The typewriter becomes an extra arm. My brain and hands refuse to function properly when I try to write a letter in longhand. Expression through the spoken word becomes more difficult. I recall an experience that

brought this out clearly a few years ago. I was invited to Pekin to speak to a Boy Scout gathering. I thought it would be a small group of restless boys who wanted most of all to get away from the place fast. Instead it was a large gathering of Scouts and their parents. Everett M. Dirksen, now United States Senator from Illinois, was toastmaster. There may be some difference of opinion as to Senator Dirksen's thought content, but none will deny he has a fluent and fascinating flow of spoken English. I was embarrassed and made the fatal mistake of trying to explain myself out of a spot.

When I was in school I enjoyed debate and oratory, I told the boys. But since college days most of my expression had been in writing rather than speaking. I was afraid I had lost the art of effective public speaking so masterfully demonstrated by their toastmaster.

"You know how it is," I told the boys. "You've heard of a man gaining strength in one arm if he loses the other; or of blind people who develop a strong sense of feel and smell. Well, my strength of expression in public speaking has declined as I have devoted more time to writing."

I stumbled through the speech and as I left I heard one sturdy youngster say as he leaped for the doorway:

"That guy must be a whale of a writer."

I'm sticking to writing.

As a matter of fact I was pushed into writing this book. The interest in the Central Illinois Community Betterment Program carried on by *The Daily Pantagraph* in cooperation with the University of Illinois has been widespread. Hundreds of inquiries have come from virtually every state in the union and from several foreign countries. Baker Brownell first suggested a book six years ago. I felt the project was not mature enough. He renewed the suggestion periodically. Governor Adlai E. Stevenson, Andy Anderson, extension specialist from the University of Illinois, Tom Shearer, president of Parsons College, and others have suggested the book.

So I have abandoned my resolve to be one newspaperman with the distinction of not having written a book. I do it in self-defense. The book is written to point out how continued centralization is robbing the people of the right of choice; how that leads to dictatorship re-

gardless of whether the vehicle of centralization is capitalism, social-
ism, fascism, or communism; what is being done here in Central
Illinois to try to halt the trend and to encourage more abundant, inde-
pendent, and purposeful living. It is a sort of revolt again—a revolt
against a much greater threat to the individual right of choice than
being forced to wear a collar and tie, or getting teacher's permission
to get married.

So here it is. I hope this book will help people all over this country in all walks of life to realize how important preserving and strengthening the small community is to that individual right to choose I defended as a student. And I hope it will spur them into doing something about the situation while there is time. Perhaps that is a form of the ministry after all. And of the law. And of teaching.

H. C. T.

Bloomington, Illinois
February, 1954

Part I • The Importance of the Non-metropolitan Community in a Free Society

GRAMASEVAKS TRAINING CENTRE
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T. KALLUPATTI

CHAPTER 1

Must We Accept Centralization?

THIS IS the story of Bloomington, Illinois, county seat of McLean County, and the smaller cities, towns, villages, and farmlands that surround it. It is a story of concerted effort toward developing a better community and a more abundant life. It is the story of the emergence of this midwestern non-metropolitan center which serves what is probably the richest contiguous agricultural area in the world.

It is the story, too, of *The Daily Pantagraph*, a newspaper which is read by most of the inhabitants of the area—and has been for four or five generations. Proudly it carries on its editorial page the slogan: *1846—108 years of community service—1954. The Pantagraph* is a hardy perennial. It is the sole survivor of more than a hundred newspapers which have been published in Bloomington. It is the champion in the toughest kind of competition in the most competitive era of American history. It survived because it served.

This is the story of an experiment in community building as a project in adult education with *The Pantagraph* and the University of Illinois as cooperators. It is the story of newspaper people who came out of their ivory towers and of college professors who emerged from ivied walls to do some shirt-sleeved work with the people. If it is a significant story, it is because it could be repeated in any primary non-metropolitan center in America.

It is significant also because of what is happening in America. The central city is passing the crest of its importance in society. The suburban metropolitan area is on the ascendancy. But approaching its moment is the non-metropolitan center like Bloomington and the area that it serves. Here is the community of the future. Here the good

life can be found. Here and here alone can the values upon which the nation was founded and nurtured be revived and perpetuated.

This is the story of the road back from centralization. It is the story of those who no longer run away from the problems of their own communities to seek Utopia elsewhere, but stay at home to build better communities. That is a reversal of a national trend.

Americans have never delighted in solving problems. Traditionally they have run away from them. That spirit is deeply imbedded in the tradition of the people. Those who first came to the New World were driven by the desire to escape from problems in their native lands. The steady march across the mountains, plains, and deserts was motivated by the same urge to get away from it all and start anew. The ambition of so many youths to leave home and seek fame and fortune in the big city or some distant land bears modern testimony to this restless energy which permeates the American scene. We have taken the Horatio Alger philosophy to our bosom. We do honor, not to the men and women who stay at home and build better communities, but to those who flee from their native environment.

In this restless mobility we have learned to exploit our resources and our communities, but we have not learned to improve them. Ghost towns, slums, plundered forests, and hopelessly eroded farm lands stand as monuments to our folly. Now the virgin forests are all but vanished. The land frontier of continental United States has been exploited. The big cities are swirling and reeling under an ever increasing maze of problems. New slums develop as old slums are cleared at phenomenal costs in both physical assets and human erosion. There are few good communities to which people can move.

The same unrest which grips most of us is also responsible for our great physical development. With only 7 per cent of the world's population, the United States does 40 per cent of the world's work. Our mechanical and productive genius has made it possible for us to produce for $2000 to $5000 an automobile which it would cost $45,000 to produce by hand. This great increase in efficiency of production has given us a physical standard of living unknown anywhere else in any era of history. The end is not in sight. We are still growing. The Census Bureau estimates that by 1975 the population will

increase another 40 million. That is the equivalent of nearly five new states the size of Illinois or forty new states the size of Maine.

Our growth up to this time has been a growth of centralization. Our populations, governments, businesses, and organizations have become giants beyond the comprehension or control of the individual. And the people are still unhappy. They have acquired the comforts of life without acquiring the art of living. They still want to move on to something else. Where shall they go?

How is America going to handle this restless energy in the future? In what directions will it grow? What will be the result? Can we as a people determine our course, or are we merely the victims of time, place, and circumstance?

We as a nation can control our destiny if we will. The early steps toward centralization were natural enough. Mass production cannot be carried on in the backlot shop. Power for mass production came largely from steam, and it had to be generated where there was an adequate supply of water. Business just naturally got big. And with big business came big labor and, inevitably, big government.

But in the process of cheapening the things we use, we cheapened the individual. He is no longer the master of his fate. The sales girl in New York or the auto worker in Detroit is helpless as an individual. His union and his government are all that stand between him and destruction. The steel strike of 1952 showed us how dependent we are. Every person in every station of our economic and social life was affected. The situation was so desperate that the President sought to seize the steel mills to keep production going. The "mess in Washington" is another example of this centralization and the social and economic inundation of the individual. The presidential election of 1952 was influenced by the desire to throw off this yoke in favor of the development of a society in which the individual counts.

No one escapes from this overpowering pressure of bigness. The success of a farmer in the rich agricultural area of Central Illinois depends less upon his ability and his decisions than it does upon the decisions which determine the support price for corn and the appropriations which shore up those prices. The quality of the schools in almost any community is not wholly within the jurisdiction of the people of the community. They must conform to the standards set by

various state and national agencies in order to get the funds with which to operate.

Our modern society has made of us a group of twentieth-century cliff dwellers without the liberty our predecessors enjoyed. Families may live side by side in an apartment building for years and not know each other. People in the biggest cities are the loneliest. They may spend as much as two or three hours a day commuting to and from jobs. They gulp a bite of lunch after standing in line for the privilege. They see the blight of slums roll in upon their homes, apartments, and churches; and they are helpless. They are lost in a sea of gadgets, tossing about helpless but for the decisions of those they do not know —decisions they cannot control.

No wonder people turn to big government and big unions to protect them. No wonder the gargantua of bigness feeds upon itself. The end result is inevitable. A continuance toward centralization is certain to lead to complete totalitarianism. The individual cannot count in a centralized society. Complete centralization means complete loss of liberty. It matters not so much what form that centralization takes, the result is the same. Streamlining, such as that recommended by the Hoover Commission, will contribute to efficiency. There is grave doubt whether it will restore the sanctity of the individual.

Is this, then, the end toward which we have been propelling ourselves? Must this be the reward for our energies and our drive? Are we coming to the end of a great experiment in representative government with material success and individual slavery? Has the great dream been transformed into a horrible nightmare? Have we fashioned the tools for abundant living into weapons which destroy the purposes of life?

There is no return to the backyard shop and the household loom. The good old days were not so good, and we couldn't recapture them if we wished. But there is a point of diminishing returns in centralization. Mass production does not necessitate making everything in one factory. Efficient use of modern equipment does not require that millions upon millions of people live in congested cities. All value must not be measured in terms of gadgets. The cost in moral and spiritual decay must be included in the balance sheet of modern industry. The individual must count for something in the scales of production.

II

The early developments of centralization were natural and beneficial. It was a transition from an agrarian to an industrial civilization. The development of mass production techniques dovetailed with improved farming practices and better farm equipment. Surplus farm labor was absorbed into industry. The evil was in over-centralization to a point where our basic philosophy which gives preeminence to the individual is threatened. Unless we can find ways to restore to the individual a greater degree of control over his own destiny, the great American experiment will have failed. Man cannot enjoy the luxury of freedom in a centralized society. He can have freedom in an industrial society if he is willing to work for it—if he is willing to substitute effort for drift.

There are many forces at work to bring about decentralization. One of the most important is electricity. It is no longer necessary to concentrate industrial plants along water courses. Electric power can be transmitted anywhere. The miracle of rural electrification within the last two decades is an example. Today we can have a factory on every farm. Produce of the farm can be processed as far toward the state in which the ultimate consumer buys it as the farmer wishes. Development of small power units for virtually every type of task or process has made the farm factory feasible. There are some four hundred uses for electricity on the farm today and rural electrification is still in its infancy.

Much greater development of this possibility has come about in recent years than many realize. The machine shop is a vital part of most commercial farms. And the ingenuity of farmers often places them ahead of the big machinery manufacturers in the development of labor-saving devices. Pick up most any farm publication and you will read of ingenious devices worked out in the farm machine shop. Possibilities for still further progress in this field are limitless.

Availability of electricity makes it possible to operate a factory efficiently in almost any community. Industry has been emancipated from the centralizing force of steam power.

Highway, rail, and air transportation—all products of a centralizing society—are playing a part in the counter force of decentralization. Factories, powered by electricity, no longer need be located along

rivers or on the coast. Rail, truck, and air transportation can deliver their products to any market quickly and efficiently. It is being done all over the United States so effectively that even the giant corporations are spending billions of dollars on branch plants. They, too, are decentralizing.

Commercial development of atomic energy promises to be an even greater force for decentralization. There is the obvious physical danger of vulnerability of concentrated industrial areas in time of war—a threat which looms larger to this country than to any other. This is getting serious attention from industrial engineers, governments, and military men. But the mobility of atomic power in peaceful pursuits challenges the imagination. Atomic experts believe it will make ample power available anywhere in the world. If the potency of atomic power lives up to early claims, it will be possible to carry enough energy in a piece of luggage to industrialize a small region.

Even developments in entertainment are contributing to the trend toward decentralization. Radio and television can give the family at the farm or village fireside the same quality of entertainment available on Broadway. The same books and magazines are available everywhere.

III

Some thought is being given to the economics of centralized industrialization. A factory might possibly make a product at a somewhat lower unit cost in a huge plant, though even that is challenged. But to that cost society must add many others. The cost of slums, of social programs, relief, of crime in congested areas, of a breakdown in morals, of big government—all these must be charged against the accounts of centralized industry. It has been estimated that the average worker in a city like Detroit loses two weeks a year in traffic jams alone while going to and from work.

With individuals requiring up to three and four hours a day to commute, the loss in man hours to the total national production each year must be staggering. That, too, must be charged against the cost accounts of centralization. So must the cost of building and rebuilding and widening the highways leading to industrial plants. So must the cost of fuel and tires and automobiles used by commuters. These are

some of the reasons why decentralization is certain to get greater attention in the years ahead.

There is a crisis in public transportation all over the United States. Private companies are having a hard time breaking even and many of them are openly urging the socialization of public transportation. Yet the experience of public transit systems is far from encouraging. They differ only in the amount of subsidy which must be provided from the general funds of municipal governments across the land. Publicly financed transportation is a by-product of centralization. Its cost must be taken into account when evaluating the efficiency of our centralized civilization.

Automobile parking is a problem in every city of the nation. Millions upon millions of dollars are being spent in an effort to cope with it. Those dollars are coming out of the pockets of the people. They add to the cost of a centralized society. There would be no large parking problem if it were not for centralized factories and shops.

Centralization of production has brought with it the centralization of organized labor. The vertical union can tie up an industry just as can the operators of giant essential industries. In today's society work stoppage in such an industry is a modern type of blackmail in which the helpless public is held as hostage. The much cherished right to strike and the equally cherished right of management to stop production cannot be tolerated in a centralized society. Either the right must be abrogated in the face of realities or society must be decentralized. Centralization makes it necessary to destroy liberty.

It is no accident that industry has been fleeing from the East toward the South and West. The managers of industry are trying to extricate themselves from the rigidity of a centralized society which they helped to create. It is not surprising that governmental agencies are urging further decentralization of industry—not so much from the social or economic standpoint but from the standpoint of national survival. The national policy for industrial dispersion was announced by the President in 1951. It was designed to assure greater relative security of the nation's industrial plant and production from atom bomb attacks. It provides that new defense production facilities must be located ten miles or more from a highly industrialized or densely populated section. This is considered so important in assuring greater relative

national security that the federal government has made proper location of a new defense plant a condition to receiving defense production assistance. Numerous federal publications have been issued to encourage dispersion of industrial production. Decentralization is a major factor in national survival in the atomic age.

IV

Industrialists themselves have seen advantages in decentralization. Don G. Mitchell, president of Sylvania Electric Products, Inc., has said that as far back as 1865 "industry was calling more and more people to cities where in return for higher wages and for what appeared to be greater opportunity, the masses who migrated from rural areas had to give up some of their freedom of individual initiative.

"To me this has been the greatest fault of the machine age—the concentration of workers to the point where security has become more important than the opportunity offered by risk and initiative. Those of us who have had a policy of decentralized manufacture for some time are convinced that its social aspects are fully as important as its economic benefits. Decentralization is training a new group of individual leaders, men with a social as well as an economic perspective, men who understand how to live with, as well as in, communities, men who are eager for responsibility, who enjoy freedom, who want nothing better than the right to succeed or fail."

Industrial managers have found that they get better production and lower cost in plants outside the central cities. Some of the reasons for locating in outlying sites are listed in Regional Planning Bulletin No. 80, titled *New Industrial Location in New York Metropolitan Region from 1946 through 1950*, by the Regional Planning Association. These included:

1. Space for (a) one-story factories designed to use new equipment and assembly-line processes; (b) future expansion; (c) employee parking; (d) employee cafeteria and recreational facilities; (e) landscaping and setting, the latter recognized for advertising value.
2. Economy through (a) faster transportation of supplies and products, and easier accessibility for employees; (b) minimizing employee turnover by better living and working conditions.
3. Decreased vulnerability by planned dispersion within the regional market.

The trend to locate new industry outside the larger cities is evident throughout the country. It is gaining momentum. Before the outbreak of the war in Korea, Detroit had 35 per cent of Michigan's manufacturing activity. Since then the 145 million dollar investment in Detroit proper has been only 14 per cent of the Michigan total. Industry is breaking away from the old patterns of locating in the big cities and is placing new plants in the outskirts of the big cities or in the smaller towns. Paul Reid's studies indicate that this trend had been in progress for about a quarter of a century. A survey conducted by the Area Development Division of the U.S. Department of Commerce in 1951-52 revealed that nearly 60 per cent of areas meeting the requirements for supporting industrial districts were located in or near cities of 100,000 or more. Another 25 per cent were in or near cities of 25,000 to 100,000, and 15 per cent were in communities of less than 25,000. The survey indicated that there is apparently no minimal size of community required to support an industrial district.

I. Q. Lord of the Department of Commerce said in 1953 that

> decentralization of business and industry is broad in scope, encompassing (1) the trend to locating manufacturing plants in outlying sections of metropolitan areas rather than in central cities; (2) the trend to locating manufacturing plants in counties and states which previously were not heavily industrialized: (3) the National Dispersal program relating to the proper location of plants within a given area, undertaken for defense reasons; (4) the breaking up by individual manufacturers of single large plants into several smaller, relocated plants; (5) the rapid growth in the retail field of shopping centers located in the suburbs of, or rural areas adjacent to, metropolitan trading areas.

The broad geographic decentralization program of the General Electric Company is an example. In late 1953 the company announced plans to construct a seven million dollar plant in Bloomington for the manufacture of general purpose controls for industrial use. The company purchased a sixty-six acre tract of land on which to build the plant. There will be ample parking space for the thousand employees, who can live within a few minutes' drive from their work.

General Electric expects to have spent $1.1 billion in expansion in the decade ending in 1955. Most of the expansion will be in non-metropolitan communities like Bloomington. By 1953 the company had 131 manufacturing plants in one hundred communities in twenty-

four states. William C. Wichman, Vice President and General Manager of the General Electric power components division, had this to say about taking the company's various manufacturing plants to the country where factory worker and farmer complement each other in balancing the economy:

"General Electric wants to be widely decentralized geographically. Each of its plants and departments is about as self-contained as we can make it from an operating standpoint. We have found that our operation is more effective that way. We get better management when the men responsible for each plant work as a team. We want our people to be a part of their respective communities in every sense. We want to keep employees in their own environment where they can be better and happier workers."

Ralph J. Cordiner, President of General Electric, is one of the pioneers in the decentralization of industry. He has insisted that his company choose new sites carefully. Mr. Wichman has said that the cultural level of Bloomington, described in another chapter, was a major factor in its selection as headquarters for the company's general purpose control department. A cultural climate in which a highly educated and skilled staff could feel at home was considered important. What is happening in General Electric is happening throughout industry.

The retreat from the city is under way. It is not yet as pronounced as the flight from the country to the city has been in recent decades, but its significance is not dimmed by this fact. In the decade between 1940 and 1950 the flight was from the city to the suburbs. In that decade suburban areas gained 9 million persons as compared with a gain of 5.7 million by all central cities. Suburban areas had a gain of 35 per cent as compared with 13 per cent for the cities. Still more significant is the fact that the central cities fell slightly behind the national rate of gain, which was 14.5 per cent.

Much of that flight was due to the desire of people to escape from the dirt, smoke, crime, and high taxes of cities. Some of it was due to the decision of the more affluent to enjoy a rural atmosphere while still reaping whatever advantages the central city offers.

Life in the suburbs is not likely to prove as alluring as it appeared for many people. It adds to the problems of commuting. Any ad-

vantage in taxation is likely to be temporary unless they forego the essential services such as police and fire protection, garbage collection, central utility service, paved streets and so on. They have transferred their problems, but they have not solved them. They may, in fact, have complicated them by spilling over the corporate boundaries of the city rather than leaving the metropolitan district. It would not be surprising if the census figures in the succeeding decades show more of a flight from the metropolitan area entirely. If it is not obsolete, the central city is certainly less important than it once was in our economic-social setup. In typical pioneering fashion we have exploited the big city, and repairing the damage may seem too expensive.

There is a better solution. With an estimated 40 million population increase in the next quarter century, and with the big cities already disintegrating, the time is ripe for preparing to disperse this new growth in the small cities, towns, and village and rural areas across the nation.

Whether the next decades chronicle the complete break from centralized industrial and population areas will depend in large part upon how the smaller communities of the nation capitalize upon their opportunities. Economics, sociology, and the good life are on their side. All they need in order to make the transition complete is vision, determination and cooperation. Whether they meet the challenge will determine in large part the durability of a free society in a world turned upside down by technology.

GRAMASEVAKS TRAINING CENTRE
16 APR 1955
T. KALLUPATTI

CHAPTER 2

Human Erosion

A LITTLE more than a century ago—in 1851—Horace Greeley popularized the advice: "Go west, young man, and grow up with the country." Greeley did not originate the statement, and frankly said so. He quoted John Babsone Lane Soule of the Terre Haute, Indiana, *Express*. The idea caught on because it was in keeping with the times. Young men were hitting the adventure trail westward. They were pushing the frontier into the Pacific Ocean at a rapid rate. They were exemplifying that mixed blessing—the restless urge which characterizes Americans.

It was this same urge that impelled James Allin to migrate northward and westward from North Carolina to the area where he later founded Bloomington on the Illinois prairie. It was that urge that moved Jesse Fell and Judge David Davis from the East in the early part of the last century. They were some twenty years ahead of Greeley's advice, as were the John Henlines and John Pattons of Lexington. They contributed their full share to community building in their day, if their actions are considered in terms of the exploitation prevalent at the time. Allin made certain that he owned the land on which the town of Bloomington was located, and he picked the choice spot for his general store. Jesse Fell established a long record of accomplishment for the community, including the establishment of Illinois State Normal University and *The Pantagraph*, routing the railroads through Bloomington, laying out subdivisions, and so on; but he too made sure that these improvements benefited his own extensive holdings. It was an era of exploitation fed by the urge to move on. That urge to avoid the difficult, to aim for big stakes quickly, to escape realities rather than conquer them, played a large part in

bringing early settlers to the New World. It was the driving force in the push westward. And it left many an exploited community in its wake.

Now the physical land frontier has passed, but the urge to run away from problems, or to solve them "the easy way," lingers on. Instead of going west young men today, and old men as well, go to Washington in quest of a solution to their problems. They are still running. And as a result they are carrying this country to centralized government, centralized business, centralized labor, and centralized populations. The land frontier is not there to sharpen up their independence and increase the nation's wealth at the same time. Now they are running away from their problems into a barren unproductive bureaucracy. The end of the road is complete dependence upon a benevolent government, a patronizing employer, and a dictatorial labor union. It's a short step from any one of them to tyranny. The individual has no control over his destiny in such a system.

This great centralization has carried along with it tremendous human erosion. Young people from the farms and the small towns have flocked to the population centers. They have had to go to find jobs. We have a system of agriculture which assumes that at least 50 per cent of the farm youngsters must go away from the farm to find a livelihood. This is true because we have applied new machinery to old methods in the farm belt. Instead of putting machinery to work to process the crops of the land at the source, we have used it to replace man labor. Thus both people and raw material have been sluiced away from the agrarian areas of the nation in one of the greatest erosion binges in history.

II

Aside from filling a few service jobs in the small towns, the displaced persons of American agriculture have migrated to the big cities. And what is the result? In the name of efficiency we have developed profligate waste of time and energy in the ever growing traffic problem of metropolitan areas. At the heart of this modern Frankenstein is the central business district of the big cities. It is the cause of the parking problem. Efforts to solve the parking are, in essence, efforts to bail out the central business district. The need for parking spaces

of all kinds is more than can be provided unless we want to launch into a public spending and rebuilding program that would dwarf our military budget. Victor Roterus, Area Development Division, Office of Domestic Commerce, U.S. Department of Commerce, pointed up some of these tail-chasing traffic problems in a paper read before a joint session on urban planning of the American Political Science Association and the American Economic Association in New York in 1949. He said:

At the core of the central city is the Central Business District, which sucks in hordes of people and vehicles each day and pumps them out again each evening. Here is concentrated one of today's most vivid planning dilemmas—traffic congestion and parking.

How are we approaching the planning problem of traffic congestion and parking? Ordinarily, first we draw up plans for improving ingress and egress to the Central Business District mainly through the provision of expressways. At the same time, we make a study of the parking requirements of the present flow of traffic into the central business district and measure against this the supply of parking spaces—short time and all-day—already available to get the additional number required. The resulting findings are invariably more than can be practically provided. Even if, however, the desired supply could be completely provided, what would happen?

The answer is simple: you would have the same congestion and the same lack of parking spaces with the only difference that more vehicles are giving rise to the same problems. The reason for this? We have underestimated the demand side of the problem. We have not taken into account the tremendous potential rider demand that lurks in the hinterland; and which at the first sign of abatement pours in to make the problem no better than it was. In Los Angeles, for example, it was found that, although only one-half of the population lives in a radial zone 7½ miles from the business center of the city, this population contributed 80 per cent of the downtown visitors. Consider the tremendous reservoir of potential downtown traffic represented by the other half of the population who don't think the trip downtown worth the bother under today's conditions. Or better yet, take a look at what has actually happened in New York City. Here, over the last 20 years, more than a half billion dollars has been spent on improving access. These expenditures have resulted in about a 40 per cent increase in the number of persons entering the lower half of Manhattan each day, but traffic congestion has certainly not been ameliorated.

The dilemma of the Central Business District poses many problems to the city planner which need more acute economic analysis than these problems have been receiving. Should we continue blindly the vain attempt to make the Central Business District accommodate what, in fact, it can't? To what lengths should we go in providing overground and underground parking accommodations? What is the incidence of benefits of such accommodation? Should the expense of further accommodations be borne solely by business interests in the area? What is the role of the city government in this matter in view of the fact that the Central Business District is a key part of its tax base? Should the city government contribute to the extent that such outlays will be returned through maintained or increased revenues and no further?

There can be but one answer to Mr. Roterus' question if we are to pursue the policy of putting salve on the sore rather than curing it. The public will have to continue to build, condemn, rebuild at the cost of billions in an effort to bail out the central business district in major cities of the nation.

That is only one side of the picture. Adjoining the central business district of the big city is the blight ring. It contains the slums, commercial blight, and loft industries. It also harbors crime, disease, and low morals. And how has society approached that problem? It has taken the areas of greatest densities and rebuilt them into areas of higher densities with so-called modern multiple unit housing developments. Mr. Roterus was not overstating when he said in his paper that "there is going to be an increasing amount of public money spent in these areas in one form or another." Society ought to begin to ask whether this is the answer. Is it not just to include in the balance sheet on "efficiency" of centralized populations and production the costs borne by the public in attempting to cope with these conditions born of centralization?

In this centralized economic-social pattern there is little wonder that otherwise intelligent men turn to quack remedies—even including communism. With home life practically nil, with one divorce for every two marriages in some cities, with crime on the increase, especially among juveniles and young people, with the individual totally dependent upon organizations and agencies over which he can exercise little if any control, it is going to take more than new sluiceways into the stagnant waters of the metropolitan area to save individual liberty

in the United States. It is time to tackle the problem of human erosion on a broader base. Soil conservationists know the answer and are beginning to practice it. They keep the topsoil at its source. Why not do the same with people? Why not put modern industry to work at the source of the raw materials of our land? Why not make jobs for these young people at home and arrest the tremendous waste in physical human resources brought on by centralization? It can be done.

III

Farm account records show that reasonably small family farms can be profitable. They often make a better return on the investment than larger farms. Within the framework of today's mechanized realities, more thought could and should be given to the possibility and desirability of making smaller family-sized farms available to more people. This unit is likely to weather any depression if it is well managed, because it is more self-sufficient.

Look at current history. What is causing unrest in the trouble spots of the world? There are complex causes, of course, but high on the list in nearly every instance is the desire for land reform. Communism has bought its way into many freedom-loving countries with a promise to divide the landed estates among those who till the land. It is a false promise, of course, but it reveals the deep-seated yearning for the right to own and till the soil. If the present trend of enlarging farms and depleted rural population continues in this country, we may face the same problem. As soon as economic troubles develop we are likely to hear more about the necessity of dividing up the land. A Central Illinois farmer who worked his way up from a farm hand to a wealthy landowner and stockman said at the height of the farm boom that men like him would be the first targets should a depression develop. Having seen both sides of the picture he knew that people, not just bank accounts, make a desirable society. And people must have a fighting chance to be desirable in society.

Technology cannot be repealed. But it can be put to work more wisely. We don't have to condemn millions to the slums or spend billions to move them from present slums to future slums. We don't have to consider 50 per cent of our farm young people expendable. We don't have to throw them into the jaws of the great city to be de-

voured. We don't have to make them our modern social and economic sacrifices to the false god of centralization. We have placed enough burnt offerings upon the altar of bigness.

Most of the young people who go off to the big cities don't make good. Most of them fare no better than—if, indeed, as well as—their fellows who stay at home. Their children have poorer education, for it is generally recognized among educators that the best school systems of the nation are in the smaller communities and the worst are in the big cities. Utah, for instance, with hardly a big city within its borders, rates at or near the top in every criterion of measurement applied by the educators. Compare the record of Utah with the half-day school shifts for hundreds of thousands of children in the congested areas.

The urbanized society into which they are forced has contributed to the terrific toll of degenerative and nervous disease. Gradually they are losing initiative and hope. They are becoming the wards of the state, clamoring for security which cannot be provided except by the individual with hope and opportunity.

Ways must be found to adapt electricity and atomic energy to the preservation and development of our physical and human resources. Our so-called urbanized high standards of living have left out an important ingredient: The art and purpose of living. It has not made man happier. It has not brought him salvation. It has robbed him of his self-respect and his self-determination.

The best brains and energy available are needed today to help build a balanced economy in the rural areas and small communities of the nation. Here opportunity lies. A start has been made in this direction. Many communities have been successful in developing an economic base capable of supporting the full cultural and civic life which man can attain. Industry and business are already decentralizing. Here is the mid-century challenge. Here more lasting solutions can be found in the search for a full and meaningful life. The advice of Horace Greeley in 1851 does not fit today. Rather it should be "Go home, young man, and build a better community."

CHAPTER 3

Small Town to the Rescue

THE GREAT metropolitan area grew up because of the restrictions of the steam age. It was abetted by rigid rail transportation. It was encouraged by the industrial revolution on the farm. In its growth it has created new problems faster than old ones could be solved. Some of these have been discussed in the preceding chapters. Traffic congestion alone costs the metropolitan areas of the nation billions of dollars or more a year. Arthur C. Butler, director of the National Highway Users Conference, said in a Chicago address in September 1952, that traffic congestion costs the City of Chicago 100 million dollars a day. The total is staggering when the cost in all our metropolitan areas is visualized. And that is only the beginning. The problem of traffic defies solution if the metropolitan areas continue to grow. They need not do so.

Electricity and the automobile have emancipated people from the metropolitan area. In the last ten years, use of electricity on the farm has increased 500 per cent. "Today," says the General Electric Company in an advertisement in the April 1953, issue of *Harper's Magazine*, "American farmers use twice as much mechanical and electrical horsepower as all manufacturing combined." Electricity can and does go anywhere. So do the highways. Some 50,000 villages and 4000 cities and towns in the United States depend entirely upon highway transportation. Approximately 11 million people live in these communities.

Another industrial revolution has been taking place in America. It is, in effect, a counter-revolution which seeks to correct the evils of the first. It is the revolution of decentralization of industry and population. It is taking place because the metropolitan areas in the United

States will face "economic blight and political, cultural and social bankruptcy," in the words of the American Municipal Association, unless municipal officials assume leadership and demand that immediate steps be taken to solve the problems of their communities. The association goes on to say that "the problems of the metropolitan areas have increased at an alarming rate during the past decade and threaten to strangle the political, economic and social life of the American metropolitan cities." Then the association calls for the impossible. It says that "federal standards, including density of population, provision of adequate play space, off-street parking and other matters related to reasonable living, should be evolved and applied. . . ." Plans cannot be evolved and put into effect fast enough to solve the problems of people who have no control over their own destiny and who must rely upon big government, big business, and big labor for their mere existence.

While the planners plan and the captives of the metropolitan areas sorrowfully beat their breasts, the counter-revolution continues in America. The National Industrial Zoning Committee found in a study that of 137 representative industries with new construction in various parts of the country, 98 per cent provided at least one parking space for every five employees and 93 per cent reported off-street loading and unloading space. In more than half of the plants reporting, the private car accounted for 80 per cent or more of the employee transportation. Those accommodations are difficult if not impossible to provide in the big cities. While *Fortune Magazine* sees no trend up to this time, it did report late in 1952 that many small companies and some large ones are finding more reasons to justify moving into the suburbs or the open country. It is the belief of the author that any move to the suburbs will provide only a temporary solution, if any, to the problems of the congested city and that eventually the only solution is the open country.

In addition to what industry is doing toward decentralization, small cities and towns the country over are germinating industry from within to balance their economy. That is a more significant development than the movement of existing industry from the city to the country. Just as nothing more than keeping young people at home is needed to depopulate the cities in a few generations, so is nothing more

needed than the genius of these young people germinating new industries and services at home to decentralize industry. Crawford H. Greenewalt, President of the Du Pont Company, told the Chicago Executives' Club on May 1, 1953, that "it has been estimated that half our present national working force is engaged in production and sales of things unheard of generally in 1902. A very large number are concerned with developments new since 1928. Should this trend continue, half our working population in the year 1978 may be making and selling things as yet unknown."

The new growth, estimated at 7500 births a day in the United States, and new industrial products and services, estimated to occupy half our working force in another quarter century, offer the nation's best hope of decentralizing this society and bringing it into balance where people can live relatively independent, meaningful, and pleasant lives. Small cities and towns need that new growth. They cannot retain their natural population increase and maintain a high standard of living without it.

II

When Senator Clinton Anderson was Secretary of Agriculture he testified before a congressional committee regarding encouragement of industrialization of rural areas. He quoted census data showing the difference between twelve rural counties (selected at random throughout the country) having industry and twenty-four neighboring counties having very little industry. The amount of farming in each county with industry and in its neighbor was about the same. Total per capita income was 50 per cent more in the industrialized counties. Retail sales were a third larger. Farm production was valued at 10 per cent more per farm. All homes were valued nearly twice as high in the industrial-rural counties. Farm homes were valued at about 25 per cent more in these counties.

Harold F. Breimyer, agricultural economic statistician, Division of Statistical and Historical Research in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, told the Conference of the American Country Life Association in 1947 that:

> There are three main classes of manufacturing that by their nature resist concentration in a particular place. These three are the kinds that are best adapted to rural regions.

The first class is the basic processing of many raw materials. A lot of raw materials are so heavy, bulky, perishable, or hard to handle that there is real economic advantage in giving them their crude processing close to their source. I'll list a few of the more prominent ones. Among food industries: beet sugar refining; canning, drying, and preserving fruits and vegetables; canning of fish; cheese making; butter manufacture; malt industries; poultry dressing and packing; quick freezing of foods; rice cleaning and polishing; vinegar and cider making. Other industries: manufacture of lumber and other wood products in logging camps; sawmills, planing mills, plywood mills, veneer mills, and cooperage-stock mills; petroleum refining; manufacture of soybean and other products, and of cottonseed oil and other cottonseed products; primary smelting and refining of mineral ores; naval stores.

Not all basic processing is located in rural places. For instance, flour mills are often located at distant terminals because total shipping costs on wheat and flour are about equal. Basic processing is most economically done close to the source of materials only when the total shipping cost of the partly manufactured product is less than that of the equivalent raw materials.

The second class of industry is not exclusively rural but is certainly partially so. It is industry that quite commonly provides a fairly small consuming area with finished products that are bulky, perishable, or must be easily accessible. These are the industries that are nearly always located close to the consuming center. They are the ones consumers probably find fairly near by—probably within short-haul trucking distance. Examples of this kind of industry are: bread and other baked goods, candy and other confections, ice cream, fluid milk, malt liquors, nonalcoholic beverages (bottled Coca-Cola is much bulkier and heavier than the concentrated syrup), brick, concrete products, newspaper publishing, signs and advertising displays.

A third class of rural industry provides goods and services for other industries located close by. An example is the machine shops scattered throughout the midwest and, indeed, most of the country. These are often called satellite industries.

Rural industry has received little concerted national attention since the close of World War II. Then, when many were expecting an economic slump, considerable attention was given to the possibilities of developing small rural industries. The post-war boom and the focus of attention on more and more agricultural production eclipsed the problem of balancing agriculture with industry. There was no

problem in finding jobs for surplus farm labor. The nation was in an emergency and the long-range evils of centralization were forgotten in the fight to out-produce the world and to develop more military strength than Russia. All the while we were drifting closer to the kind of an economy and culture that inevitably brings on the totalitarianism we feared. Now with agriculture readjusting to a situation of more abundant if not surplus production, smaller markets and less favorable price and income comparisons with industry small communities are renewing interest in industry. A straw in the wind is the decision of the Rural Electrification Administration to retain its industrial consultant as the sole survivor of a retrenchment program on developing new uses for electricity in rural areas.

III

Untold hours and energy have been expended in prospecting for industry by citizens of small towns. In the minds of far too many citizens, this means going out and shopping for down-at-the-heels, fly-by-night industries which will move on to some other unwary community as soon as a better offer is made. There are notable exceptions. The natural decentralization of industry has been a boon to alert small towns. But there must be sound reasons for the choice of location.

Central Soya Company, Inc., set up a soybean processing plant in Gibson City, Illinois, for sound business reasons. The plant was sought by larger cities like Bloomington, Champaign, and Decatur. T. M. Perkins of the Central Soya Company said:

"Gibson City was selected as a site for one of our plants because it is in one of the major soybean producing areas of the country. In addition, it is served by three railroads. Since its beginning in 1939, the company has grown to a place of prominence in the community with an annual payroll of a million and a half dollars and employs approximately three hundred people from Gibson City and twelve other surrounding communities. . . . Excellent labor relations exist . . . and the many high school and college graduates employed here take an active part in community affairs. Seasonal employment problems are virtually non-existent, for the soybean harvest comes after the time when most farm crops have been handled. Thus, farm labor

is available to augment our regular forces when the rush season is in effect. . . .

"Our operations are decentralized to the extent that we have five main plants strategically located to serve livestock and poultry feeders in a particular section of the country. They are not operated as branches, each being equal in importance with respect to the territory it serves."

The Gibson City plant draws the bulk of its raw materials from the surrounding countryside, but even this decentralized plant collects raw materials from every state in the Union, with some of the more strategic ingredients coming from five different countries. It has a storage capacity of 6.5 million bushels of soybeans, a soybean crushing capacity of 6.8 million bushels, and it manufactures 180,000 tons of livestock feed a year.

The company shows an interest in the entire community. One manifestation of this is the encouragement of home ownership by employees. A home building organization, operated by the company, erects homes at cost for employees at Gibson City and pays a portion of the down payment in return for an option to buy the home should the employee leave the organization within five years. Contests are held and awards given annually to those who have done the best job of landscaping and home maintenance and improvement.

No subsidy was required to get this plant in Gibson City. The selection was based on hard economic considerations. Gibson City had what an expanding industry wanted: An ample supply of raw materials and manpower resources and a community where employees could live and work happily. While many small communities in the area continued the half-century decline in population, Gibson City made a 26 per cent gain between 1940 and 1950. Other communities can attract industry in this era of decentralization if they have what it takes. Again Don G. Mitchell, president of Sylvania Electric Products, Inc., speaks to the point on what industry looks for in selecting a new site:

". . . We want a local government that is alert, progressive, understanding, clean and businesslike. We like to see balanced budgets and a comparatively low debt per capita, yet with a reputation for good municipal facilities. . . . Is the town a good place in which to

bring up a family? That's the really important social question. When employees feel that the children have a healthy place in which to grow up—good schools, plenty of opportunity for the right kind of play, safe streets, good health record, good playmates, good moral record, right outlook on life—they feel little inclination to move on. They themselves become better and more steady at their jobs."

A large newsprint manufacturer, seeking a location in Tennessee, sought to "secure the best possible conditions for their employees; to get economy in public works installations and the provision of facilities and services for the residential areas of the future; to have industrial zoning applied to some of their lands and some adjacent lands in order to preserve areas suitable for future industrial occupance by ancillary industries . . . to avoid hazardous conditions on approach highways resulting from unregulated shoestring development, as well as avoiding unwise opportunistic land subdivisions."

Victor Roterus cites the example of Calvert City, Kentucky, where some companies constructing new plants in this developing metallurgical community took a keen and active interest in planning the growing community. They contributed to the financing of city planners to help chart orderly growth. One company bought up some land it didn't need, to prevent its development for residential purposes in an unsuited area. The company's reason: It wanted to avoid the experience it had in an unplanned industrial community of its own making in an eastern state.

These examples show that industry considers the rounded community. Industry wants a well planned community because it means happier workers. Utility services, adequate factory sites, good schools, churches and hospitals, proper sanitation, efficient local government alert to the community's needs—all these are important lures if a community expects to attract industrial plants. Every community needs such plants to process the crops and raw resources of the area and to provide employment for its people. Communities which provide them will benefit by the decentralization now under way.

IV

An entirely different approach, and one worthy of much more support, is the encouragement of greater and more efficient produc-

tion in the existing community economic pattern. A necessary corollary is to encourage the germination within the community of new methods and techniques of processing its raw materials. H. P. Rusk, late dean of the College of Agriculture at the University of Illinois, said in 1950:

"It seems to me that the business interests of a community or trade center often devote relatively too much time and effort to bringing new industries into the community and to the expansion of its trade territory. They overlook the fact that a ten per cent increase, for instance, in the income of farmers in the trade area may be equally effective in increasing total trade and business activity. Such a ten per cent increase in income for people already in the community will make possible for them a higher level of living, rather than merely increasing the number of persons geared to an otherwise lower level of living. Of course, efforts toward community improvement should include both of these approaches in proper balance."

The Honegger development in Livingston County, Illinois, fits the pattern recommended by Dean Rusk. Here the energy, foresight, and good business ability of Sam and Frank Honegger have built up a poultry and feed business which has pulled the farm production and income of their county along with them. M. L. Mosher, retired professor of Farm Management Extension at the University of Illinois, briefed the story in paying tribute to owners of honor poultry flocks in Livingston County. He said:

"Something happened in Livingston County between the years 1932 and 1947. In 1932 the poultry project on the Farm Bureau Farm Management Service farms (those keeping business records along bookkeeping lines outlined by Mosher) in Livingston County was about on a par with that on farms" in surrounding counties. "Of forty-six farms in Livingston County, eight per cent had from two hundred to three hundred hens per flock. The Honegger Brothers flock had one hundred one hens. However, in 1937, twenty-eight per cent of the flocks in Livingston County had over three hundred hens and only sixteen per cent had less than one hundred hens. . . . The average egg production on Livingston County farms in the Farm Bureau Farm Management Service increased from one hundred fourteen eggs per hen in 1932 to one hundred ninety-nine eggs in

1947, an increase of eighty-five eggs—seven dozen—per hen." The average production of the three nearby counties had increased only fifty-four eggs per hen in that period. "Something had happened to increase egg production in Livingston County that had not happened in other counties," Mosher said.

It was no mystery. Jerry Andrews of the university extension service visited the Honegger farm in the early 1930's and pointed out to Sam and Frank Honegger that they were getting more returns for feed and labor used on their average-sized poultry flock than from the same amount of feed and labor going into dairy cattle and hogs. The Honeggers got busy. They began building up the best poultry flock they could produce by employing the best men in the business. They interested their neighbors in the development. They have been singularly successful in increasing their own production and helping their neighbors do likewise.

Interest in egg production plus the fact that Livingston County produces a surplus of grain led the Honeggers to branch out into the feed business. They process the grain of the area into feed in a modern plant at Fairbury. Their poultry enterprises, including an egg grading station, are located in nearby Forrest. By combining good breeding, good feeding, good marketing, and effective management they increased production in this basically agricultural area. This development has encouraged the conversion of grain into feed and feed into eggs right in the area.

The Honeggers are doing much the same thing now with hogs. They have a modern "pig poppery," which is the swine counterpart of a poultry hatchery. They are equipped to produce an average of a pig an hour throughout the year.

This enterprise has produced new employment. The Honeggers employ an average of 225 persons who are drawn from a radius of ten miles from their plants. Their 1952 payroll was more than three quarters of a million dollars. They processed and sold more than 68,000 tons of feed in that year, sold more than a million and a half chicks and sold a million and a half dozen eggs through the egg grading station.

Professor Mosher put it this way: "Cooperating with the people in the (University of Illinois) Experiment Station and the Extension

Service, the Honeggers have developed a business which provides the people in Livingston County and surrounding counties with high producing stock, a good quality of feed, a good marketing service and a lot of know-how information. They apparently have made money themselves; but for every dollar of profit they have made, my guess is that the farmers who patronize them have profited by several dollars. And those profits have gone into better living for many hundreds of North Central Illinois farmers. . . ." He might have added, and to thousands of non-farmers of the same area who depend upon farm patronage for their livelihood.

It is no accident that communities like Gibson City and Fairbury are growing and prosperous. They can afford their new hospitals, new schools, modern sewage systems, and the other facilities they need.

Many communities raise money to provide sites and sometimes plant facilities of prospective industries. There have been numerous sad experiences in this approach, but it sometimes pays big dividends. Fairbury merchants raised some money to help the Honeggers rebuild a new factory there after one burned down in Forrest. But railway and highway facilities, necessary utilities, desirable living conditions for employees, and similar considerations played a part also.

Where many communities fall down is in the effort put forth to encourage germination of such enterprises as that developed by the Honeggers in cooperation with the University of Illinois extension service. Many chambers of commerce have industrial committees whose job it is to promote industry. But few have devoted adequate attention to this home-grown industrial development. They would do well to consider establishment of a sizeable revolving loan fund to help finance young men with ability and energy in new enterprises. They could work closely with public schools and colleges in determining who holds out promise. These are the people who ought to be kept at home to make better communities. It would be staggering to most communities if they were to take invoice of their material and cultural loss through failure to make it worth while for their best young people to apply their talent and industry at home.

An organization to keep them at home could be patterned somewhat after Junior Achievement, Inc., which encourages teen-agers to develop their own business. Some 10,000 youngsters in fifty cities,

large and small, participate in this program under adult guidance and encouragement. Business and civic leaders in any community can start under this pattern if they wish. Details are obtainable from the Expansion Department, Junior Achievement, Inc., 345 Madison Avenue, New York 17, N. Y. That would be a beginning. To get the full benefit of developing new business and industry in the small community, the interest should go beyond school age to encourage and assist competent young adults to develop new business, offer new services, and create additional wealth at home. Agriculture and services to agriculture do not balance the community's economic scales. Some industry is needed to provide employment for natural population growth.

The small community must have a reason for existing. The reasons of the past no longer apply. Their captive audience has vanished. They must survive because they offer what the people want, or they will not survive. In an era of tremendous expansion such as the United States enjoys now, and with the large population centers already decaying at the core, the small community has great promise. It has promise, not for what it now is, but for what it can become. What holds it back? Why is it drab, ugly, often sordid and unimaginative? Why does it continue to adhere to the Horatio Alger philosophy which can lead only to its destruction and the destruction of the free society we know? Some of the reasons will be discussed in the succeeding chapters.

CHAPTER 4

Community Teamwork Is Essential

THE RETREAT of industry and of people from the central city has been under way for a number of years and it has made more progress than those interested in the central city wish to admit. Parallel with this retreat has been the growing realization that the non-metropolitan cities, towns, and villages of the nation need the industry to balance their economy and their quality of living. Population follows jobs. These non-metropolitan areas will get the people, which, in most cases, simply means holding those who formerly migrated, if the jobs are made available. With a sound economic base any community can create the kind of life the people want. It has to do certain things before it can attract industry.

First is the development of community teamwork. That is essential to any program of community improvement. Maximum use of human and natural resources cannot be developed without it. Yet many, if not most, communities lack unity.

It is not unusual for the small community to have from fifty to a hundred civic, social, and specialized organizations. These include the American Legion, parent-teacher chapters, Farm and Home Bureau or Grange, Rotary and similar luncheon clubs, women's club, Boy Scouts, 4-H clubs, Rural Youth, churches, chamber of commerce or boosters' club, the various lodges, schools, and so on. Try listing them in your town and the total will surprise you. Bloomington has some two hundred.

Despite all these organizations, there are few communities with any agency or institution which can speak for the whole community. The church cannot do it, for the churches frequently disagree among themselves. The city or village officials cannot do it because they do

not officially represent the schools or other governmental agencies in most communities. The businessmen cannot do it, nor can the Rotary, the Masons, or the Farm Bureau, or any other organization within the community. In fact these specialized interests by their nature frequently act unwittingly as divisive influences.

The devout church member places his church's interest first. The Legionnaire is likely to devote most of his surplus energy to the promotion of Legion affairs. Likewise Rotary stresses intense loyalty among its members. And if there happens to be a Kiwanis or Exchange club in the same community, there is keen competition for membership and for recognition among the townspeople. The various lodges carry on programs that often leave the members with no time or energy to work for the whole community. All these groups and their counterparts have state and national organizations with administrative staffs whose job it is to keep interest and loyalty fanned to a high pitch.

These organizations have high purpose. It is not their intention to be divisive. Their members are, for the most part, people of the utmost good will. Many organizations engage in some form of community service. But any project they sponsor must be known as a Legion project or a Kiwanis project. If possible it must be noncontroversial and it must be a project which can be completed quickly. It is likely also to be an obvious project on which the results show plainly for all to see. Typical community organizations in this category frequently branch out into the community for support of their specific project, but they are not by their centralized organization or fundamental purposes cooperative and selfless in their approach. Who gets credit is tremendously important to them. It often becomes more important than what is accomplished.

Despite these natural and unintended divisive influences of the segmented organizations that grow up in every community, they have done and are doing tremendous good as they see it. Any of them can name outstanding civic projects for which they are responsible. Yet they are handicapped by the nature of their organizations, and it also is true that they frequently are responsible for a lack of unity in the community. One Central Illinois community, too small to support a good luncheon club and keep community interests foremost, saw its all-inclusive community club wither and gasp for life when a luncheon club was organized.

II

What every community needs, and what it must have if it is to be a good community, is a voice of authority based upon the cooperative judgment and will *of all the people*. That is most likely to prevail in communities where the major civic group, by whatever name it is called, includes members of both sexes from all walks of life and representing all points of view. In one place it might be called a community club, in another a civic association, in still another the Hometown Boosters. The name doesn't matter. What does matter is a membership policy which welcomes anyone in the community and a democracy of approach which respects the views of all.

Few communities have such an organization. Actually they are too decentralized—diffused to a point where they are not articulate as communities. They have no common purpose. This is so general that it was found necessary to set up a new cross-section organization in every community participating in the Central Illinois Community Betterment Program. Some existing organizations have since broadened their base to include the entire community, but that was not the case at the beginning of the program.

National organizations with units in smaller communities are realizing the divisive character of these clubs and many are revising policies so as to avoid such diffusion of leadership. They do not seek to set up local clubs in communities which cannot support such luxuries.

There is another divisive factor in most small communities, and one which is much more damaging and dangerous to community survival. That is the misunderstanding between town people and farmers. Get beyond the chat about the weather or the state of the union in almost any community and you uncover a discouraging and deep-seated cleavage between those who live on the land and those who live off those who live on the land. The feeling sometimes is so pronounced that the community is strangled. Farmers will go to some other community to trade. In retaliation the businessmen, who already suffer from lack of normal patronage, go out of their way to reject almost every proposal the farmers make for the community. Each fails to realize his dependence upon the other.

Why does this situation exist in so many places? It is an outcropping of our Horatio Alger philosophy. We have talked about and

encouraged our best young people who leave the home community for the big city for so long that those who remain have an unconscious feeling of inferiority. The farmer feels it. Far too many farmers are apologists for being farmers. That sentiment crops up in strange ways. It is commonplace to hear a farm speaker declare with great fervor that the farmer is the backbone of the nation. He leaves the clear inference that the other 85 per cent of the people of the nation are parasites feeding off his back.

Inside the town or village the feeling is reversed. Of course the merchants may invite the farmers to a dinner once a year, frequently tying the event in with an annual dollar day. But in private conversation they are likely to call rural people "big hicks," "hayseeds," or just plain "big farmer" with an inflection that clearly defines the expression as no compliment.

No group of people firm in their faith and happy with their assignment in society need resort to such conduct. They know they are important and thus they can devote more of their energy to the welfare of the whole community. Every community, which includes townspeople and farmers, must have the full and intelligent cooperation of all if it is to prosper.

III

The community newspaper can do more than any other agency to weld the people into a working team. It is the one visitor which goes into virtually every home in town and country. It goes not once, but every day or every week depending upon the plan of publication. It carries information about all segments of the community. If it is worthy of the name it also carries comment and opinion on local affairs. Its columns also should be open for the comment of readers of all shades of opinion. The community newspaper is the textbook for the community. Frequently it is the only textbook for persons eighteen years old or older. A community without a good newspaper has two strikes against it in any cooperative enterprise.

Unfortunately newspapers have been hit by centralization also. Publication costs are staggering and the casualties have been heavy. In addition to high production costs they confront high taxes and the trend of advertisers toward using the larger papers more and the smaller newspapers less for getting their messages across. Most adver-

tising agencies set an arbitrary figure of 50,000 population for a city. If its population is below that figure, the newspaper gets no business from that source.

Strangely the advertising agencies do not take circulation into account in this arbitrary line of demarcation. A newspaper in a town of 40,000 might have 35,000 circulation because of an aggressive circulation policy. It may cover a small region instead of just an incorporated city. And another newspaper in a city of 75,000 may have a circulation of only 25,000. Yet only the latter paper will get business from the national advertising agency.

It is no wonder that, out of every five daily newspapers existing in 1930, one has since suspended publication or merged with another newspaper. Out of every ten new papers started since 1930, six have failed. There have been approximately 750 daily newspapers suspended or merged in the last two decades. In that same period newspaper circulation has grown by 14 million daily and 20 million Sunday to a current total of approximately 46 million Sunday and 50 million daily. Imagine selling 50 million books on any subject! Yet newspapers containing the equivalent of two or more books a day reach 47 million families daily. Assuming that two or more persons read each copy, more than 100 million persons are reached daily by a newspaper. The newspaper is the textbook in fact for most of the adults of the nation.

What has been happening to the daily newspaper in the metropolitan areas has been affecting the small-town daily and weekly as well. Hardly a week goes by without an appeal of people from some small community for guidance in how to improve the home-town weekly or how to get one established. There is no easy answer and, in many cases, there is simply no answer at all.

People of the small community can help retain and improve the newspaper they have by supporting it. They can subscribe regularly and they can use its columns for advertising. Even though the rate may be high, a newspaper is still the most economical reading matter one can buy and its advertising columns carry a message to more customers in more permanent and convincing form for less money than any other medium.

More small daily and weekly newspapers could survive if people had a better understanding of these facts. While the small-town paper

derives some revenue from job printing, and subscription rates, it needs advertising revenue if it is to publish a product that can and will serve the community best. Patronizing the home-town newspaper with advertising is not an act of charity. It is good business for the advertiser, the publisher, and the community. One of the best ways to insure a good community newspaper in your town is to support it.

It is still possible to operate a good newspaper in a community of reasonable size. To set down a specific size would be useless. There are always exceptions almost without number. But in Central Illinois there are several good weekly newspapers in towns or villages of 1000 population and up. These papers circulate far beyond the town limits to reach as many or more people beyond. They, along with the town bank, the doctor, the veterinary, and the library help to set the real community boundary by the length of their reach.

Rare instances point to the possibility of community newspaper publication by citizens themselves. Mimeographed sheets or even printed pages can be prepared by volunteer groups and distributed throughout the community. It might be feasible to include such a project in the community school curriculum if the area has no newspaper. But by and large the business of newspaper editing and publishing is a full-time proposition requiring experience, ability, and know-how that few communities could meet on a volunteer basis.

IV

There is no substitute for the home-town newspaper devoted wholeheartedly to the community's welfare. If properly run it need have no fear from outside competition. No city or regional newspaper can touch the home-town product for completeness of coverage, and no city or regional newspaper attempts to compete.

While *The Pantagraph* goes into more than a hundred Illinois communities surrounding Bloomington and, in some cases, has more circulation than the home-town paper, the publishers of *The Pantagraph* do not consider the paper in competition with the home-town weeklies. *The Pantagraph* does compete in these communities with some fifteen or twenty daily newspapers published in other Illinois cities.

The regional newspaper such as *The Pantagraph* may be the best

answer for many communities too small to support a newspaper of their own. Its columns usually are open for coverage of news happenings and community projects. Most such newspapers maintain local correspondents. Many, including *The Pantagraph*, have sizeable staffs whose full time is devoted to developing and processing news from surrounding communities. *The Pantagraph* carries between twenty-five and thirty columns of small community and farm news and pictures daily. People from a wide area use its "By the Public" column to express viewpoints on local, regional, state, national, and international affairs. Staff representatives cover their major local events. Their projects and their problems are discussed editorially in *The Pantagraph*. Hundreds of editorials on community betterment for the small town have appeared in recent years. Many of these are in the form of encouragement of projects launched and recognition for work completed. Many point up specific needs common to the communities of the area.

But having a newspaper, either local or regional, is not enough. It ought to be a good newspaper. Both the facts and the truth about the facts must be published. There is no room for fear or favoritism. The good newspaper will use its editorial columns to express mature, virile, meaningful opinions of vital interest to its readers even though they deal with controversial and troublesome issues.

Operation of such a hard-hitting, effective newspaper calls for high idealism. And a newspaperman without ideals is in the wrong profession. He should be burning up with a desire to make this a better world in which to live, and he should be intelligent enough to begin in his own community. The calling of journalism should express the same impelling desire to be of service to mankind as the call to the ministry. A newspaper that does not have a publisher and an editor dedicated to the public good without thought of personal credit or glory is a newspaper without a soul. It is, in fact, not a newspaper but a business parading under the colors of a free and enlightened press. It is a disgrace to the profession and the most dangerous current threat to freedom of expression in the United States.

Fortunate indeed is the community or the region with a newspaper in the truest sense of the word. You can pick them easily, for these are the good communities. Any community without such a medium of

free and intelligent expression must make it the first order of business to encourage development of such a force. Until that force is developed the community will be inarticulate.

While unity and cooperation are essential if communities are to improve themselves, there is always room for honest difference of opinion. Unity of purpose is developed only on the foundation of frank discussion. Cooperation does not mean that everyone must do exactly what the town's leading citizen thinks should be done. Cooperation means that the town's leading citizen is capable of yielding to the wishes of the majority in the interest of the community. It means that the minority, having had its say, can cast aside its differences and work for the common good.

At some stage the differences must cease. An organization or agency capable of speaking for the entire community must emerge to carry out the assignment. It cannot emerge except by common consent.

CHAPTER 5

Too Many Communities

THE SMALL community is the balance wheel of our economic, social, and cultural order. It is the insurance policy against the loss of the individual's ability to determine his own destiny. In the small community the individual counts. Here he can own his home, keep close to the out-of-doors, and work, worship, and play with his neighbors. Here he can live a well rounded life with people who know him and who care about him. Here he can establish roots and rear a family in a stabilizing environment. Here he can do more to provide his own security than any man in the large city.

Yet it would be a mistake to defend every community and every unit of government in the United States. Technology and the modern needs of man dictate that only those communities serving the needs of the people in them shall survive. That which no longer serves a useful purpose fades away.

Much of this country, especially the Mississippi Valley, was settled when the railroad and the horse provided transportation. As the railroads pushed across this fertile valley they placed stations four to six miles apart. Villages grew up around these stations to serve the surrounding farms. They provided the shipping points, banks, repair shops, and other essential services. County seats were established every twenty to thirty miles. These developed into secondary or primary trading centers to provide the services and facilities which the smaller village could not afford. This situation prevailed until the automobile came into general use in the 1920's. By then highways had been improved and automobile ownership had become reasonably widespread.

P. D. Converse and Ramona J. Russell of the University of Illinois

have determined in a number of surveys that, as a general practice, people will spend up to an hour in going to market. "With villages four to six miles apart, most farmers were within four miles of a village trading center and could reach it in an hour with a team and wagon (except at times when the roads were so deep in mud that they were well-nigh impassable)," they wrote in *Current Economic Comment*, a University of Illinois publication. "With the coming of the automobile the farmer could travel 10, 20, 30 or 40 miles in an hour," they stated.

The ability to cover forty miles in the same time it used to take to cover four has had its effect upon the many small towns and villages of the nation. They have been declining in retail volume since that time, with the usual exceptions, of course. The small-town merchant with energy, imagination, ability, and personality has found that the superhighways lead in both directions, and that he can compete successfully with the city merchant. But speed of transportation has rendered many small villages and towns obsolete. Thousands of them belong now only to the archives, and thousands more are destined to follow them into oblivion. No formula can save them. None should be attempted. Too many weak communities threaten all small communities. This should be kept clearly in mind as we go about the building of better small communities.

When the tiny crossroads communities were formed they served as the natural center for the people within their orbit. They had, in fact, little monopolies. Each was the only possible center for the people who patronized it. The expanding horizons brought on by the technological revolution changed all that. It became a matter of choice whether a family traded, went to church, sought recreation or formed its social circle in one community or another.

Residents of Gridley, on the north edge of McLean County, can elect to patronize their local shops and utilize their local cultural assets. But they have alternatives. They can drive east over to Chenoa in a few minutes. Or they can drive west into El Paso. In a relatively short time they can be in Pontiac, County Seat of adjoining Livingston County. It doesn't take as long as many city people wait for a train for Gridley residents to be in Bloomington. Peoria is an hour away. They can make a round trip to Chicago in a day with plenty of time to shop, visit a museum, and see a play. Residents south of Blooming-

ton have the same choice between the numerous small towns and larger places like Lincoln, Springfield, Decatur, and St. Louis. All business and all service from the crossroads to the central city are highly competitive today. The captive customer has been liberated.

II

Today's fluid society already has had its effect. While there are more than 116,000 local government units in the United States, the number was reduced by 25 per cent in the last ten years, according to a study published in 1952 by the U. S. Department of Commerce. When the study was completed Minnesota led all other states with 9000 separate units of government. Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, New York, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin had 5000 or more. In contrast Arizona, Connecticut, Delaware, Louisiana, Maryland, Nevada, New Mexico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia had less than 500 each.

More than half of all local governments are school districts. It is logical that the trend toward merging of local units of government should begin with the schools because of this multiplicity of small one-room districts. It became obvious that the one-room school could not provide the kind of equipment, supplies, instruction, and financing necessary to offer a broad educational program. In the face of this situation more than 40,000 school districts have been eliminated in the last decade, but there are more than 65,000 districts left. Two-thirds of those remaining districts have fewer than fifty pupils. They account for only 3 per cent of total school enrollment.

Illinois was among the more backward states in this regard, but the formation of larger units and consolidated school districts has been phenomenal in the last ten years. In 1940 most people in Central Illinois would have voted against school consolidation. The cost pinch during World War II and the teacher shortage accompanying it changed their minds. They still rated good education above sentiment and today virtually the entire area is organized into unit districts. Many of them include several towns. That is a step toward building a strong local community. The boundaries have been extended but it is still local in the truest sense.

The state of Illinois as a whole is an example of what has been

taking place in school reorganization. In 1945, at the end of World War II, Illinois had approximately 12,000 districts. By 1953 the number had been reduced to well below 3000 and the process is still going on. The same trend is evident in other states. In the last ten years Arkansas, Kansas, New York, Oklahoma, and Texas have reduced the number of their school districts by more than 50 per cent. Missouri reduced her school districts by more than 50 per cent.

In addition to the school districts there are 3103 counties within the states, ranging from none in Rhode Island to 254 in Texas. More than 250 counties have less than 5000 inhabitants, with Loving County, Texas, holding the record with 250.

There are in the United States approximately 17,000 separate cities, boroughs, villages, and towns. There are about 17,000 townships also. There are some 12,000 local governmental units for special purposes. Half of these are fire, drainage, or soil conservation districts. Another 15 per cent include cemetery districts and housing authorities. Still other special units have to do with health, hospitals, highways, water conservation. There are thirteen interstate authorities for bridges, irrigation, or power, in addition to the New York-New Jersey Port of New York Authority and the Pennsylvania-New Jersey Delaware River Authority.

There is room for more centralization at the local level. It must be brought about wisely if the small community is to emerge as a permanent part of our economic and social structure, and if we are to escape the stagnating effects of the big city. People will not and should not renounce the great economic, scientific, and cultural gains in this country. They cannot take full advantage of them in communities too small to provide for the needs of the people.

Community spirit, the feeling of belonging, has not died with expansion of school horizons. The case of Al and Ruth Otto and their son, Bruce, will illustrate the point. Ruth was a country-school teacher before her marriage. She and Al have lived on the Otto family farm all their married lives. They can drive to Bloomington or Normal from their home in a few minutes. When school consolidation was first proposed in their district near the end of World War II, they were hesitant. "Bruce will be on the streets of Bloomington soon enough," Al said. "I want him to go through elementary school right here in our

neighborhood." But the new unit district came and the neighborhood one-room school was closed. Bruce was loaded onto a bus with the others and taken to nearby Normal to begin his education. Al and Ruth found some advantages. Bruce gets better instruction in music than he could have found in the one-room district. He has more fellowship with boys his own age. He can play baseball under adequate supervision. He gets training in drama. His whole curriculum is much richer than he could have had in the small neighborhood district. Al and Ruth realized these things. Al later became president of the unit district advisory council. Ruth served a term as president of the parent-teacher association in the town school. They are still members of a community, but their horizons have expanded. Even the neighborhoods have retained their identity. Neighborhood gatherings will attract as many as 150 men, women, and children. These people are adjusting to their community growing pains. McLean County had reduced its school districts from 275 to 26 within a few years.

Progress has been slower in other units of the local community. Virtually any midwestern county is honeycombed with local governmental units with power to levy taxes. McLean County still has more than 120 tax-levying bodies. They include the county government, 31 townships, 19 incorporated towns, the 26 school districts, 1 sanitary district, 8 fire districts, 7 library districts, 27 drainage districts, and 2 cemetery districts. Some of these units such as the county townships and incorporated towns will have several tax levies. And what is true of McLean County is true in larger or smaller degree in virtually all of the 3103 counties of the forty-eight states.

III

Many of these units are so small they cannot hope to cope with the problems confronting them. A small township road district does not have sufficient capital to own and operate the heavy road machinery needed today. It does not have a large enough tax base to build the kind of roads required by the people of the community. They must have help. It would appear logical for all such districts in a county or a number of counties to see their common problem and pool their resources in an effort to solve the problem locally. In many instances small districts have held tenaciously to their inadequate boundary

lines in the name of local control while being forced to go to the county, the state, and the nation for subsidies to bail them out. Instead of retaining local control they lose it to a central government—not because the central government reached out and grabbed control but because the inadequate local unit could not do the job the people required. Thus inadequate local units continue to exist only through the courtesy and the generosity of the centralized government. Their home-rule muscles grow flabby. In their efforts to retain all local units of government they lose all effectiveness.

The only way they can arrest the trend toward centralization of control is to have local government capable of meeting the requirements of the people. To do that they are going to have to reorganize into larger units. The ineffective local unit—whether it be a road district, a school district, a health department, or a law enforcement agency—is the greatest threat to the sound, locally controlled, and self-sufficient community. Artificial boundaries must go or local community effectiveness will be lost in the name of home rule.

The problems of health and sanitation, police and fire protection, adequate utility services plague the lilliputian community today. A sanitary sewer system for a small community could cost a half million dollars. Paved streets cost thousands of dollars per block. Garbage collection is expensive. Fire fighting equipment designed to protect high-priced property today costs more than many a small community can pay. Street lighting is a matter of major expense. Financing a modern police and law enforcement agency requires a broad tax base. Laboratory technicians, sanitary engineers, and medical and nursing personnel required to cope with today's health problems pull heavily upon the public purse.

Yet all these problem must be met and the services provided, or the small community cannot survive. How small a community can survive? It would be difficult to set a figure. The property assessment, the will of the people to get the job done, the proximity of the community to other centers where the services are provided, the ingenuity of the people in providing jobs, developing their resources, and encouraging growth—all these are factors. The important thing is that the services must be forthcoming from some source. Either the home community provides them by itself, or it receives cooperation from surrounding

communities, or an appeal will be made to the state and/or national government, and the home town ceases to be of importance. The problems cannot be ignored. They must be solved.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower said in a speech in 1949, "The completely spurious argument is frequently advanced that because the federal government skims off so much of the available tax revenues it must, as a consequence, bear more of the local expenditure. That is putting the cart before the horse. If local communities do their job, then there will be no need for added centralized revenues for subsidies of an essentially local character; and we will avoid the extreme pitfalls of extreme centralization." He said on another occasion that "the abdication of individual responsibility is inevitably followed by further concentration of power in the state."

Woodrow Wilson said: "The history of liberty is a history of limitations of governmental powers, not the increase of it. When we resist, therefore, the concentration of powers, we are resisting the process of death, because concentration of power is what always precedes the destruction of human liberties."

Adlai E. Stevenson, while governor of Illinois, kept pointing this out to the people. He pleaded for effective local government and offered it as the only hope in avoiding greater centralization. "We talk about and deplore incessantly the increasing centralization of power over our lives in Washington," he said. "But that tidal drift toward the capital will go on and on unless those necessary functions of government which don't have to be performed in Washington are performed, and properly performed, at the state or local level. The people will demand the services and if they don't get them at home they will turn to Uncle Sam. And every dollar you send to Washington to pay for them will shrink before it gets back home."

That is what has been happening since the beginning of the country. The tempo has increased in the last quarter century. We have kept the form of local self-sufficiency but we have lost the substance, and one of the main reasons we have drifted so far toward centralization is the inability of the too-small community to solve its problems and its unwillingness to reorganize into an effective community unit.

There is no justification for trying to salvage all the small communities of the country. It is not the purpose of this book to encourage

any such effort. The country might have a much better and more effective brand of local self-sufficiency if we had half or a third as many communities as now. If we had fewer and stronger local communities we would have less need for centralized paternalism. The weak, the ineffective, the unneeded small community is the Achilles heel in the fight for self-sufficiency. It must be eliminated or strengthened, and which it will be depends in large part upon the individual community, its people, and its will to live. Hundreds of communities will die in the next quarter century. Those with a real function and a determined, cooperative will to survive can do so. The country will be richer and the people freer as a result. Those that do survive will have to progress toward economic breadth, cultural depth, and civic effectiveness. Change is our tradition; there is no status quo. Communities with a will to survive had better make no small plans.

The economic and civic phases of small community growth have been discussed. The neglected and more often misunderstood cultural phases of small community life remain to be considered. The most frequently misunderstood social-cultural asset of the small community is recreation. It will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

Small Communities HAVE Recreation

RECREATION IN the United States has been put in a strait jacket. It has come under the complete domination of the metropolitan areas where the best they can do is to organize and supervise consumption of idle time and surplus energy. The first dictionary definition of recreation is "recreating." The second is "refreshment of strength and spirits after toil." Organized recreation became more important as centralization grew. Informal recreation came naturally in rural America. One had difficulty in differentiating between work, worship, and play. They all blended together in a complete and satisfying way of life. My own childhood experiences were typical.

When I was a boy we took life as we found it. We trudged two and a half miles to the country school, lunch basket in hand, enjoying the crisp morning frost. We were carefree as we ambled home in the evening facing the silver cobwebs that flirted in the sun. Sometimes we stopped by Squire Karnes's apple orchard. He always found reason to turn his Jersey bull into the orchard about time the fruit was ripening, but we discovered that by splitting our forces one group could entertain the bull while the other collected enough apples for all.

As we neared the farmhouse we were greeted with the aroma of freshly baked bread, and we made a mad dash to see who would get there first and thus earn the heel of the loaf, saturated with fresh country butter.

We had chores to do—meaningful chores. The pigs had to be fed, the cattle watered, the horses fed and chicks put to roost.

There were hungry appetites as we gathered around the supper table—all eight of the living children and Mother and Father. Those

appetites waited until Father said grace. Occasionally he would yield the honors to Mother. Later we played family games in the parlor. The evening always came to a close with Scripture reading and family prayer. One night Father would read the Bible and Mother would offer prayer while we all got down on our knees. The next night they would reverse the procedure. We were not always reverent. Things had a way of getting awfully funny at prayer time, and it was torture to suppress a giggle. If the preacher happened to be staying all night, as he frequently did, he had the scripture and prayer honors. And we repeated the performance in the morning for his benefit. But when he wasn't there we ate a hearty breakfast with no more spiritual guidance than grace at the table, and hurried out to the day's tasks.

On Saturdays we worked, or went with the family to town for the weekly shopping—such as had to be done. We did our own butchering, took our own wheat to the mill, and got a due bill for flour as we needed it. We grew our own vegetables and fruit and Mother and the girls preserved them for winter use. Often to our sorrow Father would assign chores and leave us at home while he and Mother went to town. He could think of more things that needed to be done than any man I ever knew. On such occasions we frequently found time to rope a few calves and drive them around in tandem, ride them or hitch them to a home-made cart. Once we cornered one that Father had just purchased and got a rope around his neck. He didn't want to move, so Ernie told me to hold the rope while he twisted the calf's tail. That was a common way of coaxing a calf into action. He acted. He lit off around and around the straw stack with me sailing around in space at the end of the rope, my feet touching the ground only now and then. And once we hitched the goat and the family dog to our little wagon. In two minutes they were in a furious fight and our wagon was in splinters.

On Sundays we went to church at Wesley Chapel. My parents had been Baptists, but they joined the Methodist church near the farm and we were all reared as Methodists. (Later I went to a Presbyterian college and still later married a Baptist, thus returning to the family's original religious fold.) We had Sunday School in one big room. It was the spirit of Babel. Church services often were opened with a testimony meeting. People spoke sincerely of their religious experi-

ences. Father often talked so long the preacher didn't have time for his sermon. In Father's defense I must say that his extemporaneous testimony was usually a better sermon than the itinerant preacher could deliver anyway. It was quite a shock to us when our circuit preacher, the Reverend L. M. Height, was later convicted of helping his paramour poison her husband. He went to prison. It would have taken more than that to shake the faith of Father and Mother. They were sorry for him for falling from the faith.

Their faith was abiding. Mother was the type of person who was not satisfied with saying "deliver us from evil" when reciting the Lord's Prayer. She always said "deliver us from *all* evil." Regularly I was awakened by her clear soprano voice singing "Rock of Ages," "When the Roll is Called up Yonder," "Nearer, My God, to Thee," and similar old hymns as she ground coffee beans in the old-fashioned hand-grinder.

Father was not one to call the police if something went wrong. I recall once that some boys from town stole some of his hens. He went to the produce house and looked around till he saw his hens. Then he calmly asked the buyer who sold him those chickens. The clerk gave him the name of the boys and he went straight to their parents to tell them what had happened. Together they arranged to let the boys keep the money they collected for the stolen loot, but they had to come out to our house and work it out picking strawberries. They also had a visit to the woodshed. My parents, like a good many others of that day, didn't know any better than to beat hell out of me when I needed it. And I have noticed that those of my generation who are pulling their full share of the load of civic responsibility got similar treatment.

Father and Mother believed explicitly in prayer. When things got rough and they didn't know just what to do next, they went to their knees. Mother's favorite praying place was the outhouse and Father preferred the barn. I don't know how their prayers were answered, but they always came out with a look of serenity on their faces, and they had new courage to face the rigors of life.

After church everybody invited everybody home to dinner—and meant it. I've seen more than fifty at our house without advance notice. If the crowd got too big for the spacious dining room, the spotless tablecloths were placed on the grass under the oak trees and we

squatted Indian fashion as we ate chicken and ham and pie and cake and homemade ice cream until we were miserable.

On Sunday afternoons we played "andy-over" or skated on the farm pond, or roamed the clover fields to fight bumblebees with handmade paddles. When we got a little older we gathered at some farm home to play hide-and-seek, and we always managed to pair off so we could hold hands excitedly as we were being hunted. Our social life, like the subject of the song in the musical hit of a few years back, came naturally.

Threshing was a big event. All the women and children came along with the men. The kids romped all over the place—and there was room for romping—while the men worked and the women prepared those unbelievable threshing dinners. It was quite an honor to be water boy. The snappiest rig the farmer owned was at your disposal. It usually wasn't hard to get a pretty girl to ride with you as you dashed from wagon to wagon and back to the machine. I can almost hear the water gurgle from those earthen jugs as the hot, thirsty men upended them, their Adam's apple oscillating on their sweaty necks. And in the afternoon your favorite girl would climb on the bundle wagon and ride to the field with you.

Box socials, Children's Day exercises, the last day of school, neighborhood Christmas parties—those were the big events of the year. There was something of a circus air about loading into a straw-filled wagon box and driving a few miles for an all-day stay at "camp meeting." Then there were the revivals at Wesley Chapel where the adults renewed their religion and the young folks renewed acquaintances. Father and Aunt Betty Karnes always had an endurance contest in both praying and shouting. All the chosen would go down front to the altar to pray. First one and then another would begin to pray out loud until virtually every adult in church would join the prayer chorus. Soon the weaker ones would begin to run short of wind and the din would die down gradually. But Father's deep voice and the shrill cries of Aunt Betty just kept rolling along. They really got down to their knitting when they realized that they were the finalists. It usually ended by a joyous shouting trip up and down the aisle of the church. I record this not in derision, but in reverence. They struck a spiritual fire I haven't witnessed since, and they left spiritually uplifted. Let the

sophisticate scoff: Where today can he get such exhilaration without suffering a hangover?

II

The foregoing could be written off as nostalgia and forgotten. But it has a lesson for people today who want inner peace and purposeful living. People today will not go back almost half a century to horse-and-buggy living. But they could try harder to integrate their work, worship, and play into a workable philosophy of life. That mode of living has gone for most of us. Society generally has discarded it. But society has not found a suitable substitute. We have been urbanized and commercialized and energized to the point of almost complete frustration.

It is doubtful if inhabitants of the great metropolitan areas can formulate a philosophy of satisfactory living. They are forced to turn to the synthetic. Because of their very mass they are obliged to sit on the sidelines and be spectators. Their opportunity for individual creativeness is limited. By and large they have imported their talent from the small communities and farms of the nation. The drawn, worried, hurried look of city people is depressing. They have had to turn to formalized recreation programs and to spectator sports. The individual is consumed by the crowd.

The smaller communities in too many instances have aped the big city, but they can formulate a satisfying philosophy of life. They have not done so. Heading the list of needs in virtually every Central Illinois community where a questionnaire has been distributed is the demand for recreation for young people. They have in mind organized, supervised recreation just like the big cities have. They think of big playgrounds, community centers, new factory-made equipment.

There is nothing wrong with organized recreation. Properly supervised play is fine if there is nothing better to offer. But the small communities can do much more than they have done to utilize the recreational assets at their finger tips. Most of them have excellent community centers in their fine school buildings and churches. They could have preserved the small plots where one-room schools once stood and converted them into small rural parks. Some of them did, but most of these plots have been utilized as homesteads or have been

allowed to revert to cultivated land. Farmers themselves could set up recreation areas around their homes and invite their friends for a cook-out, a game of tennis, or just relaxation and conversation.

The people of Minonk, Illinois, were thrown into a panic a few years ago when a commercial show which they had booked for their annual community reunion failed to arrive. Paul Jones, Bob Morrison, and some others hurriedly got together a local talent show, and it was one of the best entertainment programs Minonk ever had. The people themselves participated in the acts. Those who didn't had a deep interest because they knew the performers as their neighbors or their children.

The children of a Bloomington neighborhood were enthralled for two weeks not long ago when one mother took the time to work up a kiddie review in her back yard. They made costumes out of gunny sacks or anything at hand. They used old sheets as curtains. The youngsters worked up their own stunts. When the big night came they invited their parents and charged a penny per person for admission. The show was a great success and the kids took the receipts to buy treats the next day. Parents who had never seen each other before became good friends.

That kind of recreation meant something to the neighborhood. There would be fewer broken windows, trampled flower beds, damaged evergreens—yes, and less delinquency—if more mothers would spend more time with the children and less at the bars and the card table. And both children and parents would be happier.

Much more thought is being given to that type of recreation. Of course, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H clubs, and similar organizations have been in this field for years. Their greatest need is for more adult volunteers to work with the youngsters.

A whale of a lot of fun can be had on a fallen tree. Every back yard offers a thousand mysteries of insect and plant life if parents and children will explore them together. A family cook-out can be a great experience for everyone including the dog. Yet many of the communities in the Bloomington area and elsewhere continue to think they need organized, professionally supervised recreation. Perhaps they do, but they need neighborhood cooperation in taking advantage of what they have much more.

The pattern of recreation centers in the small town is clearly established. Youngsters have a wonderful time cleaning up some old building offered by a kind citizen. They borrow a truck and gather up discarded furniture to equip the place. Finally the center is completed. Attendance is good for a few nights but the youngsters eventually discover that the real fun was in getting the place ready, and that trying to keep it going is boring. They have purpose in readying the center. The operation is synthetic. The life of such centers is short.

III

Probably the best example of a happy combination of recreation and purposeful living we have in America today is the 4-H club. A boy or girl with a 4-H project has the finest type of recreation and at the same time gets experience and training that will be useful throughout life. In addition many club boys and girls build up bank accounts of several thousand dollars by the time they reach college.

The continuity, unity, and pleasure of the Clarence Ropp family as built around the 4-H concept is typical of what is happening all over rural America today. Clarence Ropp is now in his early 40's. In 1928 he attained the highest honor of 4-H work by being chosen Illinois representative to the National 4-H Club Camp in Washington, D. C. He had been in 4-H work for nine years. About the same time the girl who is now Mrs. Clarence Ropp was Illinois State Champion. She was the Illinois representative for girls to the National 4-H Leadership Training Camp.

A quarter of a century later their son Gordon followed in his father's footsteps as Illinois representative to the National 4-H Club Camp. These attainments are the zenith of 4-H club achievement. To win them one must have made an outstanding record with actual projects in competition with thousands of other youngsters. Gordon's record will illustrate that point.

He was in 4-H Club work ten years. During that time he had projects in pig raising, poultry, gardening, potato growing, soil conservation, corn growing, and dairying. Each project required that he carry out all the work necessary to complete it, finance it, keep careful records, and compete with others of the County at the annual 4-H fair.

Dairying was Gordon's favorite project. In 1951 he won Grand

Champion honors with his Jersey cow in both the junior and open classes at the Illinois State Fair. He has won numerous firsts at county and state fairs in the junior class, but winning in the open class in competition with the best breeders of the country is an unusual accomplishment for a lad of eighteen.

In 1949 Gordon won the Illinois Outstanding 4-H Junior Jersey Breeder Award for achievements in developing a Jersey herd. In 1950-51 he was president of the Future Farmers of America chapter in high school. He was six times declared the state's outstanding 4-H member.

Gordon Ropp is now a student at the College of Agriculture at the University of Illinois. He has built up a herd of sixteen purebred Jersey cattle. Through a business arrangement with his father from which both benefit, the cows continue to yield him a nice financial return while he completes his education. During his 4-H club career he built up a cash and inventory value of nearly $10,000. He expects to complete college with his herd intact and with a sizeable cash reserve. He did all this while contributing his full share to the family farming enterprise. He did the work of a farm hand from the age of nine. He also found time to be valedictorian of his high school class, serve as president of the McLean County 4-H Club Federation, win numerous awards as a dairy judge and place among top state winners in public speaking. At the university he served as senator representing the Freshman Council, as a sophomore he served as representative on the university's Financial Board, secretary of the Dairy Production Club, was a member of the Ag Club, the Hoof and Horn Club, served on the Red Cross Committee, and was a member of the university baseball squad.

Gordon was not born to wealth. His parents are working dirt farmers who own only ninety acres and rent forty more. That is well below the average size farm in McLean County. He was born to opportunity and encouragement. His father has served twenty-five years as 4-H leader, president of the McLean County Farm Bureau, chairman of the county 4-H Fair Committee and president of the fair, chairman of the McLean County School Survey Committee, president of his local school board, member of the Illinois State Teachers' College

Board, member of the McLean County Community Chest Board, to mention only his major civic activities.

Mrs. Ropp has been equally active in 4-H leadership, church work, parent-teacher activities, Home Bureau, and the Farm Home Mothers' Association.

Younger son Ray is just starting in 4-H work, but he has been a member of the Ropp family team for several years. He has his regular assignments around the farm, and his allowance is based upon the work he does. If he takes time off for some personal activity, his pay is cut accordingly. If he fills in as a full farm hand while his father is away from home, his pay zooms upward. He has an incentive for work.

The whole family philosophy is wrapped up in Clarence's statement: "We don't live to farm, but we farm to live." They don't covet the adjoining eighty acres. They believe in and practice the belief that the small farm properly operated provides the best type of living and leaves time enough to enjoy living.

Play is important to the Ropps. Clarence has a well-known relic room which houses not only the family heirlooms but his collection of weapons. There is a tennis court on the homestead and the tree-studded lawn is the scene of many family games. The parents have made a point of never being too busy or too tired to play a game if the boys proposed it. In return the boys never protest when there is work to be done. They go to church together on Sunday. Picnics and group gatherings are numerous on the Ropp farm. Foreign visitors are frequent and they always leave with a new, refreshing, and encouraging view of American life at its finest.

The Ropps have a well integrated life that combines work, worship, and play in today's world. They have as much security as anyone can attain. They are in tune with the universe. What they have done is attainable by any average family.

IV

Urban youngsters, especially those of the city, have fewer opportunities to play, learn, and earn all in the same operation. Scouts would come close if their leaders and parents would really make the troops live up to Scout standards. Instead most troop leaders make repeated calls for financial support from the sponsoring organization.

Troop members would learn so much more if they earned their own money in clean-up campaigns, gleaning corn fields, running errands, and so forth.

There is much virtue in household chores for boys and girls. There probably would be less delinquency and fewer problem children if more boys mowed lawns, washed windows, and kept the family home in good repair. There would be less time for idle and restless complaining if more girls did more housekeeping along with their mothers. Work can be recreation if one has the right attitude toward it, and young America for the most part is missing the thrill of real accomplishment through work.

Opportunities are numerous in the small community. There are always church grounds, vacant lots, parkways, and roadways to be beautified. There are services to be rendered. Impromptu stunt nights, circuses, musicals, drama, nature studies—the list is endless. What alert person would ever be bored in the great out-of-doors?

While adult recreation is seldom mentioned, it is an important factor in the well rounded community. Fortunately, more has been done in this field than is usually realized. Adult education is sweeping the rural communities of the country. At Benson, in Woodford County, Illinois, the enrollment in adult night classes has exceeded the enrollment in day school for years. People pursue their natural interests. They take instruction in upholstering or woodwork or basket weaving. One of the most popular classes in the Bloomington-Normal Adult Education program is millinery. Women learn how to make their own hats—lots of hats.

Public sales, community auctions, special festivals—all these play a part in the total recreational picture of the small community. Eureka's Pumpkin Festival has gained national attention. Eureka is the county seat of Woodford County and the home of a canning factory. Canned pumpkin is one of the big items so pumpkin growing was encouraged in the area. Now Eureka proudly claims to be the Pumpkin Center of the World. The festival attracts thousands of people. A Pumpkin Queen is elected and a gala time is had by all. El Paso, also in Woodford County, holds a Corn Festival. That has meaning in El Paso because it is headquarters for Pfister Hybrid corn. Corn is big business in El Paso.

Every year farmers in neighborhoods all over America gather to rebuild a barn, harvest a crop, or plant seeds for a neighbor who has suffered misfortune. They bring their tractors and their machinery. Their wives prepare the dinner. There is something of a game in seeing how many men and machines they can put to work in a single field, and in finishing the job in record time. It is recreation in the fullest sense.

The citizens of Towanda, near Bloomington, hold an annual benefit sale to provide funds for the community library. People of the entire community have the opportunity to participate in the event. The library becomes their project through voluntary action. Aside from raising money through the sale of items contributed by citizens, with proceeds going to the library, the event has many social and recreational benefits. A chicken dinner is a part of the festivities. Movies are shown. There is something for every member of the family. A good spirit is almost sure to result from such an event. It cannot be carried on so easily in a larger place, but it is a good way for the neighborhood or small organization to combine work, public service, and fun. The people of Towanda probably never thought of this project as recreation, but it is recreation of the finest type. It has purpose and it brings all of the people of the community together on common ground.

Church women, who serve dinners as a means of making money to pay up their pledge to a new building or addition, work hard but they also have recreation.

Summer concerts by community bands provide recreation for all. In Danvers, not far from Bloomington, the community band is made up of people ranging in age from seven to seventy. Street dances, free movies, or just a Saturday night in town give people an opportunity to get together and talk things over. Life can still be pleasant in the smaller communities. Here is emerging the new philosophy of life that combines making a living with enough time and opportunity for enjoying life.

There is pleasure and great recreative value in doing nothing regularly. Perplexing problems have a way of coming into focus if one can put his body in neutral, sit quietly on the terrace or under a tree, and do a bit of mental free-wheeling. The soothing sound of the leaves

in the breeze, the song of the birds, the beauty of flowers and shrubs nearby, the moist caress of a playful puppy's tongue on the hand, the splendor of the endless sky-blue canopy overhead, the complete absence of man-made noises—all these create a spirit of calmness and reverence and well-being. And that is recreation. It is hard to find in the crashing, crushing, ear-splitting whirlpool of man and machines in the big city. The person who has not learned to be happy and content while completely alone for an hour, a day, or a week has missed life's greatest serenity.

The urban definition of recreation is too restricted. It is regimented and artificial. It is divorced from the purposeful life and, by its nature, may cause disintegration of the family unit and actually contribute to delinquency. The smaller community can supply integrated recreation all about if its people have eyes to see. It is only when they, like Lot's wife, turn to look back at Sodom and Gomorrah that they get into trouble.

CHAPTER 7

Small Communities Need Strong Churches

NO GROUP in modern society has a bigger stake in the survival of the small community than the Christian church. Christianity is founded upon the principle of the sanctity of the individual. It believes that man, the individual, has a dignity and a purpose in life and that to attain that dignity and that purpose he must live in harmony with the universe. To attain such harmony man must live and work and play in an environment which gives him dignity and purpose and fulfillment. Today's urbanized, centralized society does not provide that climate. The small community does.

Man is reduced to the concentrated pursuit of money in today's urban society. He has become a slave to the era of gadgets. In metropolitan living he has been forced to divorce his religion from his business. Daily he must rationalize the moral convictions of Christianity to fit the materialism of the market place. Either Christianity must lose out to materialism or society must be remodeled with the community at the center.

While Christianity is founded on a belief in the value of every human personality, it nurtures a kind of individualism that bridges the differences among men. It breaks down artificial boundaries and opens the door to a universal humanity. In this respect it gives deep meaning to the community. The Judeo-Christian concept early accepted the responsibility for one's fellow men. Adam's son asked, "Am I my brother's keeper?" And the answer came back that he was. So he is today. Christianity holds fast to the value of every human personality and at the same time accepts the brotherhood of man. That great dual assignment can be carried out only in an environment conducive to the flowering of the individual and in a community climate where neighborliness is possible and natural.

The basic principle of Christianity is destroyed in a centralized society. The sanctity of the individual is denied. The state-society comes first. Individual relationship between man, the individual, and his God in an industrial plant where thousands of men work and in urban centers where millions live is difficult if not impossible.

The Judeo-Christian religion gives primacy to the family. Urban living today splinters the family. Dr. Arthur Morgan has said: "The American city today draws to itself the cream of the population of America, and then extinguishes the family life of those it attracts. City families on the average die out in four generations or less." That is no climate for a living religion. The small community, by contrast, naturally throws the family members together. They work and worship and play in a closely knit unit. They live in an environment where the individual can accept and practice religion.

Christianity is more than a religion. It is a way of life. It is more than a faith; it is a kind of living. It must include freedom of conscience and opportunity to achieve security of mind and body without condoning or abetting practices which are contrary to inner promptings or conscience. Christianity must have a setting where those inner promptings can be nurtured and made sensitive; or Christianity loses its meaning.

II

Churchmen are aware of this problem. In a vague way they are concerned about the loss of laboring people in the big cities. True, many of these people go through the form of maintaining church affiliation, but religion is not a vital part of their lives. They find companionship and importance instead in the tavern. They are more likely to pray to Walter Reuther or the Social Security Board than to God. Christianity cannot endure under such conditions. The church, whose mission is the salvation of man, should be in the forefront of the crusade to arrest centralization.

Many faiths have established rural life departments to promote the small church. Seminaries are doing a better job of training young ministers for work in the small-town and rural churches. Most of them have missions in the big cities to minister to the poor and the unfortunate. But few if any have tackled the bigger problem of re-

moving the causes of these evidences of social and religious degeneration. The real job is to arrest the trend to centralization and to promote well rounded communities across the land where Christianity can have a chance to thrive. To be in tune one must have a tuning fork. There is no tuning fork for the universe in the steaming throngs of the slums.

Yet the churches are putting too much of their energy, their talent, and their resources into the perpetuation of a centralized economic and social order which will destroy them. The small rural churches are all but extinct. The small-town churches are weakened to impotence by denominationalism and organizational routine. They have poor equipment, inadequate leadership, and programs which have only a superficial application to the problems with which men struggle today.

Just as society is supporting too many lilliputian communities, so also is it supporting too many small churches. The result is that the church is not producing the vital Christianity it could in the areas best suited to the nurture of Christianity. A church school teacher, however devoted, cannot develop young minds to a full appreciation of the philosophy of brotherhood without teacher training and teaching experience. It cannot be done without adequate equipment and adequate financial support. It is difficult for churches to provide the proper tools and personnel when some small communities have three to half a dozen denominational parishes.

Some of the nation's Protestant leaders see the need of less competition and more cooperation among the two hundred Protestant denominations. Charles Clayton Morrison wrote in the *Christian Century* in 1946:

> Protestantism, with twice the Catholic membership, supports 17½ times as many churches. Nearly all these 230,000 churches exist side by side with other Protestant churches. They are not there because the community needs them, nor because Protestantism needs them, nor because Christianity needs them; they are there because each one of the denominations imagines that its peculiar brand of Protestantism ought to be propagated, regardless of the effect upon these communities and upon Protestant Christianity as a whole.

Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam, in a recent sermon, said:

Our disunity is a denial of our Lord, disobedience of His command, disregard of his prayer. We can no longer call upon God to bless us in wasting wealth and talent in useless duplication or downright competition; such inefficiency is sinful. Our consciences condemn the contradiction of a gospel that unites and a policy that divides.

James Hastings Nichols, in his *Primer for Protestants*, says:

The very term "denomination" implies that the group referred to is but one member of a family with a common faith. Denominational multiplicity is a serious confusion. American Protestantism, in our generation, must reconsider this whole system. The luxury of denominational division is too dangerous and too expensive to be retained.

The *Presbyterian Tribune* for April 12, 1947, says of the churches of that denomination:

There is no shortage of pastors; there is an oversupply of churches. We have 2031 churches with less than 50 members. Some communities are so over-churched that congregations are doomed to languish. The implications are plain—more emphasis should be put upon the ecumenical vision and cooperation to enlarge the smaller churches by federation with others.

III

There are possible remedies. Churches could strip off their denominational tags and establish community churches with sufficient economic and manpower resources to support a constructive, challenging program. The community church movement is taking this approach. It has been in progress for fifty years and there are now some 3000 communities in all parts of the United States where community-centered churches have been formed. These include people from many branches of the Protestant church and with a wide range of beliefs. The International Council of Community Churches, with headquarters in Columbus, Ohio, has been organized to foster this movement. An international conference was held in East Lansing, Michigan, in August 1953, to bring world leaders together to evaluate and foster the community church movement.

As set forth by the International Council of Community Churches in a pamphlet, *That They All May Be One,*

the Community Churches . . . do not constitute another denomination. They represent a "grass roots" revival of lay religion, dedicated to the practical expression of the religious life of the entire community and with all creedal and dogmatic barriers broken down. . . . The movement concedes to each congregation, as the congregation does to each individual, full freedom of self-expression. It stands for the spiritual unity of all people who are interested in building together, the Kingdom of God on earth. Each church shapes its own program and decides its own procedure. It does not discard, wholesale, the tested values of historic church experience. It can borrow the best features of all Christiandom. Its members are united in a common Christian purpose and no one who shares that purpose is excluded from its fellowship, no matter in what terms he may state or fail to state his creed. It aims to embody in its own work and worship the true genius of the ecumenical church, richly inclusive of the best all groups can offer and devoted to the fullest spiritual sovereignty of the individual believer. In short the Community Church undertakes to constitute an actual, living demonstration of Christian unity wherein people of many faiths and backgrounds worship and serve together harmoniously and happily, without distinction and without prejudice. It is a simple, democratic brotherhood of believing Christians like the brotherhood of the early apostolic church.

The trend is in the direction of the community-centered church, but the movement has been slow. With only 3000 such churches out of 230,000 to show for fifty years of effort, it would be too much to expect quick results.

The case at Cooksville, not far from Bloomington, will illustrate the point. More than a decade ago the Presbyterian and Disciples of Christ churches began meeting together. They each had a minister and a church building. Denominational leaders encouraged their efforts. After meeting first in one building and then the other, they finally decided to abandon the Disciples' church and use the Presbyterian building, which was in better condition. The name was changed to the Union Church. Care is still taken to see that all boards have equal representation from both groups and benevolence funds are divided equally between the two denominations. Only in 1953 did the members begin procedure to bring the two church buildings and the one parsonage under joint ownership. The Union Church has about a hundred members drawn from the village and the surrounding

farms. Sunday School attendance on special days reaches about seventy-five.

When the Cooksville Methodist church burned a few years ago some thought was given to merging all three groups into one village church. Several meetings were held but obstacles were too great and the Methodists proceeded to erect a new church building. The Rev. William B. Slater, minister of the Union Church, is frank to say that they still should get together and form one congregation. They have held Bible school together and, perhaps in time, they will merge. But the process is slow. Most of the 60 million Protestant church members still belong to one of the many denominations and will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. More than 90 per cent belong to fourteen or fifteen denominations.

It is not beyond hope, and certainly within the spirit of Christianity, for denominations to consolidate their forces. Remarkable progress has been made in this direction. A high point in collaboration was reached in 1950 with the creation of the National Council of Churches of Christ. Twelve interdenominational cooperative groups, including the Federal Council of Churches, merged their organizations to create this giant church federation. It represents 32 million members in twenty-nine denominations. Progress has been made in church cooperation on a world scale. The 1951 National Council of Churches Yearbook lists eighteen agencies working in this field. A milepost in this direction was the formation of the World Council of Churches in August 1948, at a meeting in Amsterdam, Holland, with 156 denominations participating.

Much remains to be done toward unity among branches of the same denomination in this country. Southern Baptists and Northern Baptists, now known as the American Baptists, have been unable to get together. The three main Presbyterian groups are continuing their efforts to merge. The movement to unite American Baptists and the Disciples of Christ has slowed, as has the proposal to unite Episcopalians and Methodists. Other mergers still in the discussion stage are those of the various Lutheran bodies, and of the Evangelical and Reformed with the Congregational Christian. Ninety per cent of Negro church members in the United States are still within separate Negro churches, chiefly Baptists and Methodists. Church fusion is still a dream.

IV

Actually there would not be enough churches today if all the members were active. Only about 25 per cent of the 60-odd million Protestants take an active part in the work of their chosen church. One of the first tasks is for the churches to recruit and hold their own members. In addition there are some 16 or 17 million persons in the United States beyond the age of fourteen who do not profess church membership of any kind. They offer a fertile field for the existing churches.

But without the non-active members and without the non-members, the churches of the nation are going to have to learn to crawl before they can walk into fusion. The need is unity but not necessarily dead uniformity. Church councils can and do bring about greater unity. They frequently get the various denominations to work together on training of teachers, operation of Bible schools, youth work, and similar activities. There are numerous examples of two or more churches of the same denomination merging. The First Methodist and the Grace Methodist Churches of Bloomington merged into the Wesley Methodist Church and finished a million dollar building in the early 1950's. But the final merger represented years of patient and persistent effort on the part of scores of members and several ministers.

The small community with a number of Protestant churches still faces a tremendous problem. A standard set at the twenty-fourth American Country Life Conference held in Chicago in 1944 is still far beyond the reach of the average small community with more than one Protestant church. The report of this conference advocated a membership of at least 1000 persons or 200 families. It recommended a reduction of denominational competition to a minimum in order to attain this standard. The report took into consideration geographical conditions, density of population, and such factors as nationality or tradition or similarity of denominational belief.

Depopulation of the rural areas because of mechanization of the farms, plus good highways and fast automobiles, has been hard on the country church. Many of them have closed and the farm people attend the town or village church. In some small communities voluntary merger or federation of churches appears to be essential if

the church is to be strong enough to fulfill its community function. Where union is out of the question, denominations could, with leadership from above, cooperate. One denomination could be given the task of meeting the church needs in one community, another denomination in some other community. Both denominations and both communities would be strengthened. This is being done in the foreign mission field. It ought to be done more at the fountainhead of the American church. It could do much to remove the divisive influence of too many churches in the small community.

Still another possibility is for church organizations to subsidize the small town or rural church just as they subsidize foreign missions and, in many instances, urban missions. A well supported and adequately staffed church in a small rural community could probably do more to develop the fullest meaning of religion as a way of life than any big city church. A blending of work and play and worship on common ground goes further toward putting man in tune with the universe than ushers with striped pants and a half dozen choirs in elegant robes —even further than the best efforts of a great pulpiteer.

There are examples of what can be done. The Christian church in Eureka, Illinois, is such an example. The structure itself is a surprisingly magnificent architectural creation for a small county-seat city of 2400 inhabitants. It is attractive to the eye and it is designed for use. Its parish hall is a community center in the fullest sense of the word. All kinds of secular, civic, and religious groups meet there. The educational plant is designed to serve the needs of the congregation. Marble fireplaces and comfortable furniture grace the room where women's organizations meet. There is even an office for the superintendent of the church school. Recreational facilities are available for young and old. Worship service is held in an atmosphere designed to induce reverence. Many of the pews are made of native walnut cut from the surrounding family farms. Altar and communion appointments are designed by the world's greatest artisans. A small chapel, a replica of the larger church sanctuary, accommodates prayer services, informal weddings, and similar events. Eureka College, supported by the same denomination, plays an important part in the religious, cultural, and intellectual atmosphere. Here is an effective church in a community where there is opportunity to help people keep in tune with the universe.

The country needs more such churches to keep alive the true meaning of Christianity. They are most likely to succeed in the atmosphere of the open country and the small community with strong ties to the land. One cannot be a part of the passing seasons, watch the reproductive miracles of plant and animal life, feel the dependence upon the elements beyond man's understanding and control without having a keen sense of the presence of a superior force in the universe. Call it God or good or nature; call it what you will, but its presence is felt. And in that presence man finds a serenity, a purpose, a meaning in life that is not found in Times Square. Without inner peace all the gadgets in the world and the highest physical standard of living imaginable are meaningless. The ultimate end is frustration and eclipse of the individual.

Here, then, is the new mission field for the church. Here is a challenge to stop feeding the hand that chokes the spirit and begin to grasp the hand that can elevate the spirit. The church and religion will crumble under the unfriendly weight of centralization, as they are being crushed in those countries championing centralization today. Decentralization is a matter of survival for Christianity. And, since Christianity is the source and strength of our civilization, decentralization must be encouraged or that which we cherish is lost.

CHAPTER 8

Bedroom Citizens

THE MOVEMENT from the cities into the suburbs has created hundreds of thousands of bedroom citizens—those who live in one community and earn their living in another. This is a sort of "in-law" problem on a civic basis. Just as it is best if a young family can avoid having to keep a mother-in-law, it is best if a community can provide employment for its own people and thus avoid the bedroom citizens. But occasionally there is no other place for mother to go, and, for the present, at least, the city dweller is going to take up residence in the suburbs and small towns near where he works. It is going to take a lot of patience on all sides if blowups are to be avoided.

The problem is most acute on the rim of the big cities. Numerous small towns and villages were developed as service centers where life was simple and satisfying. People went about their affairs with little contact with the nearby large city. They had their own laws, their mores, and their tempo of life. They knew each other on a first-name basis. Then the city began to spread its tentacles outward. Gradually these little islands have been swallowed up in the great suburbia of today.

Newcomers outnumber the natives. Dry communities become wet. Churches lose their influence. Morals change. Social activity is revolutionized. The invaders take over and destroy the identity of the old community. Utility services are overtaxed. Schools are crowded. The new citizens have a haughty attitude toward local citizens and local businesses. Local citizens look upon these invaders as foreign intruders. Intense emotional reactions are inevitable and normal community life cannot go on. In such places the quality of life has not been improved by the movement from the city proper to a suburb.

It disrupts the old patterns for those who were there and those who come as well. There is no solution for a full and complete life in this environment, except to move on out into open country.

The situation is not so critical in the non-metropolitan areas where natives and newcomers alike work in nearby plants. Residents of scores of small towns work in Bloomington, Peoria, Decatur, Champaign, and similar primary centers throughout the nation. These people usually belong to church in the small town, have their social affiliations there, serve on various committees and boards. Many of them grew up in these communities, or at least one of the family partnership has ties here.

II

Morton, located near Peoria, is an example of this latter type of community. Morton is in a rich agricultural area and was a thriving service center before the war years gave a boost to Peoria's industries. In 1930 Morton had a population of 1500. By 1940 it had grown to 2200, and by 1950 it had reached 3700. More than half of the employed adults residing in Morton work in Peoria or Pekin factories, businesses, and offices. In addition a number of salesmen who cover a wide territory in Central Illinois live here. With today's mobility salesmen are in a position to select their community.

Between 90 and 95 per cent of families in Morton own their own homes. Because of the doubling of population in the last two decades, the percentage of new homes is high. And so is the average mortgage. Obviously Morton does not offer much opportunity for the family seeking to rent a home. That is rather typical of the small community which has developed as a residence center for commuters. It is a stabilizing factor, because people who pay property taxes to support schools and local governmental functions are likely to show an interest in how these are administered.

A few of the newcomers to Morton serve on school boards, and in one or more instances they have offered themselves as candidates for the village board. Many of them are drawn into Boy Scout work, youth recreation, and school activities through their children.

Balancing the commuter employment are 180 business houses and service shops in Morton to employ the other 50 per cent of working

adults. But with so many people working in a relatively few Peoria and Pekin industries, a layoff cuts deeply into Morton's economy. The Caterpillar Company in East Peoria, where 350 Mortonites work, is the major economic factor for all of Morton.

Why do people move to a place like Morton? A craftsman gave these answers: It's a beautiful place to live, where the pride of home ownership is unusually high. Schools are outstanding, with children of newcomers often finding it difficult to keep up with the advanced pace. It affords the convenience of small-town living combined with close proximity to larger shopping centers for items not carried in local shops. One can get to and from work quickly without having to cross city traffic. Morton residents can reach the Caterpillar plant in better time than can many Peoria residents. There are good recreational facilities for children and teen-agers.

A newcomer lawyer likes Morton because it combines social and economic stability with a progressive spirit. He appreciates the stabilizing character of the rich farming area surrounding Morton. The community's growth impresses him. He finds it a good place for family living with a fine sense of balance as to what is important in life. He concedes that the competent professional man can make more money in the city but, for him, that is not the major goal in life. Opportunities to join in community service and to learn about the local agencies which make up the community services, appeal to him. It is a community of average families with no rich and no poor, where anyone who desires can expand his circle of friends.

A newcomer minister likes the favorable residence factor but finds that people are pretty much homebodies with a reluctance to take up civic responsibilities. He sees the church moving toward the social club pattern among people with a developed social consciousness but with lagging civic awareness. He thinks "clubism" takes precedence over religious phases of the church in the suburban community. This is encouraged, he believes, by the feeling of peace, security, and solidarity of the family—a feeling of completeness without the church.

One professional man pointed out that the original reasons that people moved to Morton have been erased by the influx. These were lower costs of homes, taxes, and services. Prices have moved up as the population grew, despite the tremendous increase in taxable property

because of the building boom. Many see a leveling off of growth now, with a possibility for integrating the newcomers with the natives. One resident, who spent seven years in a suburban area of a large eastern city, finds the tensions much less in Morton. But none will deny the tensions. The balance of power shifts. New interests dominate. Even a shift in the numerical strength of a church denomination has deep repercussions in the community.

An old-time resident of a neighboring town indicated the bitterness which frequently shows itself when a community has a large influx of newcomers:

"We have several thousand people employed in Peoria and East Peoria large industries. Many of these people have built homes and are so tied up with payments on mortgages, furniture, cars, television and special assessments they are up to their eyes in debt. About six out of every ten must find spare time work to keep above water. They sell real estate, insurance, demonstrate kitchenware, farm items, do photo finishing and even double in regular jobs.

"The local people have welcomed these newcomers with open arms, but in return, whenever an election comes up, these newcomers form cliques and load the ballot boxes and try hard to push out any and all natives who have owned, built up and supported the town for many generations.

"Many of our local improvements which have raised our taxes here terribly in recent years were voted by the newcomers, hundreds of whom own not a nickel's worth of taxable property.

"These newcomers just about take over the organization and sports. They join everything and entertain lavishly in a mad rush to keep up with the Joneses."

III

Yet the best road to survival for thousands of communities is through growth. They need to retain their own young people and the smaller ones must depend in part upon newcomers to round out the community. The non-metropolitan community surrounding a primary center offers the best possibility for developing the fullest life for the largest number of people.

Bedroom citizens can soon become active citizens of any com-

munity if they and the native residents do their part. A good place to start is with the local church. New citizens are more likely to find a friendly welcome there than in any other place. While many of the members may be slow to warm up to strangers, the minister can and will see that newcomers become acquainted, if given an opportunity. Newcomers, on their part, will win friends faster if they show an interest in local affairs and refrain from talking about what is done "back home." The Compliment Club which Dr. George W. Crane has made famous and the down-to-earth psychology advocated by Dale Carnegie will melt any icy personalities. When reduced to their essentials, the programs of these two men seek to put into practice the principles of the Golden Rule.

If the newcomer family has children, the parent-teacher association members are a good group to know. Scouting, Red Cross, community chest, and similar organizations are made up of the finest people in any community. They are worth knowing. By and large the newcomer will do well to aim at the "do something" groups rather than the "entertain me" cliques. They will have to be patient. Friends worth having are acquired slowly. The worst way to become grounded in a new community is to join a "newcomers' club." That keeps one isolated from the people he needs most to know.

Newcomers should not be too hasty in their criticism of the "peculiar ways" of the "natives." Folk habits are born out of trial and error. People in any given community have their pattern of living because it has proved over the years to be satisfactory. More effort should be put forth in an attempt to understand it and less in criticizing it.

While the major burden of adjustment must fall upon the newcomer, the home-towner has his responsibility as well. He can learn much from his new neighbors. He can grow in tolerance and understanding by accepting the newcomer for what he is and what he can contribute to the growing community. There need be no closed minds in a virile community. Cross-fertilization of ideas should benefit all.

The role of bedroom citizen should be of short duration. Both the newcomer and the native should see to it that length of residence in the community is not the measuring stick of full and friendly citizenship.

CHAPTER 9

Making Communities Attractive

"WE DON'T have much to look at in this town," said the wag to a visitor who complained about the lack of beauty, "but what you hear sure makes up for it." Life in the non-metropolitan community is intimate and friendly. People are genuinely interested in their neighbors. They have a close relationship in work during weekdays, recreation during the leisure hours, and worship on Sundays. There is sincere concern when you are ill, or when misfortune overtakes you. Friends are always around to lend a helping hand. They know about your goings and comings, and your knowledge of the fact has a purifying influence upon you. Somebody cares.

The critic was right, none the less. Most small communities fail miserably in the esthetic department. A common sight is an auto graveyard to mar the landscape as one enters a small town. Unpainted buildings, bumpy railroad crossings, barren debris-strewn vacant lots, precariously leering garage doors, rusting tools under an apple tree—all these are too familiar in the average small town. The approach roads are studded with huge billboards with pigs rooting and chickens scratching around their stilted legs.

If the visitor does venture to the shopping district of the ugly duckling town he is likely to come upon display windows badly in need of cleaning and decorated with fly paper and faded merchandise. Now and then a broken glass will have been replaced by random boards from a packing box. Store fronts need paint, doors need new hardware, clerks need some energy and a little knowledge of their wares.

The service station pump looks deserted, and you round up the attendant with difficulty. The rest rooms, if there are any, are un-

attractive, smelly, and littered. Almost invariably, if the area does not have local option, the town tavern shows the most signs of life. Cars fill the parking area and from the dimly lit interior of the shack comes blaring music from a juke box and a familiar tavern admixture of tinkling glasses, conversation, and laughter.

Homes, many of them showing good basic lines of architecture, have been violated by nondescript additions or deletions. Only the fine old trees planted by a prouder generation save the lawns and houses from desolation. And the trees in many cases are neglected and near destruction by insects and the elements. Privies punctuate the rear areas near the weed-ridden, can-strewn, ash-covered alley.

It is not an inviting community for the family seeking haven from the unrealities of city living. Industries in search of a site for a new or branch plant don't spend much time investigating here. Young people read the billboards, listen to the radio, watch television, and long for the day when they can escape from this place. Is it any wonder?

II

Yet the small community has all the essentials of a garden spot. It has space, fresh air, natural and human resources. It merely lacks pride. Many of the residents are convinced that all the good people, the smart people, and the lucky people have moved on. Those who stay frequently apologize for having done so. They look forward to the time when they too can step out into the bright, exciting world beyond.

With imagination the humblest cottage in a town like this could be made a place of beauty. A little paint, a few flowers, some green grass, well chosen evergreens, and disease-free shade trees, carefully planned terraces, sun pockets, and canopies would do wonders both to the home and its occupants—and to its neighbors who soon would carry on the beauty treatment.

That vacant lot next to the railroad, or even the unkempt area set aside by the town founders for a park, offers a challenge to those who sit around and say, "What this community needs is some decent recreation." There is none better than a family night a week when people of the community convert an eye-sore to a beauty spot.

The whole shopping district can undergo a face-lifting if someone will just start. One store front remodeling project is likely to lead to others. The comparison is pretty obvious. Or businessmen as a group could set aside a specific interval for cleanup and paintup time. This has been done successfully in many communities.

The important thing is to strike that spark of pride and to fan it into a flame of action. It might be ignited through the development of a winning softball or basketball team. People in small communities have almost unbelievable loyalty to their athletic teams. They will vote thousands of dollars for a new gymnasium to provide a place where the boys can play—and where the citizens can watch. They will go all out to provide their cheer leaders with the snappiest uniforms they can dream up.

It isn't difficult to arouse interest next in a school or community band. And what is a band without uniforms? So the parents set about holding auctions, rummage sales, community suppers, and similar money-making events to finance the purchase of uniforms. In the process they become better acquainted. Joe, son of the tenant farmer, plays a trombone next to Jim, son of the town banker. Soon Joe's father and Jim's father meet on common ground through their interest in the band.

It won't be long until someone wonders aloud, now that they have the band, why they don't have summer concerts. Pressure is put on the school board to retain the music instructor the year round. Perhaps some of the townspeople will be added to the band. Then there will be a reason for beautifying the neglected park and adding a bandstand.

Everyone can't and doesn't want to play a musical instrument. Parents of children like these begin to want something for their youngsters. Eventually the school coach is employed on a twelve-month basis and conducts recreational activities during the summer months. If the community cannot afford a swimming pool, as most of them can't, parents load the kids in their cars or commandeer the school bus and off they go to a nearby lake or swimming pool in a larger community. School buses transport hundreds of children from scores of communities to Lake Bloomington each year for recreation and lessons in swimming.

Pride begets pride. School administrators discover that it isn't so hard to get a tax rate increase to provide better schools. With new facilities the community sooner or later will be assigned as host of a music contest or a basketball tournament. That means the whole town must tidy up a bit for the visitors. And we're back again to that newly painted cottage, the renovated park, and the remodeled stores.

These improvements call for better streets, improved public utilities, adequate fire protection. The list is endless. Thus the ugly duckling community becomes a model. And the key is pride. It is a great transformer when put to wise use. The place to begin is with simple things which can be beautiful.

Holland, Michigan, has gained a national reputation for its tulip festival. Hundreds of residents plant tulips. Thousands think and talk about tulips. Most of the Hollanders are convinced that Holland has the most and the best tulips of any community in the nation. It is good for Holland's aesthetic sense—and for Holland's pocketbook. The people profit from the trade the tulips draw.

Any community in the land can develop pride and draw attention to itself by adopting a special flower, shrub, or tree and planting it widely. The selection should be made with care. An undesirable tree or shrub can do more harm than good and set back a beautification program for years. The choice does not have to be an exotic plant imported from some distant land. Good native specimens are best. They will grow better and require less special attention. If the native plants don't offer enough variety, then the deficiency can be made up by mass. A landscape specialist at the state university is available for consultation. Such help frequently is provided through the extension service. The specialist can go a long way with a community in preliminary planning, and possibly can even help lay out the complete plan as a demonstration. He may have to refer the citizens to a reliable commercial landscape gardener-engineer, but he is a good man to contact. He knows what will grow and thrive in your community.

A community beautification program needs an energetic sponsor. Women's clubs frequently do exceptional service in this field. Scouts, church groups, businessmen, or neighbors in a block could get back of such a project. If the interest of the entire community cannot be

aroused, then an effort should be made to interest the people in one section of town, one street, or even one block. Once a beginning is made, and results begin to show, the idea will spread.

The small towns of the United States could take a lesson from those of Europe, where beautiful effects are created by making the best use of terrain and native plants. There are communities in New England and in the Pacific and Southwest States where greater pride is taken in community housekeeping, but the vast majority of the thousands of hamlets, villages, and towns of the country have little to commend them in the way of architectural and landscape beauty.

III

Beautification does not end at the village limits. Rural landscaping and roadside beautification is sadly neglected, especially in the rich agricultural areas of the Middle West. Some emphasis has been given to this subject in 4-H and Future Farmer projects, and through adult education by the extension services of the colleges of agriculture. But it has not scratched the surface in the transformation of the rural landscape. There is more talk than action in this field. A subcommittee on Farm Land Price and Credit of the North Central Land Tenure Research Committee reported in 1950 that a single national council group had sixty-one organizations, largely nationwide, associated with it in some of its programs for improvements involving highways alone. Philip M. Raup and Charles L. Stewart reported to this subcommittee that roadside appearance and related problems are areas for the constructive attention of rural leaders. An important grouping of interests relates to the appearance of country roadsides, Raup and Stewart reported.

This group, they said, is concerned with the type of building constructed along highways and the nature of roadside land use. It was especially concerned with the resulting effects on land values and community and roadside appearances. Speaking to this point, Raup and Stewart said:

"Uncontrolled commercial roadside developments along some highways have progressed to the point where they constitute a blight on the neighborhood. Adjacent residential property values are often adversely affected, and the usefulness of the land for farming is some-

times impaired. Set-back lines, turnouts, and roadside parking spaces are often not sufficient. In some cases the use of building permits has been coordinated with the zoned control of new construction in order to accomplish the ends desired. Principal concern lies in the preservation of farm and commercial property values, and with the control of the marked recent increases in urban types of developments outside of incorporated areas."

Another group of interests found by Raup and Stewart is primarily concerned with the improvement and beautification of highways as tourist attractions and as contributions to an inviting and scenic countryside. Set-back lines, roadside landscaping, building permits, and the restriction of commercial activities of billboards, and so forth, to strictly defined areas promote this interest. The emphasis here is on the preservation of the scenic beauty of landscapes as nature left them or as enhanced by human skill and devotion.

Rural beautification affects the pocketbook as well as the soul. From the standpoint of land tenure and farm land values, the following blights are among those that have led to an interest in problems of roadside appearances, development control, and related problems of access, according to Raup and Stewart:

1. Brush, bushes, down timber, overgrown living fences, uncontrolled weeds, and other visible evidences of failure to control or use the natural growth.
2. Roadside and field gullies, washouts, and other evidences of inadequate soil conservation measures that reduce or destroy land values and lead to highway traffic hazards.
3. Hog wallows, roadside manure piles, and other evidence of imperfect farm planning for livestock and poultry production.
4. Outdoor advertisements on billboards which farm owners or operators, where following shortsighted policies, have permitted to be designed and placed improperly, as, for example, to be painted on the sides and roofs of farm buildings.
5. Farm and non-farm waste materials which rural landowners or operators have permitted or caused to be dumped at roadside locations, thereby destroying natural beauty, endangering sanitation, and obstructing future desirable land uses. City and farm junk yards, and spoil piles incident to gravel pits, stone quarries, and strip mines are examples.
6. Boxes, cans, bottles, paper and waste food items discarded by highway users in disregard of appearance and sanitation.

7. Tottering structures (fences, outbuildings, barns, dwellings) which farm landowners or operators have failed to remove or repair and crop residues of which they failed to dispose properly.

8. Rural establishments for the sale of fuel, food, beverages, or other products located in areas where they impair residential land-use values, interfere with farm land use, create traffic hazards, destroy natural beauty, or create rural slums and blighted areas.

9. Certain commercial and manufacturing establishments which are indiscriminately located, undesirable in appearance, or operated with obvious disregard for aesthetic considerations, particularly establishments of the type which may be presumed to have been located outside incorporated places by operators seeking lower taxes, freedom from zoning control, or escape from local police jurisdiction.

10. Highways that are inadequate for the use of farmers and other rural dwellers because of the combined effect of unnecessary and excessive traffic hazards and impediments to efficient operation of vehicles on the highway and because of unpleasant roadside environment.

Planting of grass, shrubs, and trees along roadsides is the joint responsibility of town and rural people, and such planting should not be limited to major highways. County and township roads are worthy of attention. In areas with interesting local history the historic names of the roads could be placed at intersections much as city street signs are used. This was a project of Rural Youth in cooperation with the American Legion in Pulaski-Alexander Counties of Illinois. Boar and Sow Creek Road, an actual name, will titillate the imagination far more than a designation like County Highway 7. A country road running from Hopedale to Green Valley in Tazewell County, Illinois, is known as Toboggan Avenue, and a large sign tells every passerby about it. The name was given by a Hopedale resident who frequently walked from Hopedale to Green Valley. When he started such jaunts he would say jokingly to his fellow townsmen that he was "heading down Toboggan Avenue." It stuck.

Adequate streamside protection along highways and through villages is important both to health and civic appearance. Orderly fence rows, but not necessarily nude ones, attractive farm drives, plantings that have eye appeal the year round, landscaping of approaches to town, public buildings and grounds—all these cry for attention from town and country people alike. Voluntary action in a spirit of good will, and through recourse to educational and state agencies already in

existence, could transform rural America in a decade. The need is for a beginning by such individuals and groups as have the vision. There is no excuse for the ugliness of the town and rural landscape of the United States.

IV

Above and beyond what citizens can do individually, in blocks, and neighborhoods to beautify their communities, democratically planned zoning can do much to create order and attractiveness. While zoning of primary roadside areas might well fall under state jurisdiction, the zoning of the type discussed here is within the framework and function of the local government. It can be limited to village, town, city, country, or region.

Thirty-eight states have enabling laws empowering designated units of local government to adopt rural zoning ordinances, and such ordinances had been adopted by 173 counties in twenty-three states by 1949, according to Earling D. Solberg, in *Agricultural Information Bulletin No. 59*, United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Economics. The Bureau of Community Planning, University of Illinois, defines zoning as "the planned regulation of and use of land and buildings in the public interest and for the general welfare. More specifically, zoning (1) specifies certain use regulations for all land within the district under consideration; (2) requires certain open spaces around buildings; (3) generally regulates building heights."

While zoning first came into use in larger cities—and usually after large areas had been blighted—it is of importance to the rural community as well. The value of land and the welfare of the people are too important to be left to chance. Lack of over-all planning by the citizens themselves has caused costly mistakes and created unsightly areas in villages as well as cities, and on farms as well as in industrial centers. Nondescript fruit stands, poorly located service stations, taverns, basement houses, and similar structures will develop what are sometimes called shoestring blight areas along roads leading out of villages as well as cities. Zoning can prevent spread of this blight. If adopted in time, it can avoid it all together.

Those who develop building lots are as likely to make them too

small in a village as in the city, and thus destroy one of the major advantages of village living, unless zoning controls size of lots. A willful resident may put up a noisy machine shop in a quiet residential area unless he is prevented from doing so by a zoning ordinance.

Good zoning ordinances set aside certain areas for industry, retail business, residential use, schools, parks, and playgrounds so that each fills the needs of the community to the best advantage of all.

Solberg made a complete list of the directives of the various state legislatures in passing permissive zoning legislation:

Orderly Development

To encourage the most appropriate use of land and water.
To guide a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the county.
To secure appropriate allotment of land area in new development for all requirements of community life.
To direct trends of building development.
To protect and guide development of rural areas.
To promote classification of land uses and distribution of land development and utilization.
To promote desirable living conditions and sustained stability of neighborhoods.
To protect against blight and depreciation.
To prevent tax delinquency.

Density of Population

To prevent overcrowding of land or water.
To prevent wasteful scattering of population.
To reduce waste of physical, financial or human resources due to congestion.
To encourage formation of neighborhood or community units.
To promote a wholesome home environment.
To promote desirable living conditions.

Health

To preserve health and prevent spread of disease.
To prevent obnoxious fumes or offensive odors.
To protect residential sections from traffic, noise, smoke, fumes and other unwholesome conditions and influences.

To prevent development of unsanitary areas for housing purposes and relate housing density to practically available facilities for waste disposal.

Safety

To secure safety from flood or windstorm.
To secure safety from fire, collapse or explosion.
To reduce hazards to life and property.
To provide adequate police protection.

Highways

To facilitate highway development and transportation.
To increase or preserve traffic-carrying capacity of highways.
To secure a well-articulated and adequate street system.
To reduce waste of excessive mileage of roads.
To prevent close arrangement or construction of buildings upon streets.
To eliminate traffic hazards.
To lessen traffic congestion and accidents.
To promote convenience of access.
To provide reasonable access.

Soil and Water Conservation

To conserve soil fertility.
To prevent soil erosion.
To facilitate adequate water flow, water supply and drainage.
To make and adopt a development pattern for the physical and economic development of the county, including surface mining.

Aesthetic Considerations

To protect scenic attractiveness of the landscape.
To promote conservation of exceptional natural physical features.
To conserve and restore natural beauty and other natural resources.
To preserve the natural and scenic beauty and attractiveness of roadsides.
To promote good civic design and arrangement.
To restrict unsightly development.
To increase amenities of the municipality.
To promote the reservation of common park and playground areas and conservation of natural physical features, trees, waters, stream courses and other natural resources.

The scope of these directives cuts across the duties of many other agencies such as soil conservation districts, sanitary sewer districts, hospital or sanitarium districts, drainage districts, and so on. Any community or county contemplating enactment of a zoning ordinance would have first to examine its own state laws on the subject and it would do well to take into account the phases of the job already being done by such agencies as mentioned here.

While state laws differ widely, they usually authorize the local governing body of the county, town, township or a unit of such bodies to establish a planning or zoning commission. This commission holds hearings and develops a plan which it transmits to the government body for approval. Zoning measures are derived from the police powers and are exercised in the public welfare. Since the zoning plan is originated, developed, approved, and enforced at the local level, it is an orderly democratic process in keeping with self-analysis, self-determination, and self-help.

The experience of Tazewell County, whose eastern boundary is closer to Bloomington than to the Tazewell county seat of Pekin, can serve as an example. The Tazewell County Board of Supervisors created a county zoning commission under Illinois permissive law in 1951. The planning firm of Scruggs & Hammond was engaged to help develop a comprehensive plan. Clarence E. Hammond of that firm said the aim of the project was to plan for proper expansion of residential areas, industry, and commerce and to insure the most efficient use of the county's farm lands.

The Illinois law requires that the zoning commission hold hearings in each of the townships of the county in order to give citizens an opportunity to learn the purposes and to object if they so desire. This was done in 1953. Tazewell County is highly industrialized around Pekin and East Peoria with some light industry in a few of the smaller towns. Most of the rest of the county is agricultural and many of the towns are "dormitory towns," with residents earning their living in the Pekin and East Peoria industries.

The need of zoning has been brought on by a 30.5 per cent increase in population in the decade between 1940 and 1950. Virtually all that growth has been in the industrial sector. Highways are inadequate, housing is at a premium. Ribbons of blighted areas line the highways

for miles. Mushroom residential districts are filled with substandard housing. Taverns are mixed with dwellings. Meager sewage facilities are overtaxed. The assignment of the commission was to develop a plan which would halt the evils of too rapid industrialization and seek to steer future industrial and housing development along more desirable lines without encroaching upon the better farm lands.

The sharp division of economic base has caused plenty of trouble for the planning commission. Residents spoke out against zoning at some of the meetings in the rural and small town communities. Some objected because certain types of industry were specified in their area and some objected because they felt that they were being denied industry. There was widespread opposition to a proposal which limited sale of non-farm dwelling acreages in the farming areas. The objections were so strong that the zoning ordinance was liberalized so that three-acre tracts could be sold. Factory workers frequently like such tracts on which they can grow a part of their food. The ordinance finally specified these residential districts: single family, with usual size lots; two family; multiple family; country home, with minimum size lot of one acre; and agricultural, which permits non-farm dwellings on an area not smaller than three acres.

The ordinance was prepared for presentation to the Board of Supervisors in June, 1953, but action was postponed. The Zoning Commission and the engineers preferred to go slowly enough to permit all citizens ample opportunity to learn the purpose and scope of the plan and to register objections if they so desired. That is one of the cardinal principles of community improvement efforts. More solid progress is made if those proposing the improvements are not in a hurry. Patience is a great asset in community work. Communities do not develop their mistakes overnight and they are not likely to correct them overnight. Tazewell County may have to wait another year or two before final acceptance of the zoning plan.

Conditions will get worse the longer the plan is delayed because Tazewell County had a crisis before it created a zoning commission. Other areas can profit by the example by getting started in time to prevent a crisis.

CHAPTER 10

Diagnosticians at Work

THE REVIVAL of interest in the small community has produced a rash of organizations and foundations, research projects, curriculum outlines as well as the usual neurotic fringe which attaches itself to any sincere effort to improve the lot of man. All of these are led by men and women with a sincere desire to make a contribution to society. All of them are beset by self-seekers.

Probably the two largest organizations devoting themselves to the welfare of the community are the American Council for the Community and the National Council for Community Improvement. The American Council for the Community says it is focused on working toward wholeness in community living by developing means for the pooling of specialized experience and research and by the development of generalist personnel, concepts, experiences, and services. In this, the council says, it differs from numerous groups and undertakings concerned with specialized community interests and services. "The American Council for the Community is envisioned not primarily as an operating program," the officers state, "but as the provision of services, of pooling and stimulation." Much emphasis is given by the council to the training of professional community workers. It sponsored a survey of 175 colleges to determine what they are doing in this field, found the efforts meager and began a campaign to increase interest among colleges.

While the American Council for the Community devotes much of its energy to the education of people who, in turn, are supposed to educate the communities, the National Council for Community Improvement tends more to the economic side of community betterment.

Under the leadership of J. C. Penney, Paul C. Stark, and similar businessmen, it has "launched a crusade for self-reliant Community Action." Mr. Penney describes this organization as one which "functions as a clearing house of information and ideas to help communities exercise individual initiative, self-reliance and organization teamwork in their own local matters. Having proven the desirability of such a function in some test states the past few years, this organization is now ready to act on a national basis. The national crusade was launched in March 1953, at a meeting in St. Louis. Some sixteen meetings across the nation were scheduled by this group to arouse interest in community self-reliance as an effective means of curbing deficit spending, high taxes, and centralization of power in Washington.

The National Council's goals are set forth by Mr. Stark in this four-point program:

1. A crusade to mobilize organizations and citizens for grass roots action to lessen pressures on congress for federal spending, to discourage the trend toward centralization of power in Washington, and to encourage communities to assume their rightful responsibilities.

2. Extension of field development program, available to all forty-eight states. Encouragement of self-reliant action and teamwork in communities by the National Council's field staff, helping to establish state councils for community improvement which represent all groups. State councils help organize, assist, and service local councils. The council's pilot programs have demonstrated the success of the pattern of operation of state and local community councils.

3. Mail program, in all states where the services of state councils are not available. The National Council will encourage local councils to organize and will supply helpful literature that explains how to organize and operate local councils.

4. Clearing house creating interest and supplying information to state and local community council leaders. Offering the services of the National Council as a source of ideas and reporting the experiences of other communities.

The Ford Foundation has set aside many thousands of dollars to promote interest in the field of community improvement. It financed a series of nationally broadcast radio programs dramatizing work being done to solve problems at the community level. It contributes gen-

erously to research programs designed to develop techniques which can be applied at the local level to improve communities.

The American Legion took its cue from a local Legion program in Burnet, Texas, and launched a national program of community development. Its purpose is to stimulate each community to organize for, and to undertake an improvement program of, increasing employment through adding new business and services. The Legion effort, carried down through state departments to local posts, stresses surveys among the citizens to determine what they want. This also increases interest among the citizens.

The American Federation of Women's Clubs has for years carried on a national community project contest to stimulate interest in local improvements among the club memberships.

In terms of actual accomplishments at the local level, all these national efforts, though conceived by people of good will, tend to support the statement attributed to the late Julius Rosenwald that it is more difficult to give away money effectively than it is to earn it. An organization with headquarters in New York City, or even St. Louis, directed by an urbanized staff with little first-hand experience on Main Street, cannot be very effective in helping communities to improve themselves. A pooling of interests of such agencies in a national advertising campaign to give the people, rural and urban, an appreciation of the importance of strong local communities and the dangers of centralization would do more good. The actual work could be left to agencies in the field.

II

Some effective work has been done by state universities in the field of community betterment. It fits well into a broad application of extension service. One of the outstanding efforts is the work of Jean and Jess Ogden who worked out of the extension division of the University of Virginia. Started as a project in adult education, in 1941, it has grown into the Community Service Bureau to work with communities and help stimulate the citizens to action. Their experiences are detailed in their book, *Small Communities in Action.*

Another effort introduced by the Rockefeller Foundation and Montana State University in 1944 made a significant contribution to the

role a state university can play in the field of community betterment. Professor Baker Brownell of Northwestern University was granted a leave of absence to head up the Montana study. Dr. Brownell proceeded on the premise that "the small community and rural life are of primary importance in a stable society and that efforts to maintain them, stabilize them and enrich them are worth while." He developed and adopted the community study group technique. Actual communities were taken as laboratories with significant progress in improving the economic, civic, and cultural phases of community life.

Richard W. Poston, who worked with Dr. Brownell, describes the program in detail in his book, *Small Town Renaissance*. Later Poston went to the University of Washington to head the Bureau of Community Development there. His work in Washington has been built upon the foundations established in the Montana study, and his technique of community improvement is set forth in his book, *Democracy Is You*. Finally, Earle Hitch has given an excellent digest of all these efforts plus notable efforts like Tupelo, Elma, Georgia, Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan, and a number of homestead projects in *Rebuilding Rural America*. All of these books were published by Harper & Brothers.

One of the pioneers in the field of community improvement is Dr. Arthur Morgan of Yellow Springs, Ohio. As president of Antioch College for years and later as founder of Community Service, Inc., he has made one of the major contributions of the twentieth century to the revival of interest in and appreciation of wholesome living in the small community. Dr. Morgan has built up one of the best collections of books on the community available anywhere in the world. He is the guiding light behind the publication *Community Service News*, which deals with various aspects of community problems. He is also the driving force behind an annual Small Community Conference at Yellow Springs.

No effort is being made here to catalogue all such projects in this field today. These are the better known and they are typical. All are good and each contributes its share to an awakening consciousness of the high stakes involved in the preservation and improvement of small communities. None can do the job alone. Neither can they do it as a mass endeavor. The key to community improvement is action at the

local level, and that, to be successful, must be generated at the local level. No national organization can do that. No national pattern can be imposed upon the communities. Each has its individual problems which must be solved by the people who know the problem.

There is still great need for pioneer work in this field. Probably best equipped to do the job are the state universities with their successful extension service technique, and the small independent colleges which stress broad general training in lay citizenship.

The state universities have not done the job they should in this field. That is due in part to the lack of vision of the administrators and in part to faulty extension service representation in the field. Old as the agricultural extension service is, and successful as it has been, few state universities have applied the same techniques to other phases of education. It is just as effective, and just as important, to provide extension service to small business, city governments, park developments, and the like, as it is to help farmers do a better job of farming. The complete extension service should make every college, school, department, and division of the state university available to every community of the state in which it is located. A detailed account of the pioneering being done by the University of Illinois will be given elsewhere in this book.

III

Probably the best job of all in revitalizing small communities can be done by the small independent colleges of the country. Most of them draw a large percentage of their young people from within a radius of fifty to seventy-five miles and return these young people to the same area when they graduate. They have an unparalleled opportunity to relate their entire educational program to the community. The major need today in the field of community betterment is an informed lay citizenry—people who have some knowledge of what is good and some understanding of how to initiate improvement projects and carry them through. The trained technicians will be available when the citizens need them.

The small college has specialized for a century and a half in the training of lay citizens. It is made to order to fill this great need today. Some small colleges are grasping the opportunity. Parsons College in

Fairfield, Iowa, under the leadership of President Tom Shearer, is formulating a sound program to relate college work to the region. His goal is to train young people to make the most of their opportunity to live full and useful and rewarding lives by rebuilding small communities. His emphasis is upon the individual.

"This is not to point to a road which leads backward," Mr. Shearer tells his students. "We must show young people like you that here is a thrilling new road ahead. The community or town or small city which will meet the challenge of the future is a new kind of community. It will have industrial plants, fine economic opportunities for young people like you, home living that surpasses anything which now exists, and recreational pleasures for young and old. Music, art and literature will abound there even as they are available to only a few in the largest cities now. We cannot re-create the old frontier for you young people with all the thrilling adventures and its challenges and opportunities. But we can guide you ahead to this new frontier which can combine all the fine traditions of our past and the advantages of our industrialized techniques with the fine qualities of living and the deep pleasures of family and home which were so much a part of our great rural, American heritage."

Shearer has set up the Mid-American Foundation at Parsons College with Kenneth F. Millsap as its director, to work toward coordination of college and community in an enriched educational citizenship.

The first new course to be introduced into the academic curriculum under the sponsorship of the foundation is entitled "The Citizen and the Community." Offered for the first time in the summer session of 1952, each semester has seen increased enrollment. The course, under the supervision of the director of the foundation, combines classroom examination of community needs and programs with actual work by the students on different community projects.

The first twelve meetings of the class are devoted to a series of orientation lectures in which the students are given background material pertaining to the development of communities in mid-America. Next, the students are "farmed out" to various community organizations to work on projects. For example, one student was assigned to the community chest, another to the Boy Scouts' summer camp, and still another to the local chamber of commerce. During the last few weeks of the course, the students are brought back into the classroom

to compare the different types of community training they received.

Training for community or civic responsibilities on the part of the students, Tom Shearer thinks, is just as important as many other phases of the student's education. If the communities in mid-America are going to be better places in which to live, these future citizens must be made aware of their responsibilities.

In addition, the foundation staff cooperates with other members of the faculty in courses such as "Survey of the Midwest," "Small Business," "Agricultural Economy," and "Rural Sociology."

The members of the "Citizen and the Community" class have conducted an educational questionnaire in the Fairfield community. With the consent and approval of the Fairfield Board of Education, a survey prepared by the Iowa State Department of Public Instruction was used by the students. Over 250 responses were collected by the group. The purpose of the survey was to secure the average citizen's viewpoint as to the effectiveness of the public school instruction in preparing the youth for the complex problems of living.

As a special community project for the class, a religious survey was made of the community surrounding a small rural church. Here the purpose was to orient the class as to the role of an "open country" church in a rural community, and to determine the usefulness of a church in such an area.

A part of the educational program brings individuals and groups to the campus for day-long conferences with students in and out of classes.

Tom Shearer would be the last to deny that back of this program revolving around the Mid-America Foundation is an effort to recruit financial and moral support for Parsons College and to find for the institution an important niche in today's society. That does not detract from the merit of the program.

Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana, is doing an excellent job in the field of training citizens for community action under the direction of Dr. William Biddle. He calls it the Community Dynamics program. There are scores of others.

IV

Because it is typical and because the author has a better working knowledge of its efforts, the community program of Illinois College

at Jacksonville, Illinois, will be examined in greater detail. This little college, founded on the New England liberal arts pattern more than a century and a quarter ago, is trying to adapt the liberal arts principle to modern needs in higher education for citizenship responsibility. Through its Sociology Department and in cooperation with the Division for Youth and Community Service of the Illinois Department of Public Welfare, it began a program of community development in 1950. This program grew out of concern over the democratic processes of self-government as related to the small community.

Already the State Division for Youth and Community Service had learned that if it was to carry out the assignment of the legislature to prevent delinquency, it must cooperate with communities in the solution of problems which, in many cases, sowed the seeds of delinquency. That led to general community improvement. Illinois College was better able to go into the broad field than was the division. Hence the marriage in the field of community betterment.

The purpose of the program as developed at Illinois College is (1) to assist communities to develop their resources and meet their problems and needs through group action; (2) to provide a means by which the youth of the communities may have the interest and help of their neighborhoods in becoming useful citizens; (3) to develop an awareness in students of community problems and the problems of individual persons in the community and to train students in the methods and techniques of meeting these problems as responsible citizens.

The college sets forth its philosophy underlying the program in these terms: (1) The conviction that the revitalization of small communities is essential to the preservation of democracy; (2) the belief that people in the neighborhoods and communities can solve more of their problems if the situation is provided in which individual initiative can assert itself; (3) the actual interconnection of the basic problems of any society, which is seen most clearly at the level of the community and met most effectively through the primary group; (4) the realization that in the face of basic problems, trained persons are needed to work closely with groups and individuals to stimulate, discuss, and share with them the resolution of those problems; (5) the conviction that the participation of persons in a neighborhood group

is essential to a program of delinquency prevention in that neighborhood; (6) the belief that a major educational responsibility of a college seeking to serve its constituency is to make students aware of the importance of the community, and for the sake of providing continuing leadership to train them in the methods of solving basic social problems, since the dynamic approach to personal and group relations is the essential task of education.

The method used by the college is to send students out into the various surrounding communities to work with local groups. The individual student's efforts are concentrated in the small community and his ultimate aims are toward a more wholesome, unified, independent community. He works in conjunction with any group that is interested in solving some of its basic community problems.

Contact with the communities is made by representatives of the college and the community is asked to share with a student its experience in attacking its problems. Thus the community becomes teacher and the College moves closer. The classroom walls are expanded to take in the whole region. Students make surveys of their own on the community and its people and make an analysis for class discussion. There also is a group-work course in which students work with small groups of difficult boys or girls of elementary school age. These are children who, for the most part, are not reached by Scouting and church groups. The students take five to ten youngsters and plan parties, picnics, take them to movies, organize athletic teams. Once a week they hold discussion meetings with the youngsters. Social workers and school people report a decided change in attitude of children who might otherwise develop into delinquency problems. The student gains because instead of abstracting a thing in class he is living it in reality.

The college has had community development programs of this character in nine communities. Students have dealt at first hand with problems in street improvements, recreation, community directory development, city hall renovation, acquisition of school band uniforms, fire house construction, economic development, park district planning, recruiting physicians, enforcing traffic laws, establishing public dumping grounds, instituting cleanup days, procuring playground equipment, organizing fire districts, setting up youth centers,

and helping procure a community center building. In each case the students have worked in the community with the community citizens in coping with these problems. They cannot help but go back to their home communities after graduation with a better understanding of the problems their citizens face and a lay knowledge of how to cope with them.

Illinois College has taken a territory within a radius of fifty miles of Jacksonville and is making a study of the college and its relation to this larger community. A study also is made of the resources of the area. The college draws approximately 50 per cent of its student body of less than five hundred from this area and it returns a portion to the area after graduation. It is seeking to carry the resources of the College into this fifty-mile radius and to help the area to see itself as a single community unit.

The aim is not to take merely a sociological approach although that temptation is always present. Every department of the college is to be related with the community. The Economics Department will send students out to study and help solve the economic problems of the area. The Psychology Department will do work in group therapy. Speech and dramatics will be taken off campus to the churches, community halls, and schools of the area. The Philosophy Department will supply pulpits and work with church groups. Social studies and the natural sciences are to be grounded in the community. The entire College program is to revolve around the community concept with the main goal that of helping people, including students, help themselves.

Dr. Malcolm Stewart, head of the Department of Philosophy and guiding genius behind the program, thinks any college can make this approach without losing its integrity. He sees the move as the addition of a basic concept in education. "The real purpose of any college is to return students to their community better able to solve problems they face," he said. "The job of the educators is to bring impersonal and personal concepts together to a point where we do not teach subjects but persons within a community. Four years of college—the modern liberal arts college—should not be a separation from, but an integration with, the community. In the success of such a program is the mutual preservation of democracy and the small college."

Thus, while the big public and private universities are getting millions for all kinds of abstract research, the small independent and poorly financed college is grappling with and helping to solve the root problem of our time. What a pity it does not get more support from the foundations and the philanthropies, which all too frequently are a perpetuating force in the centralized bigness that threatens to destroy the genius that made America—the ability of the individual to control his own destiny. All those national organizations mentioned earlier in this chapter would do well to have a look at what is being done by schools like Illinois College at the point where they are weakest—action. All their work will go for naught unless it produces results at the local level.

CHAPTER 11

What Is Good?

THE REVEREND Rudolph Loidolt is a product of the city. He was born and educated in Chicago, with seminary work in New York City. When he came to Bloomington as minister of the First Baptist church he felt that it was merely an interim—a brief stay until he could return to a metropolitan church. "Ah, Chicago," he used to say; "that's the place where the challenge lies. That's where real service can be rendered. Those people need help." He was surprised and shocked when asked exactly how he would help them solve their problems; when it was pointed out that the best he could do was to help them endure them. But he was firm in his conviction that the big city was the place for him.

Time went on. Rudy and Katherine Loidolt acquired little Paul Luther and Frances. Gradually they felt their roots sinking into the rich soil and richer culture of this basically rural community. They felt the genuineness of the friendships they developed, the stability of the character and economics of the area. They began to see the difference between the senseless hurry of Michigan Boulevard or Fifth Avenue and the friendly greetings of people along Main and Washington Streets. Mr. Loidolt, being a thoughtful person, thought seriously of the virtues of decentralization. He couldn't dismiss the challenge that big cities are abnormal and that problems for people are not really solved there but merely salved.

It was on a warm summer day that his conversion from metropolitanite to decentralist became complete. He had spent the day on the hot streets of Chicago helping his aged father move from one apartment to another. He saw the helplessness of this older man in the environment of the big city, where friendship depends more upon

the bank account, business connections, organizational strength, or pressure group than upon brotherhood of man for man. He helped move this old man to a strange place among strange people to a life of emptiness and loneliness. Then he drove back to Bloomington.

Mr. Loidolt came straight to an outdoor picnic. Here were gathered professional people, laborers, farmers, clerks, and men in retirement. They visited in friendly understanding. Children played in the unrestricted areas of a rich farm which has never had a crop failure. Tables were loaded with food, most of which was grown in the area and prepared by the women present. A gentle breeze played against the maple leaves overhead. The sky was calm and the stars were composed. There was no hurry, no anxiety, no frustration. People were enjoying the company of people in a friendly environment.

"You people here," said Mr. Loidolt, "have the best that life offers. You have what the world longs for—friendships, security, and an opportunity to practice religion in its fullest meaning. You ought to be extremely thankful for your blessing."

That is the essence of what is good. Not perfect by any means but good. That is philosophy and economy and culture all wrapped up in one. But, to be specific, what is required to reach these levels? People cannot build better than they know. What are the guideposts? How does one stake out a good community in the light of the present? While some of the criteria of the good community that follow are mentioned in other parts of this book, they are given in some detail here for the convenience of community workers seeking to grapple with real problems in self-analysis and self-help.

Prosaic as it may seem, the foundation of any community, and the base upon which the good life must be built, is economic. If the community does not have the economic strength to prosper, it cannot provide the social and cultural advantages which every good community must have. There are three types of economic enterprises in the good community—industries, which manufacture articles; businesses, which carry on trade with the community; personal services which minister to the needs of the people. The following groupings of economic categories desirable in any healthy community are designed to serve as a yardstick by which a citizen can evaluate his community's economic sufficiency:

Stores and shops: grocery, meat, bakery, fruit and vegetables, drugs, dry goods, hardware, jewelry, shoes, electrical supplies, radio equipment, furniture, paints, seeds, fertilizers, greenhouse, feeds, harness and leather, woodworking shop, machine shop and welding, plumbing supplies, farm machinery and equipment, lumber and fencing materials, coal and other fuels, garage and auto supplies, blacksmith and general repairs, limestone, gravel and tile, farm marketing facilities, farm purchasing facilities.

Farm produce handlers: grain elevator, frozen-food locker plant, livestock buyer, poultry and egg dealer, creamery, shipping facilities.

Professional services: medical and surgical, optical, dental, legal, nursing, veterinary, health clinic, undertaker.

Trade services, skilled labor: building contractor, electrician, carpenter, plumber, real-estate agent, gas station, mechanic, trucker, barber, dry cleaner, beauty parlor, laundry, insurance agent, telephone and telegraph.

Banking and credit: commercial bank credit, general farm credit, real-estate mortgage credit, building-and-loan service, saving-and-loan service, veterans' loan service.

Miscellaneous: restaurant, soft-drink parlor, bowling alley, dance hall, hotel and rooming houses, pool and billiard hall, tavern, moving picture theater, printer, local newspaper.

Business and services should be attractive and convenient. They should measure up to the following standards: Business establishments and office premises should be clean, orderly, and attractive, with enough heat, light, and ventilation. Air-conditioning is sometimes practicable. Waiting rooms where needed should be pleasant and restful.

Good businessmen are friendly, sincere, and courteous in their relations with patrons. They show consideration and respect for the personal interests and viewpoints of their patrons. They evidence at all times a sincere willingness and desire to render good services.

Public conveniences: Is there enough parking space for out-of-town people during rush hours, particularly Saturday afternoon and night? Is there clean and sanitary drinking water for public use? Do patrons of business places and offices have access to public, modern, clean, sanitary washrooms and toilets? Is the community kept well informed

through newspaper advertising of the goods and services that are available? Are business places clearly identified by attractive street and window signs?

General appearance of business district: A business district with streets, curbing and sidewalks clean and in repair, enough street lights, and neat and inviting store fronts and display windows will attract shoppers. People also like to see the areas around stores and vacant lots free from trash and other refuse.

Expanding local businesses: Local business can be strengthened by good use of advertising, offering articles equal in price and quality to those offered elsewhere, and finding out why some people shop outside the community for things they can get within it.

Anything that will increase the incomes of local farm families or make them more certain will help the whole community. Townspeople can do something about this problem, too. For example, they can join with farm people to encourage better soil-conservation practices, thus protecting the basic wealth of the community. They can organize to help find labor for farmers, especially during planting and harvesting periods, thus helping to keep production high. Development of good roads all the way to the farms will help bring farmers in.

Industrial and manufacturing enterprises already in the community perhaps will expand if they know the community will endeavor to furnish enough labor and to promote good local labor-management relations, and will assure them of having enough gas, power, water, and other utilities. Local production of raw materials necessary to industry will help. It is fair enough to expand the business of your community by drawing it from other areas if the other towns are making no special effort to meet the needs of their people. Judicious advertising will reach these people.

Both farmers and townspeople will make more use of local professional and trade services if they can get good work done without unnecessary postponements or delays and if the personnel are qualified, well trained, and efficient. It would be well for the community to develop some method for replacing service workers who retire or move away from town.

Getting new business and industries: New businesses are not likely to be attracted to a community unless the people show they need

goods and services not now available in the town, or need more of some they have. Many towns have found it well worth while to prepare an outline of local business opportunities which can be sent to any who are interested in establishing a new business in the community.

Industries which might be interested in moving into the community want to know that the community can offer: natural resources; water, gas, light, power, and sewage disposal; good transportation; markets for products; both skilled and unskilled labor; and homes for workers.

If an industry plans to produce for the general market, it will want to know whether there are products grown locally which, at least in part, may be processed there. It will also want to know what goods and materials needed by nearby farmers can be manufactured in the community.

II

Having established a sound economic base, the community's civic enterprise must be put in order. This might be called the walls of the community structure. Here, too, is a major task for most small communities. Some of these problems were discussed in an earlier chapter on the smallness and overlapping of governmental units. This is a further checklist for the community worker who wants an effective local government. It begins, of course, with the citizens themselves:

Are the people in your community fulfilling their responsibilities as citizens?

Good citizens register and vote at elections. They discuss the issues. They participate in town and country betterment programs. They are willing to run for office and accept civic responsibilities.

Does your community have good fire and police protection and ordinances against disturbing elements?

Your fire department might be judged by the amount of equipment and personnel it has and whether it gives protection to farmers. Or whether fire-insurance rates are higher in your community than in others. Is there enough water available? Are effective fire-prevention campaigns carried on?

Is your police department large enough to do its job? Are the members of the force well trained?

Are there local regulations to protect you against these undesirable elements: Unsightly unused buildings and other fire hazards; unsightly junk yards; menaces to health such as an unsupervised city dump or an undrained area; unnecessary noises and smells; objectionable road houses, taverns, night clubs; obnoxious street carnivals and degrading shows; undesirable individuals, both local and itinerant; speeding and other traffic problems; misuse, trespass, or disrespect for private property?

Is your local government administered efficiently? Compare taxes in your community with those in others; if yours are higher, is it because you have better roads and streets, good schools, and so forth, or for some less desirable reason? Are local finances handled under an efficient accounting system with regular auditing? Are purchases made on a business basis with public bids asked on important ones?

Are your public employees selected on a merit basis? Do your public officials understand their jobs and do them well? Are official reports understandable and well publicized?

Your town, township, and county officials should be cooperative in the interest of good government. Civic plans should be carried on from administration to administration in order to continue long-term policies.

Does your community have good public services? Do you have good rail and bus transportation, and perhaps an airplane landing field for passengers, freight express, and mail? Is the mail service, both in town and country, good? Is electricity available for both town and country and gas for the town?

Are your public properties—municipal buildings, schools, hospitals, parks, places of public recreation, library, water system, sewage system, street lighting, roads, streets, and sidewalks—in good condition? Are your public trees and other plantings kept up?

Are your zoning ordinances and building codes adequate? Do you have community centers for luncheons, meetings, entertainments, and sports? Are there clean public restrooms? Is there enough parking space to take care of rush-hour crowds?

Do you have a program for improving and beautifying your community? Probably nothing will do more to develop pride and loyalty to

the community. Visitors are favorably impressed by a pleasant appearance of farms, houses, and other buildings; neat, orderly, well-kept yards and lawns, attractively landscaped; houses and other buildings in good repair; and buildings well painted.

"Home and garden" clubs and "clean up and paint up" campaigns help to put over such a program. The cooperation of county, town, and other local officials, as well as churches, schools, lodges, clubs, and other organizations should be enlisted.

Do farmers and townspeople work together in your community? Farm organizations can help to develop this cooperation by inviting townspeople, at least certain groups, to some of their annual events. Townspeople can work with farmers through membership on agricultural committees or by having farmers in their groups.

When a group is concerned with the welfare of the entire community, its membership may well be divided proportionately between town and country people. Church programs can be developed that will foster rural relations. Community recreation programs can bring town and country people together.

III

After establishing a sound economic foundation for the community and after setting the community housekeeping job in order, it is time to give serious attention to the social and cultural facilities. This is the roof of the community structure, but it cannot be erected with any degree of permanence until the economic foundation and civic walls are completed. Here again is a summation of material dealt with in other chapters on the broad social-cultural problems of a community:

Education: Does the school organization in your community come up to the high standards now needed?

Are your school buildings well constructed, clean, attractive, comfortable, fireproof, and furnished with modern study aids? Are the grounds well arranged and landscaped and provided with enough equipment for study and play? Is the gymnasium well equipped? Can the auditorium and gymnasium be used by the community as a whole?

It is desirable that rural high schools be located in the larger community centers, elementary schools in both the larger and smaller community or neighborhood centers. Administrative units (districts) should be large enough to operate efficiently and economically.

Administrators, supervisors, and teachers should meet state certification requirements and have a background of the life of the area. Teachers should be protected by tenure plans. Financial accounts should be audited regularly.

Nine-month school terms are best. The plan of study should be adapted to community needs and should include vocational guidance and health and safety instruction. Boys and girls should have a chance to take part in various activities besides those directly connected with their studies. Credit should be given for on-the-job training properly supervised by school authorities.

Religion: Does your community support its church as it should; and do the churches work for the benefit of the entire community?

Do you have resident pastors who are trained for work in your type of community? Are they paid salaries in line with the income of others in the community? Are they men who will strive to increase their usefulness? Do they take an active part in the business, professional, and social life of the community?

Are the grounds of the church attractively landscaped and well kept? Are the rooms, both the general meeting room and the church school rooms, well heated, lighted, and ventilated? Is there enough space for all the different programs and activities?

Do the churches cooperate in community activities, for example, in youth programs? Do they try to develop a spirit of toleration in religious matters and of loyalty to community welfare? Is there a community church council or ministerial association in the community?

Social welfare: Do you care for those who need help? Every community should have arrangements for caring for the needy, for helping those handicapped by illness, or accident, or personal loss to get back on their feet as soon as possible. County, state, and federal agencies are ready to help community welfare groups work out relief for worthy cases. Every community needs a citizens' committee that will help raise funds for approved welfare organizations in the community.

Every community should have a place where people can get information about the Social Security Act, veterans' re-employment rights, and so forth.

Health: Does your health program protect everyone? Most epidemics and many illnesses can be prevented by community action.

Measures are needed that will insure a public water supply that is free from harmful bacteria; that will prevent undulant fever, tuberculosis, and other diseases that can be transmitted through water and milk. All places preparing and serving food should have regular inspection by public officers. The community health program needs to be joined with the county programs for the development and enforcement of such measures as the control of contagious diseases and the registration of births and deaths. Young people will benefit from instruction in the care of babies and small children.

Can everyone in your community get competent medical and dental services at a reasonable cost? Or nurse and hospital or health-center service? These services ought to be available also to those with little or no money.

In the schools a health program may include: A school nurse, teachers qualified to teach health education, doctors and dentists in the community giving health instruction, immunization of pupils and teachers to certain contagious diseases, correction of physical defects of pupils, hot lunches, and physical education.

Recreation and entertainment: Is it available to everyone in the community? Is there a year-round planned recreation program, including supervised play, for children of school ages? Does the community have a forum, band, chorus, home-talent festivals, hobby and pet shows, picnics, community fairs, and so forth? Do youths and adults work together in planning and taking part in social and recreational events of the community? Besides these community affairs, there should be available commercial entertainment, under proper supervision. This might include movies, pool and billiard halls, dance halls, bowling alleys, carnivals, and any other varieties that are desirable.

The recreational facilities such as library, playgrounds, community building or youth-center building, tennis courts, baseball fields, parks, and picnic grounds should be available to everyone in the community.

Volumes have been written on almost every subject mentioned in this checklist of the economic, civic and social structure of the good community. A bibliography is given in the back of the book for those seeking broader information. But the outline here represents the condensed thinking of active workers, community consultants, and specialists in the various fields. The successful solution of the problems

and challenges given here in brief would go a long way toward the building of better communities everywhere.

These are the roads to the kind of community the Reverend Rudolph Loidolt discovered one hot summer day after some first-hand comparisons. They are roads any community can travel if it has the will to do so. The way is not easy, but it is rewarding.

CHAPTER 12

The Complete Community

A COMMUNITY is a local area capable of providing all the economic, civic, and cultural needs of the people in it. That may not be the sociologist's definition, but it is the meaning implied in this book in the discussion of the whole community. It is obvious that the average small town of less than 5000 people cannot qualify as a whole or complete community under that definition.

Such a town, or even a village of 500, can supply some of the needs. Most of them could supply more than they do at present. But specialized hospital care, advanced education, complicated mechanical repairs, epidemic control, professional entertainment, technical libraries —these and scores of other requirements cannot be met by the small community. Neither should the people of these communities depend upon the primary center for all of their services. Groceries, elementary and possibly secondary education, churches, general library service, fuel—in fact the bulk of everyday needs—can be provided by the small town. Even the crossroads village can supply staple foods, gasoline, work clothes, and similar items.

A whole community breaks down into three components as suppliers of the needs of rural and urban people. First comes the village or crossroads store. If the items beyond everyday needs are required, the farmer and the village resident are likely to go to the next larger village or town. There they can buy more of what they need. But this secondary center cannot fill all needs. If daughter wants a formal, mother has her heart set on a stainless steel sink, father wants a custom-made suit or son needs plastic surgery to repair that corn picker injury, they must go to the primary center. These three layers sometimes are called the tertiary community.

The tertiary community is much more of a reality in fact than most people who are a part of it realize. It cuts across village, town, and city boundaries. It is no respecter of township or county lines. Like water forming an inland lake, it spreads out as far as the economic, civic, and cultural shore line will permit. The area comprising Bloomington and its surrounding cluster of farms, villages, and towns can be used as an example.

The McLean County Health Department serves Bloomington and the rest of the county, rural and urban alike. It looks after the public health problems without thought of where one township border ends and another begins. It is as interested in the fluoridation of water in LeRoy or Chenoa as it is in Bloomington or Normal. It shows as much concern about pre-school examinations in Stanford as in Lexington or Carlock or Hudson. It is located in Bloomington but is of and for all the people of the county who finance it. The same is true of the McLean County Tuberculosis Sanatorium, the Community Chest of McLean County, the McLean County Soil Conservation District, and the McLean County Highway Department.

The same electric company supplies most of the people of the county and spreads well beyond the county boundaries. Most of them are served by Bloomington's three hospitals. The wholesale companies spread still farther. The big department stores and the specialty stores extend beyond them, as do the newspaper and the radio station. Illinois Wesleyan University and Illinois State Normal University spread their influence still more widely.

The Bloomington-Normal Symphony is made up of voluntary musicians from all over the Bloomington area. People from fifty or more towns and the farms in between attend the concerts. The Community Players provide participation for many and entertainment for hundreds more without regard for civic geography. The Art Association has a similar function, as does the Amateur Musical Club. Adult education classes and religious leadership training courses are open to the entire area. The public library of Bloomington cooperates closely with the other libraries in this tertiary community. Bloomington's Miller Park and its zoo, a rarity in a city of less than 40,000 people, attract visitors from miles around.

Hundreds of people living on the farms and in the small towns and

villages have employment in Bloomington. They commute daily from Heyworth, Downs, Danvers, Towanda, Saybrook, Arrowsmith, McLean, Shirley, Funks Grove, Ellsworth, and others. All these people need Bloomington and Bloomington needs them. Together they make up one community. Separately they are incomplete.

But this remarkable development of the tertiary community has come about without plan and in spite of all the handicaps selfish people can throw in the way. Too many Bloomington people consider those outside its boundaries only as customers to be exploited. There has been in the economic phase of the development a sort of local imperialism. The outlying peoples resent it bitterly. In an effort to combat it they try to promote business, services, and institutions they cannot afford. And in the process they weaken their entire structure. By not showing enough interest in the best welfare of these smaller centers, Bloomington has lacked the real support it might have had. The same could be said of virtually every other community in the country, and with more justification in most of them, because Bloomington has always had a few men with vision and tact and ability to spread the doctrine of good will. There is weakness in the tertiary community on the economic level.

The greatest handicap to complete integration of the tertiary community has been on the civic or political level. Local demagogues cling to their little domains with a tenacity that defies the twentieth century. In the name of local control they resist every effort to form units of government large enough and strong enough to cope with the complicated civic problems of the era.

From this recital it is obvious that the greatest progress has been made on the cultural level. Culture is based on a selfless intelligence that knows no boundaries. Most tertiary communities or small regions would do well to take invoice of their cultural solidarity and start there to develop a positive program of mutually beneficial integration. From there they might make more progress in the economic and civic fields.

II

The need for serious study and analysis of the small region as a self-sufficient community deserves more consideration from the great

foundations than it has received. Pouring money into the far corners of the world for all kinds of research is glamorous and no doubt highly beneficial to mankind, but there ought to be room for a closer examination of our own basic problems at the grass roots level than the philanthropists have allocated to date. The need is not for subsidies or for restoration of communities, but for the development of techniques by which the small regions can help themselves.

There is need, for example, of a complete invoice, balancing the human, economic, cultural, and civic resources against the needs. Is it good economics to ship the whole grain to some distant processing plant? Is it beneficial to those who remain for hundreds of young people to go to other areas yearly? Are the needs of the people of the area being met to the fullest by the manufacturing, processing, and retail establishments? Just what services can best be supplied at the crossroads, the secondary center, and the primary center? Is enough attention being given to the development of small regional folk customs? Do the people have sufficient cultural stimulation and outlet? What are the best psychological approaches to bring people accustomed to thinking in terms of partial communities to see the common benefit of breaking down artificial boundaries and superficial loyalties?

These questions ought to be tackled whether the great foundations interest themselves in them or not. And they can be. The first step is for the people to get better acquainted. Suspicion and prejudice cannot survive when people get to know each other and discover how similar their problems are. Will Rogers was not making an exclusive statement when he said he never met a man he didn't like. He had a faculty for meeting a man and getting to know him quickly. It takes most of us longer to get acquainted, but few of us can name people we really know and still don't like. We may disapprove of some of their habits, but we understand them and we tolerate their weaknesses because we know their virtues. That will work between peoples of adjoining towns and villages if they will give it a chance. Where can the beginning be made?

Since the greatest progress toward complete integration of the tertiary community has been made at the cultural level, that is the obvious place from which to proceed. School tournaments, music contests, play-days, and similar events draw young and old together

on a common level. So do festivals, county fairs, art expositions, and writers' conferences. More of them should be held with special emphasis upon the attraction of adults along with the young. Community builders must have patience above all else. If the adults won't respond, then the effort can be concentrated on the next generation. One cannot expect to change the thinking habits of people overnight when they have been centuries in developing.

Most school administrators of a region meet occasionally. So do county officials, municipal officers, and others. When they get together they ought to devote some time to the development of the whole community for the benefit of all. In communities sufficiently advanced for it, a regional council could be set up. If that is too big a step, a county council could be attempted. It might consist of such people as county supervisors, mayors, law enforcement officers, county health directors, school superintendents, community chest and Red Cross executives, newspaper editors and publishers—all those who have to do with administering the affairs of the people in an official or public service position. If any of the cities or counties involved have a planning commission it should be represented. These people probably would find that early meetings were infrequent. An outside speaker on some phase of community development, followed by a social hour, would help break the ice. Conversation around the dinner table would do much to lay the groundwork for future action. Eventually such a group could come to grips with the broad common problems of the region on much the same basis that individual community councils act now. Any such effort should call upon the participation and cooperation of the people of the region. They know the problems best and they will speak up if given a chance. The people often realize their needs better than the so-called leaders.

III

There is a considerable reservoir of goodwill among the people. Many of them realize the expanding horizons of the community. Here are some typical and thoughtful expressions on the subject of tertiary community development made in letters to the editor of *The Pantagraph*:

Elsie M. Stoutemeyer, who lives in Chatsworth some fifty miles from Bloomington, presented the woman shopper's viewpoint:

We who live in the small towns of the Bloomington area consider it our shopping, professional, education and cultural center.

We are not unmindful that every city has many problems usually centering around financial considerations. The solution of these problems affects us only indirectly. The following suggestions are ones which will not involve vast expenditures of money but only a little imagination and some extra effort.

Most of the rural customers make an all day occasion of shopping. There is need for really adequate lounge facilities—a pleasant place with comfortable chairs—not a few benches along a corridor or a chair or two outside a "restroom" door. Families could use such a lounge for an assembly point during the day. Perhaps the larger stores could provide this if no centrally located place on the square is available.

Mothers who must take small children shopping would appreciate a nursery or playroom maintained on an all year schedule as well as during the pre-Christmas weeks.

Rural women as well as college girls would enjoy semi-annual or quarterly style revues in some of the apparel shops or on a co-operative basis scheduled on a Saturday shopping day.

There is the difficulty of picking up purchases at stores when one is outside of city delivery areas. No one would defend double parking with its hazards to safety. Bloomington traffic officers are supposed to be vigilant in watching for this misdemeanor. If one has purchased bulky articles, he drives to get his goods, watching furtively and hoping that the police are patrolling another district.

Alleys behind stores and rear entrances are invariably blocked by store delivery trucks. Would it be feasible for the stores dealing in bulky merchandise to have convenient loading platforms in the alleys? A few stores already provide this convenience.

Shoppers often have parking irritations. In some cities stores cultivate good will by absorbing parking fees in certain parking spaces as a reward for substantial purchases.

Surrounding areas look to Bloomington for cultural advantages. Although the schools do a good job of direct or indirect extension, there are other institutions or organizations which could also contribute.

The many amateur artists of the area could be encouraged to take part in Bloomington art exhibitions through area prizes and more publicity in the small towns.

Some arrangement whereby more facilities of Bloomington's library could be made available to small-town readers would be appreciated. A rental library with books being borrowed or returned by mail in handy

cartons could be sponsored by the library. A local bookstore might find this a profitable venture.

Small town organizations rely on entertainers and speakers from Bloomington for special entertainment. A classified list of those available for such work would be a boon to harried program chairmen.

Many people find Bloomington a satisfactory place to come for commercial and professional services and cultural and educational advantages. Perhaps some of the extra services suggested would make more Bloomington boosters.

Robert S. Dunn, young Bloomington attorney, presented this thoughtful proposal:

The most constructive method by which Bloomington can better itself is to develop and enthusiastically support an integrated plan for the improvement of its economy, municipal services, schools, and charities. Such a program should place the greatest emphasis upon business expansion, which will provide the economic basis whereby other activities can be supported.

From an economic viewpoint our plan should be tailored to recognize certain severe limitations and to exploit the advantages we have. This community is handicapped by lack of abundant water, as well as by the absence of water transportation and the distance from important natural resources such as coal and mineral ores. Therefore we cannot hope to attract heavy industry.

In contrast, Bloomington is a focal point of several railroads and highways, its population has a higher level of education than most communities, and it is located in the center of a wealthy agricultural district for which it serves as a retail marketing center. Therefore, we should attempt to attract light industry, businesses which make use of local agricultural products without requiring excessive amounts of water, and we should strengthen our position as a retail market center.

In regard to retail business, the city is fortunate in having aggressive stores which can be expected to keep pace with any developments. Parking is the most pressing problem and this writer endorses the oft-suggested idea of removing the present Courthouse and replacing it with a parking lot. New state laws will be required before that is possible. The Courthouse could be accommodated in an orthodox office building.

Any attempts to attract new industry should be channelled through the Association of Commerce, which is today an ably directed organization that works steadily with its limited facilities to induce new businesses into

this area. In addition, consideration should be given to assisting local business to grow. Our finest business originated right here.

Past experience assures that the Bloomington Board of Education will cooperate with any well considered effort to improve Bloomington. Similarly our churches would enthusiastically support any attempt to improve the moral fibre of the community by increasing recreational facilities and religious life.

Finally such a plan should be broader in scope than the corporate boundaries of the City of Bloomington. Anything which benefits McLean County benefits Bloomington. The interests of Normal and Bloomington are almost identical in the minds of all citizens, save some proprietors of business located in the two shopping districts. If the children of Normal attended a morally decadent school system instead of the very fine one they do have, the resulting effect on juvenile delinquency would be felt in Bloomington as well as Normal. Any new industry will employ residents of both municipalities, and new recreational facilities will be enjoyed by all. Perhaps this should be called the Nor-Bloom or McLean County Plan.

This striking and penetrating proposal for a regional council was made by Frank Larson, who lives on a small farm twelve miles outside Bloomington:

Bloomington is the vital center of a great region. Its services reach outward some 50 miles or more in all directions. Bloomington's welfare is so much affected by the welfare of this region that the most important thing it can do for its own improvement is to open its eyes to its regional opportunities and responsibilities.

It is not a matter of indifference to Bloomington when a nearby village dwindles and the country schools close for lack of population. It is not a matter of small consequence when the best young blood of the region is siphoned off by the big cities where the population, in old age or adverse circumstances, must be supported by taxes through an expensive system of federal aid and where all the ills of humanity including insanity, crime and general decadence increase in proportion to the density of population.

Not only are the young people forced out of the Bloomington region to seek jobs and careers but whole families are compelled to move out. When any part of a region so richly endowed by nature as this one is, begins to support less people than formerly, there has been some opaqueness to the best interests of the region on the part of its leadership. This is a challenge to Bloomington, the business, education and cultural center of the region, and also its greatest opportunity.

the past 100 years, and as its citizens look to the future, a question that should be kept constantly in mind is "How can we best serve the people within our city and its immediate environs, and at the same time serve the people who live in the towns and rural areas of the smaller communities lying within our widespread trade territory?"

In the matter of serving the outlying areas, my answer is a simple one. Why not go out into these surrounding communities and ask the people themselves just what kind of facilities and services they would like to see available in Bloomington which their practical judgment tells them cannot be supported or provided in their own home towns?

This question should be asked in terms of the three major classifications of facilities and services which townspeople and farmers living in these surrounding communities need and want. The three major classifications of these facilities and services are economic, social and civic.

I shall not attempt to outline a procedure for doing this. If it is done, however, one of the by-products may well be the development of more cordial and positive relationships between the city of Bloomington, in discharging its obligations as a regional community service-center, and the townspeople and farmers living in the outlying communities who look to Bloomington to provide certain of their needs and wants which cannot be obtained in their local community centers.

After all, in a large measure, Bloomington's welfare is measured by the strength and vitality of its outlying areas. These outlying areas in turn are strengthened to the extent that Bloomington is strong.

Let me cite just one illustration to show how a strong, healthy economic situation in the city of Bloomington can be an asset to the surrounding rural communities. In 1945, when I first became associated with the University, I was given the responsibility of conducting a survey to determine how many postwar farming opportunities there might be for boys, who were then in service, whose intention it was to become farmers after the war. Twenty-nine counties, representative of the different farming-type areas of the state, participated in the survey. McLean County was one of them.

Results of the survey are reported in detail in our Circular 592, *Postwar Farm Jobs and Farmers' Purchase Intentions*. Here I wish to point out only one significant bit of information developed in the survey. A most important surplus product of rural communities is their boys and girls. On the average, only about half of the boys and girls growing up on farms in Illinois are needed to provide farming replacements. In other words, this means that half of them must look for their livelihood in some occupation

other than agriculture. They must therefore turn to the towns and cities where employment opportunities are available.

Many of them will migrate to other sections of the county to secure employment. Others, however, realizing that they cannot become farmers, will prefer to have nonagricultural employment much nearer home than St. Louis, Peoria, Chicago, New York, or other distant places.

A sizeable city, such as Bloomington, which serves as the center of a large regional area, should be able to make a real contribution in meeting this situation by providing employment for many of these surplus workers.

In concluding, I should like to stress the fact that the strength of Bloomington is determined by the foresight and dynamics of its people and its service institutions. Strong rural communities within its orbit of influence are likewise vital to its welfare. It is equally true that the welfare of the rural communities is affected by the strength of Bloomington as a "regional service center" city. The inter-dependence of country, town and city in a sizeable rural region is a definite and quite easily demonstrated fact.

V

Dr. David E. Lindstrom, University of Illinois rural sociologist, analyzed the tertiary community this way:

You go to Bloomington for many other things than trade. Bloomington's social services, such as school, church, library, health, recreation, relief, welfare, reach out not only into McLean County but considerably beyond county boundaries. So Bloomington can be called a regional capital for social as well as economic services. For some of these special services people probably come from as far as halfway or more to Peoria, Springfield, Joliet, and Danville. For others the boundary line may be halfway between Lincoln, Decatur, Champaign, Pontiac, and Peoria, with Bloomington as the center.

You do not go to Bloomington for everything you need in education or the other social services. You go to your own or the nearest community center where you can get good service. You or your doctor or dentist, for example, may go to Bloomington to get specialist help or to make use of hospital services which cannot be had nearer at hand. Just so, you could call on the McLean County Health office at Bloomington to help control a polio or scarlet fever outbreak in your community but only if you are in McLean County. The small community cannot have and support and probably should not have all these special services; for them you look to Bloomington or a similar regional center.

That means there is needed a co-operative relationship between social services in your own community and the special services you can get in Bloomington.

The question might be raised, "Can Bloomington take over and give you all of these services and do it better than your own community is doing it?" For people living in the primary service areas of Bloomington it already does that; how satisfactorily only those in the Bloomington community can say.

If you live as far out as halfway to Peoria or Champaign, however, there is a serious question as to whether you will want to go to Bloomington for everything. You could not or would not want to send your children to school in Bloomington; but Bloomington does offer college opportunities and might become the junior college center for its region. You would not want to go to Bloomington every time you want a library book but your community library might use the Bloomington library to get books for you it does not have.

You do not need to go to Bloomington for church services unless the nearest church of your choice is there; but Bloomington is the center from which some of the churches in your community very likely get special help on Sunday school or other church programs.

You may have to go to Bloomington to see a good show and no doubt you tune in on many radio programs coming out of Bloomington. You doubtless read *The Pantagraph* even if you live on the other side of Pontiac. But most of your recreation is provided more or less satisfactorily in your own community.

Probably you do not know much about the child welfare services available from the Bloomington office of the State Department of Welfare, especially if you live outside the county; but workers from that office are available and work where needed in the Bloomington region.

You look to your own county seat or town police and court officials for control and care of crime and delinquency; but whatever district offices there are in Bloomington are in contact with these officials or can help them if needed.

Bloomington is known for some outstanding social and cultural services better than it is for others. It has a wide reputation for its Passion Play. Aerial gymnastics had their early start there. Many people in the surrounding region know about and use its fine Miller Park. Its "biggest Farm Bureau in the world" has an international reputation. *The Pantagraph*-University of Illinois Small Community Development Project has received national recognition. There are others.

The test of Bloomington as a regional social service center, however, is whether people get satisfaction from those services. Every one of them can be made better for you by applying the principles of use and co-operation. If they are available at Bloomington, you should know about and use them when you need them. If you look to your community for the service, you should know what help and co-operation exists between its limited general services and the more specialized services available at Bloomington.

Your community center can be made stronger by close co-operation with the special services it needs but cannot support those which can or should be had at Bloomington. The people in Bloomington profit, too, by providing the best possible special services to you and your community. If it does not serve you satisfactorily you can and should go to another center for what you need or make it a point to see that services at Bloomington are improved.

So, it is not a matter of Bloomington taking the place of your town; rather it is your community working with the responsible people in Bloomington to make stronger both types of service centers—your own community center and Bloomington as your regional service center. One cannot get along without the other; they are interdependent.

The people in Bloomington responsible for these regional social services should ask themselves some pretty frank questions as they face the future —not only how well they serve your special needs but what other special services the Bloomington regional center should offer. They might ask themselves such questions as these: If you have spastic or other handicapped children which your community cannot handle what could you find of help in Bloomington? If youth in your community want special trade, business, or other training for a year or two beyond high school, what training could they get in Bloomington? If a group of your farmers would want visual material on undulant fever, could they get anything from libraries or other places in Bloomington?

If your community recognizes mental illness as the cause for family difficulties or for delinquency could they get psychiatric help in Bloomington? If your church leaders want to put on a religious education program could anyone in Bloomington help them work out plans for it? If your youth want leader training for square or folk dancing could they find help for it in Bloomington?

What kinds of social services should a center for the people and communities in its region provide? Who knows? If no one knows would not a check on what is available and what might be developed be worth while?

No doubt a complete special issue of *The Pantagraph* could be devoted to the results from such a check-up. How about it, Bloomington?

Just as the retreat from the city is under way and the big opportunity of the small community is at hand, the tertiary community, or small region, is emerging. The second part of this book will give in some detail the growing pains of the Bloomington tertiary community.

Part II . An Experiment in Strengthening the Non-Metropolitan Community through Self-analysis and Self-help

CHAPTER 13

The Bloomington Experiment

BLOOMINGTON IS the primary center of the tertiary community shaped like a flattened out raindrop. The area balloons out to the northeast some sixty miles before it runs into the stronger magnetism of Chicago and Kankakee. It narrows as it bumps into Champaign's own orbit to the east, Decatur and Springfield to the south and southwest, and Peoria to the west. But in the area thus circumscribed, Bloomington wields a mighty influence economically and culturally.

Any development of this entire tertiary community must start with its core. Bloomington is a good patient. It is rich in agricultural resources, in climate for exploiting those resources, and in a hardy population capable of doing much more than it does. It is afflicted with having too much that comes too easily. Situated in the heart of the greatest corn growing county in the nation and in a lucrative retail market, it has been able over the decades to maintain a high standard of living without doing its best. In the manner of the native on a tropical island, Bloomington citizens could pluck the fruits of plenty almost at will.

That lush heritage did not come without effort on the part of some. Ike Funk and his descendants pioneered in good farming practices. They were in the forefront of the development of commercial hybrid corn which revolutionized the Corn Belt. Walter Williams paced the development of the oil burner industry in America with a shop in Bloomington which is now the Eureka-Williams Corporation. Paul Beich was one of the early pioneers in the production of candy bars and his descendants still operate a plant whose products circle the globe. George J. Mecherle founded and nurtured the State Farm Insurance Companies to the top of the insurance giants of the country,

and he did it after he had passed the age of forty. The process is still going on. Jimmy Owen parlayed an African violet hobby into a tremendous mail order business that reaches all sections of the nation, and he is still a young man. Frank C. Alexander started from scratch to develop a pen and pencil manufacturing plant. It was bubbling energy like this that caused a national magazine (*Changing Times*, formerly *Kiplinger's Magazine*) to conclude that Bloomington had the highest per capita wealth of any city its size in the United States.

Out of the bounty of its human resources Bloomington has contributed playwrights and stars to the Broadway stage, radio, and television; business tycoons to the big cities; baseball heroes to the major leagues; circus aerialists and musicians to the world. A recital of their names would take a chapter itself.

But all the culture has not been drained off. Bloomington has the only self-supporting civic symphony orchestra in the country. It is made up of housewives, laborers, teachers, professional men, farmers, and students from Bloomington-Normal and half a hundred surrounding villages and towns. The community has a tax-supported community band which gives two or more concerts a week at Miller Park. The Community Players present four or more stage productions a year with local talent doing the directing, acting, stage layout, and makeup. Both Illinois Wesleyan and Illinois State Normal University dramatic and music groups present numerous programs during the year.

In addition Bloomington's internationally known American Passion Play has been presented from five to twenty-two times annually since 1923 at the Scottish Rite Temple built to accommodate it. Some 256 volunteers rehearse for weeks and then appear in ten productions a year at the Easter season. Only the director is paid. The Passion Play has been given before capacity houses of 1492 people for the last eight years. It has attracted 434,000 persons from all parts of the United States and many foreign countries.

The community has an active Art Association which encourages members to do creative work. Special awards are given annually to young people. Exhibits of great artists also are brought in. In 1939 *Pantagraph* Publisher Loring Merwin sparkplugged the Central Illinois Art Exposition and some 41,000 visitors came to see the originals of some of the world's most famous artists. In Bloomington physicians, farmers, and others paint for the fun of it.

Bloomington has more than its share of writers like Harold Sinclair, Wilson Tucker, and Jerry Sohl in the fiction field. Faculties of the two universities have contributed their full share of non-fiction work. Workshops for writers have stimulated many in the area to produce published material.

The Amateur Musical Club reflects and stimulates an interest in music. Members are encouraged to give recitals. Young people are encouraged to become members and to present recitals of their own to improve their musical abilities. Bloomington probably has more private voice and piano teachers per thousand population than any large city in the nation. Both universities also have strong music and art departments.

There has grown up in Bloomington a competent group of young creative artists who produce their wares in homes or small private studies. In 1950 five of them opened the Bloomington-Normal Art Association season with a display of their works. George Barford, Illinois State Normal University instructor, displayed products of the lathe. A fellow professor, F. Louis Hoover, director of art, prepared a display of his ceramics created in the basement of his home. Miss Mary Schimpff and her mother, Mrs. Frances Schimpff, and Mrs. Mary Parker displayed creations in silver and enamel. Miss Schimpff won first in metals in the fourth annual competitive exhibition of Young Artists of America in 1953. She won fourth place in 1950 and second in 1951 in metals.

In addition to the varied home-grown talent, Bloomington people have better access to the personal appearances of the world's great artists than do most people in the big cities. A large percentage travel to see the major performances in New York, Chicago, and St. Louis. Many great stars appear personally in Bloomington. The following is a typical offering in a single season:

Drama: Tyrone Power, Judith Anderson, and Raymond Massey in Stephen Vincent Benét's *John Brown's Body*; Elsa Lanchester and the Mad Hatters in a comedy, *Private Music Hall;* Community Players productions, *Glamour Preferred, Jenny Kissed Me, The Two Mrs. Carrolls,* and *The Great Big Doorstep.*

Music: Mack Harrell, Metropolitan Opera baritone; Nathan Milstein, violinist; Vienna Choir Boys; Jean Erdman Dance Company; Roberta Peters, Metropolitan Opera coloratura soprano; Illinois State

Normal University and Illinois Wesleyan University combined choirs; Artur Rubinstein, pianist; Angelairs, harp quintet; Barbara Gipson, coloratura soprano; William Warfield, baritone; and Boston Pops Tour Orchestra with Arthur Fiedler.

Art: Local artists' show; paintings of John Steuart Curry; one man show by C. V. Donovan; duo show by Eleanor Coen (a native) and Max Kahn; University of Illinois Contemporary Art exhibition; children's art show and the twenty-sixth Annual Amateur Competition.

Adding to Bloomington's cultural depth are the forty-two libraries in McLean County for 76,000 population. Eleven of them are public libraries. The others belong to the public schools and the two universities, and all are available to the public for reference work. Bloomington is living up to its motto: "The ABC (agriculture, business, and culture) of the Corn Belt."

II

But up to recently Bloomington had not done too good a job of housekeeping. It had been using the streets an earlier generation had laid out and paved. It had been getting by with an antiquated sewer system. It had been spending the shrunken school tax revenue prudently but the once proud educational system was in a sorry state. The high school swimming pool was empty. Band instruments were stored in it. There was no money to hire a band director or to operate the pool. The zoo at Miller Park, one of the few in cities under 50,000 population, was down at the heels. There were more substandard dwellings than most citizens were willing to admit. Some of them were owned and rented to unfortunate families by the well-to-do who found them a good investment.

The Bloomington community suffered a slight shock in the agricultural depression of the early 1920's, enjoyed the boom of the succeeding years, coasted along with some discomfort during the Great Depression of the 1930's, and rebounded with vigor during the lush years of World War II, thanks to the revival of agriculture.

It was near the close of the war that Bloomington, along with many other communities of the nation, began to look into the future and wonder what was in store after the shooting stopped. A Committee for Economic Development was named to diagnose the situation. The

committee needed help. It could have called upon an engineering firm specializing in community development. But that took money, and Bloomington people were not ready to spend large quantities of money for a blueprint. Instead the community turned to Allen D. Albert of Paris, Illinois, for inspiration. Dr. Albert had been president of Rotary International and had gained a wide following as a lecturer. He also had developed a world-wide reputation as a city planner. He did not rely on the slide rule and the drafting room. He left to the engineers and the accountants the job of working out the details. He was more of a civic evangelist, somewhat in the fashion of Billy Sunday, exhorting communities to hit the sawdust trail to improvement.

He was a good choice. His reasonable fee could be met. His approach was needed to arouse a community which was rich in natural and human resources but which for at least a quarter of a century had refused to accept local leadership. Bloomington wanted most of all not to be bothered.

Into this environment in 1943 came Dr. Albert with the Municipal Yearbook under his arm to convert the people from their sins of omission in public affairs. He made a three-day whirlwind diagnosis of the patient. He actually did little original research, but he took a hard, objective look at the community. He studied available engineering and professional reports on water systems, schools, parks, streets, sewers, public building, industrial development, fire protection, and so on. Then he called a public meeting at which his beloved Rotary was host to tell what he had learned. It was just at the beginning of the Christmas season when two hundred citizens gathered at the hotel to hear the indictment. It was sarcastic and severe. Bloomington, he said, was near a breakdown.

"Bloomington complacency has heaped up a burden, passing it from one generation to the next, which the children of 1940 will find heavy to carry," he declared, and continued:

> The function of every town is to serve its people and its customers. It lives according to that service. It cannot serve without a municipal machine, warranting the householders to feel safe in their houses and their businesses, enabling them to move around expeditiously, pleasantly, furnishing them with good water in sufficient quantity, draining off the surface water and the sewage, guarding their health.

All these services were provided in the 1870's. Not too generously. Just enough money was spent to do what was needed at the particular time. Neither then nor later has Bloomington ever had a major department of municipal administration that could accommodate any late increase in demand.

A city of twenty thousand does not need so much as a city of thirty thousand and so as Bloomington prospered a municipal waistcoat would be let out here, a pair of municipal trousers lengthened there. Whatever was on the surface would reveal that piecing, as witness the streets that once were a source of so much pride. Whatever was beneath the surface did not reveal makeshift.

Those grandfathers were a saving lot. Whatever would do was good enough. They were saving, prosperous, but not wise. If a piece of equipment was skimpy and underground, what the people did not know would not hurt them.

So in 1943 we come upon a Bloomington that is on the verge of a breakdown. By that I mean to say definitely:

One. The water system is inadequate and must be extended and expensively improved.

Two. The fire service falls so plainly under standard that the Illinois Board of Fire Underwriters is about to increase insurance rates.

Three. Of about eighty miles of streets, approximately forty miles need resurfacing and general rebuilding.

Four. Of about seventy-five miles of sewers, all are inadequate, excepting some of the pipe sewers.

Five. The municipal government is administered from a city hall that is inconvenient, undersize, shabby, suggesting to the children of the town and to visitors that Bloomington as a municipality is a cheap place, cheap and shoddy.

Six. Money has been saved on the schools at the expense of every child who studies in them.

He also criticized the community's health services. He charged that the welfare agencies overlapped, had bad planning, and were run by personnel who put job above service.

With the help of the League of Women Voters he directed a quick housing survey and came up with a report that approximately 3 per cent of the homes were unfit for human habitation.

If Dr. Albert meant to stir up the citizens he succeeded. Mayor Mark W. Hayes and most of the fourteen aldermen were furious. Their

resentment was so strong that there began a conflict between public and officials that, with one or two exceptions, continued for a decade. Much of this resentment on the part of the city officials arose from the fact that they already had made preliminary plans to correct some of the things Dr. Albert suggested. Instead of grasping an opportunity to unite city-wide support behind these projects, they chose to drag their feet at almost every stage of development. It was a misreading of the public mind.

Paul Gossard, then superintendent of schools, normally is a quiet, scholarly, and cautious man. But the indictment of the schools made him hopping mad. He made it clear that he considered the evaluation of the schools unfair, untimely, and detrimental to his germinating program for school improvement.

The Albert criticism of the community was the chief topic of conversation in every part of the town. The consensus of opinion was that he had overstated the case, as indeed he had. But it was deliberate. He wanted to create the fighting spirit. He did. At his suggestion plans were formulated to call a meeting of representative citizens from the various organizations of the community to determine the next step. The indictment was good dramatics, but it didn't improve the water system or make the fire department any more effective. He went back to his Paris, Illinois, home to let Bloomington seethe.

III

Early in January 1944, a small committee was set up to formulate a program of action. It consisted of Aaron Brooks, executive of a retail grocery chain; Frank Donovan, labor leader; Adlai H. Rust, top insurance executive; Fred E. Shoup, president of the Trades and Labor Assembly; and Ned E. Dolan, executive of a printing and stationery company. They were all men of great capacity for action and they were generally respected in the community.

The Committee composed this notice:

> We were asked to act as a small committee to suggest members for a larger group of persons to consider matters in connection with the welfare of Bloomington and particularly the relation of these matters to Bloomington's progress during the early post-war years. You are one of the persons whom we have suggested. A meeting will be held on Friday

evening, January 21, at 8 o'clock at the Association of Commerce Assembly Room to consider the subject and to plan for the work to be done. Please be present.

Copies were sent to city officials and to selected members of organized labor, parent-teacher associations, the Association of Commerce, the Committee for Economic Development, League of Women Voters, the Clearing House Association, Business and Professional Women, Junior Chamber of Commerce, Woman's Club, Rotary, Kiwanis, Young Men's Club, Life Underwriters, Real Estate Dealers Association, Bar Association, and the American Legion.

The names to whom the invitation was sent were selected carefully. Floyde Sperry, secretary of the Association of Commerce, Joe Bunting, general manager of *The Pantagraph*, myself, and a few others worked with the committee. The idea was to select people with a known interest in community improvement. Presidency of an organization meant nothing in the compilation of the list. In most cases the presidents were not the ones invited. Rosters of the organizations were used primarily to give recognition to the organizations and thus to lay the groundwork for future support. But every effort was made to avoid organizational jealousy or to prevent a single organization from taking the ball and running away with it. This was not a matter of winning credit for a specific organization, as most presidents might view it, but one of getting a cooperative civic job done. As the months passed, the wisdom of the committee was demonstrated. It became clear that there is no limit to what a community can accomplish if you don't care who gets the credit. Of all the things accomplished since this first call to community action on January 21, 1944, I doubt if 2 per cent of the citizens of Bloomington in 1953 know that any of the originators had anything to do with it. They were a competent, energetic, selfless lot of citizens devoted to community improvement.

Ned E. Dolan was the unanimous choice for chairman of this first group which, upon motion of Adlai H. Rust, was designated as the Better Bloomington Committee. It was made clear that this group was self-appointed and there was no obligation placed upon any individual or group of individuals. The committee had no official status whatever.

Legally trained business executive Ned Dolan had a keen appreciation of democratic action. He called for a large blackboard. As members of the group brought up problems he asked that they be written on the blackboard. A dozen or so major community problems were listed. These were sharpened and combined until the group ended up with ten. As might be expected, these bore a remarkable resemblance to those outlined the previous December by Dr. Albert. This was due in part to the dramatic presentation he had made and in part to the fact that they were the obvious problems known to the citizens. These were listed as needing most urgent consideration:

1. Water supply and distribution, and fire protection
2. Sewers and drainage
3. Public buildings
4. Educational facilities
5. Recreational facilities, landscaping, and forestry
6. Building and housing standards
7. Agriculture, industry, and employment
8. Transportation
9. Public health and welfare
10. Ways and means

Continuing in the democratic vein, Chairman Dolan asked that each of the group write his first, second, and third interest preference of the ten problems listed. This was used as a basis for assignment to ten panels set up to make detailed studies and to draft recommendations. Membership on the panels was left open so any citizen of the community could attach himself to any panel in which he had an interest. In that way the panels, or study groups, came into being and the foundation for a long-range program of community betterment was laid.

The panels operated more or less independently during the period of their study and the drafting of their recommendations. The staff of the Association of Commerce was used to send out meeting notices and to keep records. Most of the meetings were held in the Association's offices. Floyde Sperry, as executive secretary of the association, acted as coordinator. The panels were to bring their recommendations back to the Better Bloomington Committee and the committee was

to approve or reject the proposals. Those receiving approval would then have full support of the entire committee.

IV

Weeks went by during this study period. The panel members read references, directed inquiries all over the country, called upon local experts, and compiled all the information available on the subjects of their major interest. That was one of the keys to future success. They knew their subject. It was mid-summer of 1944 before recommendations began to come before the Better Bloomington Committee. One of the first was the report of the public buildings panel. Its report was short and to the point. It read:

> The panel recommends that the city officials and members of the City Council be commended for progressive action in authorizing the city atttorney to proceed with the necessary condemnation suits to acquire the Armory site on South Main Street which site has been approved by the Illinois Armory Board. The panel recommends that the Better Bloomington Committee endorse the action of the city officials in this respect.
>
> The panel suggests that the Better Bloomington Committee recommend to the citizens of this community the building of a new city hall on a site ample for the present and future needs and that issuance of general obligation bonds in the amount necessary for this be submitted to the voters of Bloomington at the November 7, 1944, election.

The Association of Commerce had set up an armory committee long before the Better Bloomington Committee got under way. This group had done much of the necessary spade work and had been working closely with city officials to get a new armory in Bloomington. In all candor it should be said that the major reason for seeking an armory was to get an adequate meeting place for large public gatherings. The desire for the building actually prompted the formation of a national guard unit so as to qualify for the armory building which would be built without major cost to the city. In that sense the project was not born of desire for self-help.

The city furnished some $8000 for purchase of the site. The national guard unit was organized. Plans for the armory developed and it was dedicated in 1951. Soon thereafter the guard unit was called into service again and the building was left virtually unused.

The original desire to have a large assembly hall for public meetings has not been completely fulfilled.

The Better Bloomington Committee endorsed the proposal for a new city hall and it went on the ballot for the Nov. 7, 1944, election, calling for a bond issue of $250,000. This election also combined a recommendation of the sewer and drainage panel. A small project calling for the expenditure of $147,500 was put to a vote while plans for a much larger expansion were being perfected. Both the city hall bond issue and the sewer project passed by votes of two to one. Both projects won approval in every single precinct of the city. Bloomington was on its way. City hall bond issue proposals had lost in 1929 and 1938. Cooperation of city officials and an effective citizenry was paying off. The fact that inflation made it impossible to build a city hall for the sum approved did not detract from a spirit of unity seldom demonstrated before or since. That was in 1944 and Bloomington still does not have a new city hall.

Unity in the bond issue soon vanished in a discussion of a suitable site. City officials wanted the building on the site of the old city hall. It was centrally located but quite small. Many others, including *The Pantagraph*, favored locating on a new and larger site with adequate space for landscaping and for parking. Delay caused by the dispute over the site may have played a part in the failure to get the building under way quickly enough to get it built ahead of the postwar inflation.

That was the beginning of an even wider gulf between the city council and the public. The situation was worsened when, in 1947, the city council voted to issue $2,650,000 in general revenue bonds, which did not require a referendum, to modernize the city's sewer system. The rift got beyond repair when the council sold the bonds by private negotiation without competitive bids. Mayor Hayes vetoed the action and the council over-rode his veto. In succeeding elections every alderman who voted for this sewer bond deal was defeated at the polls or chose not to run.

The much needed sewer system was built but public confidence in the city officials was destroyed. No city council project calling for additional taxes or for a major expenditure of public funds won voter approval until the old aldermanic form of government was voted out in 1952.

Recommendations of the panel on water supply and distribution and fire protection, indorsed by the Better Bloomington Committee, ran against a stone wall of voter resistance. The people rejected a 2½ million dollar water improvement. They twice rejected a fire tax, not because they failed to see the need of the improvements, but because they did not have confidence in the way city officials would spend the money. In fairness to the officials it should be said that no graft or illegal action has ever been uncovered. One banker said the sewer bond deal was a good bargain for the city. But the public felt that such decisions should be made after a referendum and by receiving competitive bids.

V

Talk of changing the form of government began to creep into conversations on city affairs. Bloomington had had the commission form of government from 1915 to 1923. Some of its greatest advancement came during that period. But ward sentiment was so persistent that an accumulation of decisions unpopular in first one ward and then another led to its eventual downfall.

But the outgrowth of the sewer bond deal brought another vote for the commission form of government April 1, 1947. It did not get the general support of the citizens. Workers in both Republican and Democratic Parties lined up almost solidly against the change and it was defeated almost five to one. But that did not restore confidence in city officials.

Mayor Hayes was defeated in his own party primary in 1949. He and his wing of the party did little to support young and capable Walter Benson, the Republican nominee. As a result Bloomington got a Democratic mayor for the first time in years. Cecil Cone, a virtual newcomer to Bloomington and with no experience in municipal affairs, found himself occupying the mayor's chair.

Mayor Cone, a World War II veteran, had a sincere desire to do a good job, but he found the going rough. Older members of the city council were not eager to support this upstart. The mayor did manage to name a citizens' committee headed by able banker Leonard Wochner to study the city's financial plight and to look into the administrative setup. This had been urged for years by the League of Women

Voters and other civic groups. The committee had decided to raise funds by popular subscription to finance a complete study of the municipal administrative organization and the council had indicated that it would at least give sympathetic consideration to the findings of an outside firm.

Countermovements already were under way, however. Early in 1951 some citizens began to discuss the possibility of another election on the commission form of government. At the time it was not legal to have a council-manager government in Illinois, but the general assembly was considering a permissive bill, as it had done every session for years. All previous efforts had failed, but this time the bill had the active support of Governor Adlai E. Stevenson and a long list of organizations interested in civic improvements. It was decided to delay the commission referendum until the legislature took action on the council-manager bill.

The council-manager bill won legislative approval about the time Mayor Cone's citizens' committee was ready to go into action. Immediately a group calling themselves the All Bloomington Committee was formed to promote a council-manager referendum.

The council-manager movement gained even more impetus after the city council passed a wheel tax to get much-needed revenue, again without a vote of the people. Then city officials, who had been opposed to the council-manager plan, forged another link in the chain of public resentment. They filed a petition to bring the council-manager plan to a vote in the April 8, 1952, election. Under the law a favorable vote would have been only advisory and the council would have been under no compulsion to abide by it.

That, no doubt, was one of the reasons for the council action. Another was that the spreading support of the All Bloomington Committee was paralyzing the mayor's citizens' committee. Under civic pressure the city council withdrew its petition, which would not be binding, and left the way open for the All Bloomington Committee to file a petition for an election, the result of which would be binding. This course was followed. An extensive and often bitter campaign followed.

Every city official except one fought the proposal, but when the votes were counted the council-manager form with councilmen as

well as mayor to be elected from the city at large, had won. The All Bloomington Committee immediately got busy to get a good field of candidates for the non-political primary election of Feb. 10, 1953. Eight good candidates entered the race and seven of them were nominated, with the candidates of the All Bloomington Committee leading the field. Two businessmen were nominated for mayor. The voters had a good field from which to choose in the April 7 runoff.

Significantly, the people voted strongly in favor of a water system improvement bond issue of $1,285,000—the first they had voted in a decade. The successful vote was made easier by action of the old council which unanimously passed an ordinance stating it would lay the matter over for the new officials if the issue carried.

O. Lloyd Welsh, former McLean County farm adviser (county agent), former president of the Bloomington Association of Commerce, former president of the Kiwanis Club, and an ardent worker in the First Christian Church, entered the race for mayor only at the urgent appeals of people from all walks of life. He received more votes than all his competitors combined in the primary and was elected handily in the run-off election. He ran on the All Bloomington Committee ticket and carried three of the four ABC candidates for council into office with him. The retiring aldermanic administration reversed its former position and created a city planning commission after the council-manager form had won voter approval.

Within weeks of the election of the council-manager regime in Bloomington a police officer was dismissed from the force on "charges of conduct unbecoming an officer," and later indicted in circuit court on a charge of "palpable omission of duty" and accepting a $200 bribe to overlook the operation of a house of prostitution in violation of city ordinances. At about the same time a loss of $50,000 to $85,000 a year in municipal water department revenue was revealed when it was discovered that some users had not paid bills in more than fifteen years, some did not have meters, and some had faulty meters which had not been repaired. Bloomington was on its way once more after a decade of virtual civic paralysis.

VI

The panel on building and housing standards divided its work into two fields. One dealt with minimum standards for existing rental

property and the other had to do with a modern building code for new residence construction.

For regulation of new residence construction the panel recommended that the city council adopt a building code conforming with minimum standards set up by the Federal Housing Authority.

The proposals on rental property were aimed at that small fraction of shacks rented to the unfortunates who could not afford to better their own conditions. Some such shacks were owned by well-to-do citizens who made a handsome profit on the small investment and the misery of the tenants. City officials have made an honest effort to correct the situation but they have not been entirely successful. The effort is still in progress. A housing authority was set up under state law to combine the work of two or more civic committees trying to cope with the situation. The authority did build a few single residence units for sale. It found that it could not get the job done at a cost appreciably below what private builders could do. It also found that the cost was higher than the people who needed housing most could afford. Housing for the lower 20 per cent income group remained bad.

Against this background the city council took steps in 1952 to get a federal loan to study the need for constructing multiple dwelling units for low income groups. Despite some bitter opposition the Housing Authority began construction of the first two hundred low-rent units in early 1953.

Building crafts in Bloomington were strongly opposed to prefabricated housing in 1944. The fight lasted several years before a new building code placing the emphasis upon soundness of construction rather than method finally was adopted. The code safeguards the public while leaving development of new and economical methods of construction to the genius of the building industry. Prefabricated houses are now common.

The panel on agriculture, industry, and employment made no specific recommendations other than to suggest that it might be useful in assisting returning service men in reemployment. Much preliminary work in the field of industrial development had been done by the Association of Commerce and much has been done since that time. Nineteen new industries were brought to the community after World War II, including a multi-million dollar soybean processing plant of the Ralston Purina Company and the General Electric plant. The

casualties were high. Only twelve survived. The city is short of adequate industrial sites and that problem has been attacked without spectacular success by the Association of Commerce. The panel fell short of its opportunity on at least two counts:

1. It could have stressed the importance of developing agricultural production. This should include greater diversification and greater output. While McLean County farm production is high, it conceivably could be increased greatly. With the current farm production of the county at 56 million dollars annually, a 10 per cent increase would be equal to the addition of several small industries.

2. It could have recommended a long-range program of encouraging industries to process the agricultural production of the area, with special emphasis upon germination of industry out of the genius of the community. Acquiring industry at public auction has always been expensive and unimaginative. A permanent standing committee to encourage talented and ambitious people within the community to develop new business, industry, and services would pay big dividends to any community.

The transportation panel of the Better Bloomington Committee made two major recommendations. One urged the improvement and development of the municipal airport and the other took recognition of the parking problem but made no specific recommendation.

Probably some of the hardest civic effort ever expended in Bloomington has been lavished on the city airport. Thousands of dollars in local funds have been expended on it and additional hundreds of thousands of federal and state money have been poured into it. The field has been enlarged, the runways improved and extended, and facilities at the field have been improved. When the county soundly trounced a proposal to set up an airport authority, the city buckled down to do the job alone, although the entire county reaps whatever reward there is.

In 1951, the city finally procured a feeder airline service running east and west, but it never succeeded in getting one of the larger airlines to exercise its permit to make regular stops between Chicago and St. Louis. The feeder service did not prove profitable and was discontinued in 1952. The field is used by some Bloomington industry for transporting equipment and executive personnel. Aviation is be-

coming more important to agriculture since planes are being used to spread chemicals. The bright future Bloomington's aviation enthusiasts envisioned has, however, not yet arrived. The mass of people still use the Alton Route of the Gulf Mobile and Ohio Railroad and the numerous state and national highways for business and pleasure transportation. Bloomington is well situated on highways. More state and federal routes converge on it than on any other city of the state outside Chicago.

Bloomington, like most other cities of the country, is still wrestling with the parking problem. And while it wrestles, the decentralization of business continues. The parking problem will solve itself as retail stores move out to areas where they can provide their own parking if communities just wait long enough. The parking problem is specifically the problem of those businesses located in the heart of the metropolitan areas. They must solve it, move away from it, or die. Bloomington has not moved boldly as Kankakee did to issue hundreds of thousands of dollars in revenue bonds to develop off-street parking. But Bloomington is moving gradually in that direction. The city procured the first of several proposed off-street sites in 1952. When the problem becomes acute enough for the downtown merchants—so acute that trade begins to go elsewhere—they will probably spearhead a movement to develop adequate parking space near the central shopping district.

VII

The major monument to the health and welfare panel of the Better Bloomington Committee is the establishment of a county health unit in 1946 into which the Bloomington city health department was merged. This was one of the first of its kind in the state. The county health department has a full-time physician as director and a staff of technicians to look after the safety of the public. Out of its work has come a restaurant code which was approved by the county board of supervisors after a bitter fight from some restaurant operators and only after it had been watered down considerably from the stiff recommendations of the U. S. Health Department. The county health department has made intensive health and sanitation studies of the small towns of the county and has recommended steps to eliminate health

hazards. It has done much to keep communicable diseases under control. Fluoridation of water supplies has been urged consistently and success is just beginning to appear with adoption in three communities and preparations for fluoridation in another.

Other recommendations of the panel have been unrealized for the most part. Its suggestion that a recreation commission be created to set up a year-round, tax-supported recreation program has fallen upon deaf ears. Its recommendation that the city park commission assume responsibilities for and maintenance of all municipal playgrounds, under the direct supervision of a recreation supervisor, likewise has been ignored. The suggestion that park areas be expanded and new sites acquired has not moved the public to action.

In fact Bloomington has not been sold on the philosophy of community-wide tax-supported recreation. Sentiment is growing for smaller neighborhood centers under more direct management and control of parents. Fell Avenue playground is such a center. It has been operated by parents on a volunteer basis with considerable success for a number of years. It has served unintentionally as a demonstration in self-analysis, self-help, and self-determination in the field of recreation. Subconsciously the people of the Bloomington-Normal area want a type of recreation that draws the family together, and they suspect that the typical form of organized community-wide recreation with a corps of paid workers does just the opposite. Every effort to sell that type of program has been turned down by the citizens. Yet they have not embraced the Fell Avenue pattern with sufficient enthusiasm to put it into effect in other parts of the community.

It is likely that eventually a program centered around the schools will emerge. It will be a compromise between the typical program with which nearby Decatur has gained such a wide reputation and the home-germinated Fell Avenue type. Bloomington people do not fall easily into national stereotypes. They insist upon keeping their individuality.

A proposal for a foster home for confinement of children awaiting trial in county or city courts has since been put into effect on a voluntary basis through the county court. Judge Robert Underwood seeks private homes, approved by probation officers, where these children may be kept. He has had fair success with the program.

The panel's recognition of the need of better trained personnel for probation officers of the county court and the women's division of the city police department has no doubt had some influence toward improving that situation. Judge Underwood has tried hard to get the best trained and best qualified people available for probation work.

Dr. Albert's criticism of the welfare agencies operating under the community chest was echoed in the report of the health and welfare panel. It called for a family agency to integrate the work of all county welfare institutions. It proposed a social service exchange for welfare agencies and one has since been established.

The problem of overlapping and gaps in the welfare field came to the attention of the Community Chest of McLean County again in 1951. The board of directors of the chest approved the establishment of a committee to inquire into the problem and recommend action. Early in 1952 the chest board approved a plan of procedure which calls for cooperation with trained welfare personnel from the staff of the University of Illinois. The plan has the support of participating agencies and the actual study is taking the form of self-analysis and self-determination as to corrective measures. That work should properly be credited to the seed planted in 1944 by the health and welfare panel.

The work of the panel on recreational facilities, landscaping, and forestry was merged with that of the panel on health and welfare and no separate report was made. Out of this study came an effort a few years later to set up a city forestry service supported by a special tax. The proposal was defeated at an election. Later inroads on the community's American elms by phloem necrosis may yet prove that to be one of the community's greatest errors of judgment, at least from an aesthetic point of view. The disease is now taking scores of trees each year. Some voluntary replacements are being made by individual property owners, but in nothing like the scope needed to get the job done. A forestry department might have been able to fight the disease on a scale broad enough to halt its progress here.

VIII

Bloomington already had begun to improve the public school system when Dr. Albert made his scathing analysis in 1943. That was one thing which made Paul Gossard so angry. Dr. William Reavis of

the University of Chicago had been engaged to make a curriculum study for the schools. After the voters had rejected increased school taxes in 1940 and 1941, they finally approved a boost from $1.35 per $100 assessed valuation to $1.85 in March 1942.

These were positive forward steps when the education panel began its study. Its recommendations did nothing to soothe the ruffled feelings of Dr. Gossard, who had inherited a far from ideal solution. The city's schools had been operating on an extremely decentralized basis for some years. A new superintendent came in, with more know-how and determination than tact, to correct the situation. He was aggressive and positive. He knew what he wanted and he was going to get it. The school system was in turmoil and public relations were bad. Brighter fields opened up where the energy and drive of this superintendent could be used to greater advantage. Paul Gossard was called to fit in between these two extremes. He was understandably cautious. He felt that his slow but positive beginnings had been torpedoed.

Nevertheless the education panel came out boldly to recommend "strong administrative leadership to include faculty seminars, new courses of study, evaluation of the services of each faculty member, in-service training, establishment of good professional attitude and cooperative spirit among faculty members, clarification of authority and specific delegation of duties." Paul Gossard felt that he was indicted for something he recognized full well, and that he was charged to do something he was already doing.

The panel also recommended equal pay for men and women. This came after sharp debate and a tie vote which was broken in favor of equal pay by the chairman. It is hard to realize now how low teacher pay was in 1944, but the panel recommended a minimum of $2400 per year and establishment of an adequate range of salaries comparable to cities of similar size. (The 1953 scale called for a beginning salary of $3300 for teachers with a bachelor's degree and a maximum of $4900 for teachers with a master's degree and fifteen years of tenure.)

The panel urged establishment of a public relations committee to be made up of faculty and representative citizens. It called for addition of kindergartens, expansion of vocational training, an adult education program, more effective use of audio-visual aids, remedial reading

classes, efficient testing and follow-up programs, a complete guidance program, broader and more complete physical education programs, and establishment of a school health clinic.

A long-range school construction program also was urged by the panel. It called for extension of grounds, proper seating, lighting, and ventilation, a qualified building engineer, and use of school buildings as community centers the year around.

Just for good measure the panel closed with this observation: "It is the opinion of the panel that more emphasis should be placed on fundamental training of basic subjects through the first eight grades, bearing in mind, however, that citizenship, not scholarship, is the ultimate end sought in the public school system."

A bigger and more attractive job came to Paul Gossard from Quincy, Massachusetts, soon after this report was made. It was not surprising that he accepted. Neither is it surprising that he is doing a good job there. He was a victim of bad timing in Bloomington. L. M. Byerly, one of the school board members assigned to interview those who would succeed Dr. Gossard, asked this question of each: "Can you make up your mind and make a clear, specific recommendation on a course of action?" George N. Wells said he could. He got the job. The timing for him was as good as it had been bad for Paul Gossard, and George Wells took full advantage of it. The story of Bloomington's schools since his arrival in 1944 has been one of continued progress, better community relations, and growing national recognition. He gives much of the credit to the education panel of the Better Bloomington Committee. He has tried hard and successfully to give the people what they want in their public schools. The people have responded.

In March 1945, the citizens voted to increase both the educational and the school building tax rates. In December 1945, they voted a $750,000 bond issue to carry out a building program. In April 1947, they voted again to increase and to stabilize the school tax rate in the face of new state tax legislation. The board of education hired a well known firm of school architects, Perkins and Will, of Chicago, to make a complete study of the existing buildings, study population growth, and make recommendations for modernization and for new building.

This firm worked in cooperation with local architects in planning and supervising the construction.

New sites were acquired and additions were built. Existing structures were renovated. A junior high system was set up and buildings were planned to accommodate it. One new grade school was constructed in the fastest growing southeastern part of the city. This new Oakland Avenue School was occupied at the beginning of the 1951-52 term. It is a model structure all on one floor of stone and redwood construction. Rooms are airy with easy access to the ample play areas outside.

Kindergartens the education panel recommended have been established. The school buildings have been opened for public use. A constant program of curriculum study is under way. The program is being tailored to fit the needs of the students. A course in agriculture was set up, not to teach boys to be farmers, but to give them an understanding of the undergirding economic strength of the area. Distributive education was established to give students training on the job. The schools cooperate in business-education day and in education-business day. On the one, teachers spend a day in the businesses of the city and on the other businessmen spend a day in the schools. High school students receive activity tickets to all school events, including athletic games, without cost. Hidden costs have been reduced to a minimum. Textbooks are on a rental basis, making the cost to each student a fraction of what it would be if each had to purchase his own books; yet the rental system avoids the development of the idea that the supplies are free and therefore need not be preserved.

An advisory council has been set up by the board of education to keep close and constant contact with the wishes of the people. Membership on the council must rotate in order to bring in new blood from year to year. The council conducted an extensive public opinion survey to evaluate the schools in late 1951. This afforded the school system a chance to correct weak spots that were brought to light and to correct mistaken ideas about the schools.

As a result of this broadened program the holding power in Bloomington High School jumped from 50 per cent in 1944 to 85 per cent in 1952. While some schools in selected areas have holding power of almost 100 per cent, the national average is near 50 per cent and the

rapid improvement in Bloomington has attracted nationwide attention.

An extensive adult education program has been developed with the cooperation of the public schools of Normal. A class will be set up to fit the requirements of any reasonable number of adults. Enrollment runs well over the 2500 mark. Educators the country over are beginning to point to the Bloomington schools as an example of what can be done through the democratic process. George Wells traces it all to the education panel and the enlightened interest it created in the public schools. "The story of educational progress in Bloomington is an exemplification of the democratic process in a free society," he declared. "The public, speaking through their committee, said what they wanted and they were willing to pay for it. This is a new and significant technique. It got the citizens interested and, in a representative way, to make recommendations. This gives you a supporting group to get things done. That formula can be worked in any community in America."

While Bloomington was recovering from a decade of civic paralysis, the other parts of the community's body were growing. Its three hospitals had acquired new equipment and built new additions. The two universities constructed a number of fine buildings and broadened and deepened their curricula to meet the needs of the area. At long last the ten-year battle of the citizens against official inertia had been won. The core of the tertiary community had been restored to health.

That, in brief, is the story of a purely voluntary, unofficial effort of a community to determine what it wants and then to go out and get it. No one can say that none of these improvements would have been possible without the Better Bloomington Committee and its working panels. Many of the improvements had their beginnings prior to the formation of the committee. It is relatively unimportant. The exhilarating thing is that people can and will band themselves together, inform themselves as to their needs, and then go to work to do what is necessary to fill those needs. That is the core of the self-analysis, self-determination, and self-help philosophy. That is the story of democracy in action.

The Better Bloomington Committee voluntarily disbanded after its recommendations were completed. The momentum carried on for a decade. It may carry for decades to come. That raises the question as

to whether the decision to disband was wise. Should the committee have remained intact to cope with new problems as they arose? Or should the new problems be left for new and spontaneous committees to solve?

In Bloomington's case, they were left to a new group, the City Plan Commission. Appointed in 1952, the commission showed its first signs of life in early 1953. Its members invited Dr. Albert to review the situation in the light of what he had found a decade ago. The commission decided to take up where the Better Bloomington Committee left off. Members were named as chairmen of various fields of interest such as parks and recreation, cultural activities, traffic and parking, public works, health and safety, land use and zoning, and economic development.

A decade later a new group was following the old pattern of self-analysis, self-determination, and self-help in Bloomington, the hub of the tertiary community. In the meantime some thought was being given to the economic, cultural, and civic wellbeing of the other areas which go to make up the complete Bloomington community.

CHAPTER 14

Community Building Expanded

THE BLOOMINGTON experiment revealed one glaring fact: Bloomington was not sufficient unto itself. Bloomington merchants depend upon customers outside the corporate limits of the city for 70 per cent of their retail trade. *The Pantagraph* sends approximately two thirds of its circulation to subscribers in small towns and rural areas of eight counties. Virtually all its potential gains are there. What happens in these rural areas and small towns is of vital importance to Bloomington. Their economic stability and welfare determine in large measure the economic stability and welfare of Bloomington. (Their need of Bloomington was discussed in Chapter 12.)

There had been developed in Bloomington a program of self-analysis, self-determination, and self-help. It had brought results. Why couldn't that technique be put to work in the small communities surrounding Bloomington? Could such a program be developed so as to benefit Bloomington as well as each individual community? *The Daily Pantagraph* thought such a mutually beneficial program worthy of a try.

Many problems presented themselves. One of the first was for the newspaper to get the people at home to understand the advantages. It was natural for some businessmen, with self-interest their first consideration, to think that every effort should be made to promote Bloomington but that any successful program to promote the interests of the smaller surrounding communities would only damage Bloomington interests. It was just as natural for the smaller communities to be suspicious of the motives of an outside interest, even from a daily newspaper in its second century—one which had been read by several generations of people in every part of Central Illinois.

These misapprehensions had to be cleared up as far as possible before getting down to the real job of community betterment on an area basis. The first hurdle had to be with the home folk in Bloomington. The problem was discussed with representative businessmen. They were assured that this was not a do-good idea. It was an effort to improve an area through application of enlightened self-interest. The businessmen were reminded that the bulk of their business came from the farms and the small towns. They could not expect to retain that trade unless the people in these communities were prosperous. Furthermore, they would stand a better chance of increasing their trade if these communities grew. Census reports indicated that the communities actually were decreasing in population. Retail stores, banks, insurance companies, factories, auto dealers, and seed houses could not sell to people who were not there.

The businessmen were told that they would likely benefit from any general rise in prosperity in any community in their trade area. Studies made by the Bureau of Economic and Business Research of the University of Illinois reveal) that a small community does not retain all its retail trade. Gibson City, thirty-six miles from Bloomington, retains 46 per cent of its shopping goods trade. Bloomington attracts 25 per cent of Gibson City's women's apparel shoppers, 12 per cent of men's apparel, and 15 per cent of those purchasing furniture. Fairbury, thirty-five miles away, makes 22 per cent of its women's apparel purchases in Bloomington, 22 per cent of its men's apparel, and 25 per cent of its furniture. Chenoa, a smaller community only twenty-four miles from Bloomington, makes 69 per cent of its women's apparel purchases in Bloomington, 62 per cent of its men's apparel, and 53 per cent of its furniture. Carlock, an unincorporated village ten miles from Bloomington, sends between 75 and 80 per cent of its trade to Bloomington. It would be natural to expect that Bloomington merchants would get their share of any increased income in these communities. The merchants saw the advantage and not one of them has ever registered an objection to efforts to encourage the small surrounding communities to improve themselves.

It was equally important to get the support of the small communities. There could be no success if they felt that this was just another promotion scheme to exploit them for the benefit of Bloomington.

They were told just as frankly that the motive was enlightened self-interest. If they could grow in size, develop more jobs, provide better schools, improve farm output, and raise their general standard of living they certainly would benefit. No secret was made of the fact that Bloomington would also benefit.

Considerable concern for their own future had been evident. All during World War II they were eager for speakers who could discuss community improvement. They were concerned about their status in the post-war era. Many of them were looking for leadership and inspiration. At the close of World War II the time appeared to be ripe for exploring the possibility of small-town improvement further.

II

It was clear that some technical assistance was necessary. There are competent engineering firms specializing in community planning, and they do excellent work in many communities. However, there were several negative factors to consider in engaging such a firm. Ranking at the top of the list was the known suspicion with which people of a small community view outsiders who come in to tell them what to do. The deep resentments created by the blunt but truthful indictment Dr. Albert made of Bloomington were fresh in mind. To stir up animosity and discord in the small communities in the name of improvement might do more harm than good.

The matter of cost also was a negative factor. These specialized people command high pay for their services. The cost for a small town could run into thousands of dollars. The small communities could not and would not afford such outlays. It might have been possible to seek grants from state or federal governments, or from some of the foundations. Such an approach would have violated the first principle of self-analysis and self-help.

There was still another negative factor to consider before making a decision to employ professional planners to work in these communities. Most of their work is devoted to physical layout and development. They are expert in planning parks, recreation, traffic facilities, public buildings; they study population trends and recommend programs for meeting the need for educational, housing, and shopping facilities. All these are desirable services and they are competently rendered,

but this is not the major need of the small community. Its major problem is jobs—broadening its economic base. It also has problems in the whole social-cultural area and in the civic or governmental field, but economics must come first.

For all these reasons it was decided to look elsewhere for professional guidance in this new experiment. My own acquaintance with Dr. David E. Lindstrom, rural sociologist at the University of Illinois, and his interest in community affairs led me to recommend that we turn to him. Since the university had accumulated considerable experience in adult education through its extension service, we felt that it would be logical to expand that service to take in the small towns which are service centers for the farmers. We felt that the College of Agriculture, the College of Commerce, Fine and Applied Arts—the whole gamut of university services—could be brought to bear on the problems of the small community in a new application of the principle of adult education.

H. P. Rusk, the late Dean; Dr. H. C. M. Case, head of the Department of Agricultural Economics; Dr. L. J. Norton, acting head of this department in the absence of Dr. Case; Dr. Lindstrom, and Alvin T. Anderson, extension specialist who works out of Dr. Case's department, were extremely interested. We managed to get Dr. George D. Stoddard, president of the university, to one of the several conferences at which plans were formulated, but he never seemed to grasp the full significance of the work nor did he lend more than casual support to it. I am confident that his passivity toward the project was due in large part to his newness on the job when the project was started and to the extremely difficult task he faced in adjusting to the sprawling administrative problems he inherited.

When, in 1947, I asked him for a conference to discuss broader university participation in the program he wrote:

It has not been feasible, because of the complications of my schedule during the past and the next few weeks, to set a date for the sort of a conference I believe you have in mind. I can assure you that the University of Illinois is officially interested in and endorses your community betterment program . . . At a later date, when some of the pressing matters which have crowded my schedule are out of the way, I hope to have a visit with you.

The conference never materialized. Two years later, in 1949, when I chided him editorially for not taking a more aggressive part in the program, he wrote:

> I suppose that some of the University's caution is due to our difficulty in getting the necessary funds for the numerous instructional programs, research projects and public services that the University is undertaking. We are still operating under conditions that call for numerous instances of 15 to 20 professors in one office room and in one case 40 professors occupy the same room on a staggered basis. We have an enormous backlog of classroom and laboratory need on the Urbana-Champaign campus but it looks now as though we shall get very little relief in this connection.
>
> I should agree with you at once if you were to say that professors are more important than buildings, but the truth is some professors will not come here or stay here unless we can provide adequate living quarters and decent arrangements for their instruction and research. Such matters limit our ability to expand, not only along the lines in which you have a special interest but also along many other lines rendering a direct public service.

The pressing matters never cleared up. Dr. Stoddard had perennial trouble getting as much money as he thought he needed from the general assembly. He got caught in an internal controversy over liberalism in the College of Commerce. He was on the losing side of a fight which converted Southern Illinois State Normal University into Southern Illinois University. He added more troubles when he ousted Dr. Andrew G. Ivy, vice president in charge of the University's professional schools in Chicago, because of Dr. Ivy's insistence that he continue his research into the controversial drug Krebiozen. All these issues rolled together resulted finally in a vote of no confidence in Dr. Stoddard by the university board of trustees, and he resigned late in 1953. He did not have the time nor the energy to follow development of the unique program of community betterment in which his own university played such an important part. The program suffered as a result.

The burden has been carried by the College of Agriculture under the prodding of Dean Rusk, Dr. Case, Dr. Lindstrom, and, especially, Professor Anderson. They should have had more help from Dr. Stoddard's office and more cooperation from the other colleges of the

university. The College of Commerce has shown willingness to cooperate but rapidly changing personnel has been a handicap there. The College of Fine and Applied Arts also has cooperated in many instances. The College of Education has worked closely with the schools of Bloomington and Normal in curricula and building studies. One of the first acts of Lloyd Morey as president was to begin coordination of all the university's community services.

We at first had an idea of conducting a self-analysis, self-determination, self-help program for the entire Bloomington tertiary community. The problems of adequate staff, sufficient cooperation from all the smaller communities involved, techniques, and so forth, caused us, at the university's suggestion, to trim the original effort down to about a half dozen small communities of varying sizes.

The task of selecting the communities was left to *The Pantagraph.* Five were chosen. Three of the communities are in McLean County and two are in adjoining Woodford County. We did not set out with the idea of making that distribution. It might have been better to select one community in each of the eight counties in which *The Pantagraph* circulates. But those towns were selected because their citizens showed an interest in community betterment. Some of them had made progress in certain fields before they entered the project, which we called the Central Illinois Community Betterment Program.

In each case some local group had to show sufficient interest to issue an official invitation to *The Pantagraph* and the university to include them in the project. The village boards acted for Stanford and Colfax. The Civic Association was the Roanoke sponsor. The Community Club acted for Lexington, and the chamber of commerce took the lead in Minonk.

III

With the communities selected, *The Pantagraph* as the daily textbook and the University of Illinois as teacher launched upon what is believed to be the first and only such venture in a new kind of adult education. It was a program without prizes. It had no professional promoters. There was no intention of asking for special legislation or state or federal grants. The entire idea was to germinate a desire for self-improvement within the community and to help develop techniques to give it breadth and continuity.

Obviously no community can build better than it knows. Knowledge of what is good must precede action if the result is to be fully worth while. With this in mind the university representatives reviewed community programs from all parts of the country. They explored the ideas of many private agencies and individuals interested in community betterment. Professor Anderson was given the job of refining the best and most practical parts of all of these programs and incorporating them with the ideas and experiences of the university staff. This was compiled into a ten-page folder which constituted a basic yardstick by which citizens could evaluate their community. One of the discoveries was that few if any programs coming to our attention covered the whole broad front of community interests. Some would deal with the economic aspects of improvement. Others concentrated on the social and cultural advantages. Still others were aimed at improving municipal functions and services. It was determined that the Central Illinois Community Betterment Program would encompass all three because all three are essential to a good community.

The folder compiled by Professor Anderson was published by *The Pantagraph* with the title, *Your Community—Which Way?* The local newspapers in the five communities were listed as co-sponsors. Every effort was made to have them play an important part in the program. (The material used in the folder is included in Chapter 11. It may serve as a checklist for communities seeking to initiate their own improvement projects.)

This folder was supplied to citizens of the various communities to stimulate a review of the adequacy of local industries, businesses, and personal services. They could measure their social and cultural facilities against the standards set in the folder. They could readily determine whether their civic affairs and public activities measured up to those set forth. Along with the folder were sent questionnaires designed to stimulate thinking on community problems. The purpose was to get the people themselves to list their assets and liabilities in the economic, social-cultural, and civic fields. They were to bring out community problems the citizens believed to be worthy of consideration and problems which should be solved—not to urge citizens to parrot what a few self-appointed community leaders thought.

Three question forms were used. One related to the economic base of the community: industries, businesses, stores, shops, trade and

professional services, and manual labor. A second related to the social and cultural base: education, religion, health, social welfare, parks, recreation and entertainment. The third related to the civic or municipal base: local government, street pavement, garbage service, fire protection, law enforcement, parking problems, safety, utility service, transportation, and similar facilities. Each of the three question forms called for answers to only three basic questions:

1. What criticisms do you have of the facilities and services (in each one of the three fields) now available in your community?
2. What do you think could be done to improve them?
3. What new facilities and services do you think are needed and would be supported?

In many cases the first two questions were answered as one. In view of that experience it might be better for other communities to use only two questions. Some sociologists and community experts prefer to make the questionnaire more specific, giving the citizen a list of proposed facilities or services and letting him check them off much in the manner of a true-false examination. That has the virtue of simplification but there is much to be said for general questions, thus making it necessary for the citizens to refine their thinking. Frequently they come up with needs that even the most experienced community planner might overlook. Who would have thought, for example, that all five communities would place near the top of their list the need of a clean, comfortable community rest room? Generally speaking, public officials and too many community planners think in terms of physical improvements, while the average citizen thinks of services. Since most ready-made questions are formed by the officials and the planners, the services are likely to be slighted in such questionnaires. The general question has the added advantage of causing the recipient to think about his community's problems. Having thought about them, he is likely to talk to his neighbor about them. This process creates a climate in which improvements can be made.

The importance of community-wide participation has already been discussed. That problem had to be faced as the program was developed in the five communities. The first step in initiating the program was to ask each local sponsoring organization to select a half dozen representatives to discuss the procedure with university and *Pantagraph*

personnel. Together they planned a community meeting to which any citizen of the community was welcome. Professor Anderson met with them to explain the purpose and procedure. Representatives of *The Pantagraph* and the Minonk *News-Dispatch*, the Lexington *Unit-Journal*, the Roanoke *Review*, the Colfax *Press* and the Stanford *Star* also attended. It was our firm belief that local newspaper cooperation was essential to success in a program of community improvement.

In order to get complete community representation in each of the towns, a community council was recommended with some reluctance. Most communities are over-organized and we had no desire to complicate the picture, but none of the existing organizations represented all the interests of the communities involved. The council, made up of representatives from every town and farm organization in the community, did represent the entire community.

Action seldom flows from large committees. A community council made up of fifty to one hundred persons was too large to formulate detailed action projects. Executive committees were recommended for this purpose. They were elected by the councils, or the council chairman was empowered to appoint them. They were chosen for their genuine interest, their proven ability, and their known qualities of cooperative leadership.

The final step in setting up the community organization was to create three action committees to specialize in the (1) economic, (2) social-cultural, and (3) civic fields. These were the three areas where it was generally agreed community improvement was needed. Membership on these committees should be selected carefully. They are the most important link in the whole betterment organization. They begin at the action stage, where most improvement plans fail. The community council and the executive committees can formulate general policy, but the action committees can translate the policies into realities. The action committees should be open enough to admit any citizen from any walk of life who shows an interest in the program. Action committee members cannot be afraid of investigation, study, and hard work. They should be people in whom the citizens have confidence. They should not be concerned with who gets credit for work done.

IV

After the organizations were completed the leaflets and question forms were sent to citizens in town and country. Some communities sent them to every family; others used the sampling method. The questionnaires proved to be an important factor in stimulating discussion on community problems and needs in each of the five towns as community centers. Community betterment became one of the chief topics of conversation among farm and town people alike. And while most people normally don't like to take the time to think through and write out answers to questions, between a fourth and a third of all those who received the questionnaires sent back replies. For the most part, these replies were specific and to the point. Both the good and the bad in each community were discussed by the citizens in their replies.

Questionnaire replies were tabulated by Professor Anderson to ascertain which criticisms, suggestions, and proposed improvements were mentioned most frequently. He made no effort to evaluate the replies. If the people of one of the communities rated a swimming pool high on their list of desired facilities, he did not inform them that many if not most large communities have to subsidize their pools. He left that for the people themselves to find out.

When all the answers were tabulated for each town, the assets and liabilities, the needs and limitations of each community were known. In many respects the answers were similar to those which experts on community affairs could have given. But there was one important difference. The citizens pointed out their own shortcomings. They criticized their own community. These criticisms were numerous, and some were quite severe, but they were not the product of some outside expert. Since they themselves found these shortcomings, the charges must be true and something had to be done about them, the people reasoned.

It is the opinion of the university and *The Pantagraph* that the program would have died right there if such adverse criticisms had come from the university or the newspaper.

But hardly had the results been announced at meetings of the community councils before things began to happen. Businessmen, reacting

GRAMLEY-LEWAKS TRAINING CENTER
22 FEB 1955
T. KALLUPPATTU

under the criticism that their stores were messy and uninviting, began immediately to clean up and paint up. Broken sidewalks were repaired. School officials who would have been angry at any outside interference began to think in terms of hot-lunch programs, consolidations, better recreational facilities, and vocational guidance. The experience of each of the five communities will be given in succeeding chapters.

Interest was stimulated by semi-annual meetings of the executive committees of the five councils. *The Pantagraph* played host at the first. A dinner was followed by progress reports from the various towns. Then came a round-table discussion and exchange of views. Soon the various communities wanted to take turns at playing hosts. These became afternoon and evening affairs. First in order was a tour of inspection of projects accomplished. Great local pride was evident in these tours, and visitors gathered many stimulating ideas for solving their own problems back home. In the evening there would be a potluck supper with many people of the community attending. Invariably these potlucks were built around either a local church or the public school.

Representatives of the university extension staff and of *The Pantagraph* attended these meetings and usually gave a pep talk at the general meetings. Following these the executive committees would hold their round-table discussion. Problems of how to stimulate more local interest, details of how one community set up a tax-supported garbage collecting system, steps taken by another in establishing a rural fire district, farm-town relationships—all these were frankly discussed.

There was always a new spurt of enthusiasm in the various communities following these sessions. As other communities became interested, they were invited to send representatives. Finally a community betterment workshop was held over a weekend at the university's Robert Allerton Park with the university and *The Pantagraph* sharing in the expense and in program participation. Delegates from various parts of the state attended. Lack of personnel has prevented another, but the demand is there. Both newspaper and university could serve better in this area if their representatives in the field had more free time to devote to it. Regional newspapers over the country and universities as well are missing a great opportunity for service and con-

structive community leadership by not assigning more competent personnel to the field. The benefits gained by the cross-fertilization of ideas and the exchange of know-how on practical community problems in such informal meetings are great.

Apparently the premise upon which the program was launched—that it would benefit both Bloomington and the small towns—is proving true. While there has been no separate study of retail volume in Bloomington from these specific towns, there is no reason to believe the volume has declined in view of an over-all increase in retail volume. Certainly business has picked up in the communities themselves. As for *The Pantagraph,* its subscription gain over the entire eight counties where it circulates was 36 per cent in the ten years between 1942 and 1952. Circulation gain in Roanoke was 153 per cent when rural and town subscribers are lumped together. If Roanoke town circulation is taken alone, the gain was 213 per cent. Minonk proper shows a gain of 167 per cent, and the combined town-rural circulation increased 78 per cent. Lexington, where *Pantagraph* circulation was already near saturation point, showed a gain of 44 per cent, which was well above the territory average.

These gains were made without promotional effort and without solicitation crews. Community activities provided excellent sources of news, and the people of these communities found more news of interest to them in *The Pantagraph.* Newspapers in Minonk, Lexington, and Roanoke were strengthened at the same time. *Pantagraph* gains were not at their expense. Colfax and Stanford have little opportunity for increased circulation unless there is a decided population growth. Just about every family in these communities now subscribes. In all the communities there is a much better appreciation of the University of Illinois.

That phase of community betterment should prove of interest to more newspapers and colleges and universities. There are scores of opportunities for a similar partnership in community building. If the local newspaper or the university does not show sufficient initiative, citizens might stimulate them to action. This is a case of enlightened self-interest with all parties reaping the benefit. It helps to build, rather than exploit, small communities.

CHAPTER 15

Stanford Fights to Live

STANFORD IS the smallest of the five communities included in the Central Illinois Community Betterment Program. No neighbor goes neglected there. Farmers always find time to plant or harvest a crop for a sick man or a widow. There is someone ready and willing to sit up with the ill, look after the handicapped, run errands for the old. They live the word "neighbor" in Stanford.

People here come from hardy stock. Stanford got its character from people like Mrs. Maude K. Garst, who served as cashier of the Stanford State Bank for more than fifty years—until her death in 1950. She knew the people. She made loans on character and always collected. When the bank moratorium came with the financial debacle of 1933, she kept the Stanford Bank from closing its doors when many banks in larger communities collapsed. She needed $30,000, the amount of the bank's capital stock, to stay open. She called her stockholders together and told them they could weather the storm if they would stick by and not yield to hysteria. They all pledged not to withdraw their money. "Why should we let one man get all his money out at the expense of the rest of the depositors?" she asked. The crucial test was on Saturday. That was when all the farmers came to town. Maude Garst opened the bank as usual and did business as usual "just like it was any other day." She knew that the bank was prepared to close if a run developed, and it wouldn't take more than one or two withdrawals to start a stampede. Not a single farmer asked for his money. They all had confidence in Maude Garst. The bank is still going in modern quarters, a monument to a woman of character who knew character.

Then there are people like Elmer E. Garst. He's the local his-

torian. People go to him to check his scrapbook for birth dates, historical events, to settle bets, and to establish the date of the last killing frost.

There's the never-say-die courage shown by Mrs. Hardin Neff who opened a gift shop at the age of sixty-nine.

Stanford has men like Representative Homer Caton, who has served his district for eighteen years in the Illinois General Assembly. If anything needs doing, people just naturally turn to Homer, as they all call him. He has been a strong supporter of the community betterment program from the first. Former Mayor Harry Hilpert, who operates a garage for a living, spends uncounted hours in behalf of the community. It was he who asked that Stanford be included in the betterment program. Walter Genseal, present chairman of the community council, a farmer, adds stability and character to the community, as does L. Parke Kerbaugh, another farmer, who does his share not alone in Stanford civic effort, but in all McLean County as well. He has served as president of the Farm Bureau and on numerous campaign teams for fund raising for worthy causes.

Stanford, a village of 457 souls, is a solid community. The rugged character of its citizens would please the most exacting among its founders. But Stanford is suffering from the cancerous illness of human erosion. Its most valuable asset, the young people, are forced to go elsewhere to find employment. The story is told in a few statistics. More than thirty years ago Stanford had 500 population. Allin Township, in which Stanford is located, had 1115 inhabitants in 1920; it has 965 today. Thirty-eight of the sixty-six families replying to the community betterment questionnaire had lived in the community for more than forty years. Forty-five families responding to those same questions had lived in the community for twenty years or more. Twenty-nine of those replying had only one or two members in the family. What is to become of Stanford when these solid citizens are gone? This community was included in the betterment study, not with a determination to save it, but with a desire to see what the future holds for a community so small and so weakened by loss of its youth.

What did Stanford want in 1946? The people wanted an electrical supply and repair shop. They got one. They wanted adequate hardware and dry goods merchandise. In the opinion of objective towns-

people, they have that today. The people wanted more attractive stores, buildings, and churches. Much progress has been made. The Stanford State Bank was remodeled inside and out. Churches have been improved and redecorated. Many businesses have spruced up their fronts.

Many citizens thought back in 1946 that there should be a cold storage locker plant. Surveys revealed that most of the people who wanted such service already were getting it in nearby towns. And since that time the home freezer unit has all but made cold storage locker plants obsolete.

II

Stanford citizens wanted a resident physician who would be available for emergency calls. Like so many small communities over the United States they wanted a family doctor whom they knew and who knew them by their first names. "We don't want to rely on Bloomington doctors," they said, "and we don't want to have to deal with half a dozen specialists. We want a doctor who can diagnose the entire body and who can treat all of it except in rare instances."

They got just such a doctor. Youthful, Seattle-reared Russell Quay heard through a drug salesman in 1949 that Stanford needed a physician. He investigated and liked what he found. Four years later, in 1953, Dr. Quay and his Chicago-reared wife had built a modern new home in Stanford and a new and modern office.

"When I was finishing my medical training it was the general belief that there was something more glamorous and exciting about practicing in a big city," Dr. Quay said. "Young doctors wanted to be near the concerts, plays and cultural things. We are as close to them as we need to be. We can enjoy the best cultural offerings of Bloomington, Chicago and St. Louis, yet we live in the country. I think the country offers a wonderful opportunity for a doctor. I became a physician because I like people, and here in the country you get to know Grandma, Aunt Minnie, the importance of corn planting time—the things that make a community go. You have to work harder. I keep office hours two nights a week, but the satisfactions are worth it. In the country you have more chance for individual expression, more opportunity for living. I think it would be fine if every young doctor

could get some experience in general practice in the country, even if he planned eventually to go on into specialization. As for Mrs. Quay and myself, we like it here for keeps. It is a wonderful place to rear a family and I hope our two girls, aged four and one, can go to school right here—all the way through high school."

Dr. Quay has access to Bloomington's three hospitals, and uses their facilities. Both he and Mrs. Quay enjoy the cultural advantages of Bloomington. But they do not live apart from the people of Stanford. When they entertain, they entertain their neighbors and friends of the community. They take an active part in church and community affairs. The experience of Dr. Quay bears out what many medical people are beginning to believe: that there is not so much of a shortage of doctors as there is poor distribution of the supply. They tend to pile up in the cities and, in the view of city-bred Dr. and Mrs. Quay, thus miss their best opportunity for a full and useful life.[1]

Stanford residents also asked in their questionnaire analysis for more employment. Julius Spangler, a local farmer, did set up a small gate manufacturing plant which has enlarged its circle of business tremendously. It has been operated by a son, Everett, since Mr. Spangler died. This is exactly the type of business needed in small communities. More similar enterprises are badly needed in Stanford to employ the young people.

Citizens said there was a lack of recreation back in 1946, especially for the young people. Young people showed the way finally by having a good look at their assets. The Stanford Community High School is located on a ten-acre landscaped tract. It provides an excellent setting for summer activities. Youths from the three churches formed a United Christian Youth Action group. Their purpose was to unify church young people and work on community projects. They saw the macadamized portion of the elementary school playground going to waste during the summer. It wasn't difficult to get permission from school board officials to line off this area for a tennis court. Portable net supports were provided so as not to damage the playground. It was an excellent example of how to make the most of existing assets through cooperation.

The community again turned to the school to solve more of its recreational needs. The athletic field was lighted and a softball team

[1] Dr. Quay died of poliomyelitis January 3, 1954.

was organized. The team plays regular games during the summer to a large crowd of boosters. The event affords an opportunity for town and farm people to visit and to rally around their common interest in the softball team.

Another recreational activity which took in the entire community was a horse show staged by the Stanford Horseman's Association in 1949. It attracted 1000 spectators—more than the population of the entire township—and provided a highlight of the year. Such events staged at intervals often provide more real recreation than a permanent program which taxes the imagination and energy of the citizenry to keep it on its feet.

Stanford people asked for many things they don't need or couldn't support. These included a motion picture theater, a creamery and poultry store, a shoe store, resident dentist, dry cleaning and laundry plant, daily milk delivery, bakery, and greenhouse. Bloomington businesses, fourteen miles away, could provide these supplies and services better, and the people of Stanford decided to let it go at that after some examination. It was as important to discover what they could not afford as it was to set out to get what they could afford.

III

In the civic field Stanford people got most of what they asked for. They didn't get a sewage system because no engineer has worked out an adequate system at a price the community could afford. Residents still depend upon septic tanks. They did get a drainage system and a weekly garbage and rubbish collection service for the nominal weekly fee of twenty-five cents per family. The community also has a fire district with village and rural firefighting equipment. They have the water softening plant they said they wanted in 1946.

They didn't get the new community center building they said they wanted, but they are rediscovering the fact that they already had one in the high school building. Neither did they get the park they wanted, but the ten-acre tract at the high school serves that purpose well. Stanford has no community library either, but here again the school library is open to the entire community. Much of the benefit of the survey was the re-examination of facilities already available and not fully used.

Stanford actually got most of what the citizens said they wanted in

1946. The township is working on a program to be the first in Illinois to have every road in the township blacktopped.

Stanford's big deficit is employment. Its people must go to Bloomington, Peoria, and Pekin to find work. If Stanford grows, it is likely to be as a commuter town. And to be a commuter town it must have good schools. The school is the key to Stanford's future. No one knows that better than Homer Caton, and no one ever fought any harder to keep Stanford's Community High School. Established in 1920, it was one of the first in the area to offer fully accredited courses in agriculture, home economics, and shop. Back in 1929 students in the school's vocational class built a twenty-car garage for the use of those who drove to school. The school is the pride and joy of the entire community. Yet there is grave doubt as to whether Stanford can keep the school.

The McLean County School Survey Committee, established in accordance with state law, studied the entire county school system soon after World War II and originally recommended that Stanford high school students go to nearby towns in a reorganization program. Stanford was to retain an elementary school. Stanford people, under the leadership of Mr. Caton, fought back fiercely. The survey committee retreated in its final report and left the high school in Stanford. But the fight was not won. Illinois law requires that a unit school district must have a minimum of 2000 population and a minimum assessed tax evaluation of $6 million. Stanford Community High School's district falls short of the population figure by at least 600 but the community has money to spare on assessed valuation for tax purposes, thanks to the rich farm land. With a small enrollment of fifty-five in high school, Stanford has a student per capita cost of around $700 per year as compared with around $400 for Bloomington. But, because of the rich tax base and the relatively few students, Stanford's tax rate for both elementary and high schools is $1.18 per $100 assessed valuation as against $1.45 for Bloomington.

IV

Mr. Caton has been fighting for years to get the high school district law changed to establish population minimums of 1000 and property valuation minimums of $4 million. He has not succeeded. The Stan-

ford Parent-Teacher Association has taken up the fight. In late 1952 its members unanimously approved a formal resolution setting forth their position and asking the Illinois Congress of Parents and Teachers for assistance in getting state law changed.

"It is now impossible under the law for communities of less than 2000 population or less than $6,000,000 assessed valuation to form a unit district," the resolution said. "We recognize the advantages obtainable to all schools under the unit district" but "many communities are so situated that it is neither desirable nor feasible to unite with other communities to form a unit district. Consolidation of large areas results in weakening communities and widening the breach between home and school which is incompatible with the objectives of the Parent-Teacher Association."

The resolution cited the charter of the state P-TA organization calling for "constructive work for better parenthood, better homes, better schools and better communities" and the by-laws which set forth as objectives "to raise the standards of home life."

The state organization was asked pointedly to reverse its position as favoring the larger unit school district and "suspend its program in opposition to the small schools of Illinois" and it was suggested that "the P-TA's legislative program consider the caliber of education offered rather than trying to set standards of education by population and assessed values."

The Stanford organization asked specifically for support of the legislation sponsored by Mr. Caton to lower the population minimum to 1000 and the assessed valuation minimum to $4 million. They also want the average daily attendance figure kept at thirty-six instead of being boosted to sixty. The reply of the Illinois Congress of Parents and Teachers as prepared by Mrs. Isaac A. Loose of the Legislative and Citizenship Committee, was both frank and detailed. In a letter directed to D. A. Tyler, principal of the Stanford Community High School, Mrs. Loose said:

> Today the number of communities unable to form community unit districts, because of being unable to meet the present requirements, is small and steadily decreasing. On November 1, 1952, 263 new community unit districts have been organized in compliance with the terms of the Community Unit District Act. More are in the process of reorganization.

Reorganization does not necessarily mean the removal of school buildings from the community. If the buildings are adequate, they continue to be used, either as grade schools or junior high schools. These buildings should continue to be used as community centers.

Pupil transportation and the inability, because of distance, of the pupils to be home at the noon hour are possible factors, contributing to the widening of the breach between home and school, in the thinking of your members. The Legislation Policies Committee realizes that the children, in many cases, have been obliged to spend too much time away from home because of the length of the school day from pickup time in the morning to release time in the evening. Districts are working on this problem and solving it through better routing and more buses. Even in the smaller districts, transportation has been a serious problem because of high costs. An important added service in community unit districts has been the addition of the school lunch if that service has not been available. No greater breach should exist between home and school in a large district than in a small one and parents will always find it necessary to work in close harmony and cooperation with the school authorities to secure the best kind of school program.

The School Problems Commission No. 2 [created by the Illinois Legislature] will recommend to the Legislature that the present requirements for setting up a community district be maintained. . . .

The Legislation Policies Committee agrees with you in thinking that the most important consideration is the consideration of the caliber of education. The decision about maintenance of standards should be determined by the effect that maintenance or lowering of standards would have upon the educational welfare of our children.

What progress has been made in education since 1947? [Reorganization began in 1947.] The levels of educational programs in selected schools of the state have been studied by the research staffs of both School Problems Commissions Nos. 1 and 2 and the following figures show the progress made from 1949 to 1951—

Elementary Schools	*1949*	*1951*
Inferior	47 %	28.5%
Foundation	50	66
Superior	4	5
High Schools		
Inferior	22.6	19
Foundation	69.6	72.8
Superior	7.7	7.9

The School Problems Commission reports that 50% of all schools averaging less than 60 in average daily attendance and almost 70% of all high schools less than 100 in average daily attendance are classed as inferior. This is what concerns the Legislation Policies Committee.

The Legislation Policies Committee feels that there is a minimum number of pupils below which we cannot go and have a good school program. A population of 2,000 gives approximately an enrollment of 100 in the high school and from 200 to 300 in the elementary school. A smaller number will not receive the well-rounded program which prepares for family, occupational, or further educational life. An assessed valuation of $6,000,000 requirement is little enough to educate the pupils in a district. If this valuation is lowered additional burdens will be heaped upon the taxpayers and the state.

Although reorganization has only been in effect since 1947, a study, concerning community unit districts, made by the Illinois Education Association, reports the following progress made:

1. Improvements have been made to buildings, including classrooms, cafeterias, gymnasiums, industrial art shops, farm shops, music rooms, and homemaking rooms.
2. Improvement in classrooms, such as lighting equipment, window shades, redecoration, new chalkboards, new floors, etc.
3. Addition of vocal and instrumental music, art, science, physical education, homemaking, speech correction, and other subjects to the elementary curriculum, and music, driver training, agriculture, public speaking, chemistry, homemaking, speech correction, etc. to the curriculum at the high school level.
4. Additional extra-class opportunities such as more clubs, more planned recreation, school paper, dramatics, additional sports, student council, and the year book.
5. Additional services provided such as music supervisor, audio-visual aids, director, speech correctionist, school nurse, truant officer, custodian, director of remedial reading, guidance director, etc.
6. Additional instructional aids, such as strip and movie projectors, tape recorders, record players, radios, typewriters, library volumes, maps, etc.
7. Increases made in teachers' salaries.

Because the Illinois Congress of Parents and Teachers is concerned with the welfare of all children and because the lowering of requirements for setting up community unit districts would encourage the break-up of community unit districts already established; because it would discourage high school consolidation now being considered; because it would provide

for the continuation of small high schools not providing educational opportunities that should be provided; therefore—The Legislation Policies Committee of the Illinois Congress of Parents and Teachers cannot approve the resolution adopted by the Stanford P-TA, Sept. 9, 1952, and will actively continue to support the maintenance of the present requirements of the standards set up by law; namely, population of 2,000 and an assessed valuation of $6,000,000 for forming new community unit districts.

If small districts, unable to meet the requirements for setting up unit districts, want the advantages of a unit district consideration might be given to the election of the same members to both school boards. This has been done very successfully in some districts. [Stanford has separate boards, districts, and tax levies for elementary and high schools.]

Many who have written us about the lowering of requirements are chiefly concerned with the retention of the small high school in the community. The fear of losing the high school results from the law stating that after July 1, 1955, high schools not enrolling 60 pupils in average daily attendance will not be eligible to receive state aid.

At one time the law was interpreted to mean that the receiving of state aid was a necessary qualification to receive recognition. The Attorney-General has ruled, and possibly there will be further clarification from the Legislature, that *the failure to receive state aid will not disqualify for recognition.* [The Legislature did take action to clarify this point in 1953.] The loss of state aid will, in most cases, mean only the loss of flat grants [$7 per pupil in average daily attendance since the districts maintaining small high schools are generally wealthy enough so that they are not eligible for equalization].

What will happen to the small high school after July 1, 1955? The small high school, under 60 in enrollment, will not be eligible to receive state aid, but it may continue to operate as long as it receives recognition from the Office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. It will continue to receive state money for school lunch, transportation, and vocational courses.

Actually, Stanford is not in danger of having the state take away the high school as many citizens believe. The most that could happen to them under present law is the loss of $7 per high school pupil per year. That would amount to only $400 annually, or a little more than half the amount Stanford now pays per pupil per year. There still is a lurking fear that at some future time state academic recognition of the

high school will be tied in with whether it qualifies for state aid.

That is the problem. Stanford revolves around its high school. It serves as community center, recreation center, library, and park. The people are as unanimous as a democratic community can be in their desire to retain the school at whatever cost. Mr. Caton has confused them somewhat as to the importance of the paltry $400 annual state aid, but he has united them behind their school. He was successful in the 1953 session of the general assembly in getting the effective date of the law requiring average daily attendance of sixty moved back from 1955 to 1957. In order to get this victory he dropped his bill to reduce the size and the assessed valuation minimums for unit districts. By 1957 he hopes that the postwar bulge in the birth rate will have reached high school and that Stanford can attain an average daily attendance of sixty.

V

Stanford has not been consistent in its educational fight, but what it has done has been in a fight for survival. Stanford was one of the first to form a consolidated elementary school district and draw the children from ten one-room rural schools into the village system. It was for keeps. As soon as court permission could be obtained the rural school properties were sold at auction and destroyed or remodeled for other use. People of the rural school districts involved voted in favor of the consolidation, and they appear to like it. But if Stanford had been entirely consistent, it might well have fought for the independence of these rural districts. It didn't. The people voted early in 1953 to build an addition to the elementary school at a cost of $250,000. Stanford's rural schools are gone forever.

Illinois schools have merged into unit districts at a terrific pace since World War II. While the need of larger districts was urgent, the speed with which the transition came and the confusion which it brought have left deep scars. Parents in rural areas don't like the idea of their children spending as much as an hour morning and evening on a school bus. If a rural youngster is in a school play or on an athletic team, he often has to arrange his own transportation. Most parents appreciate the broader courses offered and the benefits derived from somewhat keener competition in the classroom. But in

Stanford the whole problem of community survival is tied up in the high school district. As goes the high school, so goes the community, the citizens believe. Homer Caton has the support always attracted to the underdog in a fight. And there is little reason for denying Stanford her school if the people are willing to pay the price for top quality education.

But Stanford will not be safe, even if the high school is retained. At best that would give her a much needed breathing spell. The problem of attracting more and younger families remains, either by encouraging job-giving business and industry at home, or by making the village attractive to commuters who can choose from half a dozen communities. "We don't have much of a chance to do either until we get the school secure," Mr. Caton says. "New families are not going to move to Stanford and then send their children to a school ten or fifteen miles away by bus. They will establish their homes in the community where the school is located. Neither will local people or outsiders establish new businesses here if we have no high school. Good educational opportunities are rated high by industrial firms seeking new locations."

There is a growing desire on the part of families to have more living space. A Gallup Poll a few years ago revealed that a majority of those questioned in city, town, and village felt that they would be happier on the farm. Villages like Stanford could take advantage of this urge by establishing subdivisions of acre tracts where commuter families would have room for children to romp, and for growing part of their food supply as well. No move has been made in that direction.

Stanford's community council has virtually ceased to function. Many families already consider Bloomington their center of activities. Stanford is being defended in large part by staunch Republican, devout Presbyterian Homer Caton. He is fighting with determination and persistence. The same spirit which has driven him to attend Sunday School for forty-three consecutive years without missing a single Sunday is being put to work in behalf of his beloved Stanford. But Stanford needs more than defense. It needs virile, aggressive growth. The betterment program has shown the way. It has established the fact that a community of 500 has an uphill fight for survival.

"Well, in our country," said Alice, "you'd generally get to somewhere else—if you ran very fast for a long time. . . ."

"A slow sort of country!" said the Queen. "Now here, you see, it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run twice as fast as that!"

"I'd rather not try, please!" said Alice. "I'm quite content to stay here. . . ."

Homer Caton, age sixty-six, will need a lot of help if Stanford is to run twice as fast as it has during the last three decades.

CHAPTER 16

Colfax Insures Her School

COLFAX HAS won the battle Stanford is still fighting. Colfax completed a $700,000 high school in 1953 for a unit district including much farm land and the smaller villages of Cooksville and Anchor. It wasn't without growing pains.

The effort to organize a unit district with Colfax as the center began during World War II as an outgrowth of recommendations made by the McLean County School Survey Committee. The first proposal was to include Colfax, Cooksville and Anchor, and a fourth village, Cropsey. The law required that citizens in all four communities must approve the merger. Cropsey rebelled and later joined another unit district. The next effort was to set up a district without Cropsey. All three communities in the proposed district faced a building problem. Each had made tentative plans to construct new schools. None would have had anything like the minimum enrollment of 150 recommended by an Illinois Agricultural Association committee on schools. Any one would have had difficulty providing the minimum courses listed by this agricultural committee back in 1944: Home economics, business training, manual arts, shop work, and the usual college preparatory courses.

There was considerable sentiment in favor of a consolidated unit, but each community in the proposed district wanted the school. How to solve that problem without developing deep resentments was a challenge. The Colfax Community Council took this under consideration. Ralph French, who was operating a motion picture house in Colfax and had an appreciation of the value of entertainment as a unifying force, advanced an idea.

Why not organize a community band to give concerts in Colfax

during the summer? A band committee was formed and a music instructor was held over during vacation and an invitation was issued to all the children of Cooksville and Anchor to participate. The band had only moderate success the first year, but the second year saw it grow to sixty members made up of youngsters not only from the three towns in the proposed district but from other nearby towns. The band committee was expanded to take in people from all the participating communities.

It was natural that parents would organize to help provide uniforms for the band members. The Band Boosters Club brought all the people of the various villages and farms together in a common purpose. The band became the most popular project in the community betterment program. It also was an excellent beginning in the development of the larger community.

By the time the people got around to voting on the unit school district, Colfax was the natural choice. There was opposition, and still is, but the new unit district was approved and today it is well accepted. The high school has an enrollment of 150 which is expected to grow to 200. There are elementary attendance units in Cooksville and Anchor. Beginning with the 1953 fall term the junior high school for the entire district was established in Colfax with six grade attendance units in Cooksville, Anchor, and Colfax.

The people of Colfax had some appreciation of the feeling of those in outlying areas when the unit district was formed. With this in mind it was suggested that the new high school be given an entirely new name. Calling it Colfax High School would only offend the people of Cooksville and Anchor. A contest was conducted and the name Octavia was selected. Now the new $700,000 Octavia High School in Colfax is the property of all the people of the district. The high school parent-teacher association chapter covers the entire district and brings the people together regularly on a common ground.

Before the new school was completed each of the three communities had crowded buildings and inadequate equipment. To add to the problems, the Colfax High School gymnasium burned. The Colfax basketball team had to borrow a gymnasium from surrounding towns in which to play "home" games. Despite these handicaps, the school had one of the best basketball teams in McLean County in 1952-53.

Superintendent Charles W. Clark said loyalty to the team did more to develop a unified spirit in the entire district than anything since the organization of the band.

Every effort is being made to retain the identity of Cooksville and Anchor. In all three towns ample school grounds double as community parks where summer recreation includes the ever popular softball. Mothers' clubs at the three elementary schools keep unity among the parents in these areas.

The No. 1 problem listed in the social-cultural field when the betterment survey was made in Colfax in 1947 was that of the schools. It has been solved to the satisfaction of most of the citizens, and the solution has done more to insure the future of Colfax than any other project in the entire betterment program.

II

Need of recreation for the young people ranked high in the survey conducted by the Colfax Community Council. Efforts to meet that need have fallen into the familiar pattern of recreational activity in small communities. In 1947 the high school students took the initiative in setting up a rather elaborate summer recreational program. Funds were raised by individual donations and through social money-making events. Activities included roller skating and swimming parties, street dancing, and picnics. School grounds were used for center activities. The program went along fine for a year or two and then died of its own weight. School officials held over a physical education instructor for a summer to direct recreation, but attendance above the elementary grade level was disappointing.

This has caused Colfax citizens to have a new look at recreation. They have discovered that the schools fill the bill adequately during nine months of the year. Summer church Bible schools attract children under ten. Youngsters from the age of ten in this farm-centered community are steeped in 4-H Club activity. This includes some work and some play, but it is all recreation. Local, county, and state fairs keep them busy from the time school closes in the spring until it opens in the fall. They have to grow their crops, raise their livestock, make their garments, or preserve food for exhibits at the fairs, and then spend several days in competition. If they win they go on to the larger

fair, ending up eventually in the state fair and the International Livestock Exposition.

There are countless family reunions, vacations, excursions, and festivals. Colfax has had singular success with festivals and similar events. A home talent show attracted hundreds of spectators and offered opportunities for creative effort for the young people. It was work and fun for all, and it had a termination point. There was no necessity for trying to keep the project alive indefinitely. That has its advantages for the small community. For certain types of recreation, such as swimming, it proved much better for Colfax to take youngsters to Pontiac, Bloomington, or Gibson City for their water activity than to try to renovate an old pool in Colfax.

Colfax is located off the beaten path. It has paved highway connections with Bloomington, but the route does not have commercial bus and freight service. There is no convenient rail transportation. Improved transportation was one of the projects the citizens requested in their replies to the betterment survey. Efforts are still being made to get commercial bus and freight lines to make a circle route through Colfax.

People have a way of overcoming handicaps such as these if they put their minds to it. Charles E. Hicks concluded that the way to solve the freight problem for Colfax was to go to Bloomington after the freight. He made regular trips for years and hauled everything from pets to tractors. He instituted a buying service, which ran the gamut from a spool of thread to an evergreen. Private delivery service and the universal use of the family automobile cut into Mr. Hicks' business and he found it necessary to cut his schedule down from daily trips to three a week. When he retired in 1953 there was no eagerness to replace him. The freight must get there in some way. State sales tax reports show Colfax standing up well in comparison with some larger communities in the county. Colfax still needs better public transportation.

Colfax citizens said they wanted better fire protection. Rural fire districts are needed in most farming areas. Conventional equipment for fighting fires in town is not adequate on farms. There must be equipment to pump water from wells, creeks, lakes, or ponds. Farmers must be educated to the need of providing adequate water for fire

fighting. Rural fire districts carry on such educational programs. Maps of each farm and the roads leading to it, location of all buildings and water supplies, are kept by efficient fire district personnel. With farm buildings and equipment representing investments of $10,000 to $75,000, every precaution is needed to protect them from fire. Loss of grain, hay, and livestock by fire can be extremely costly. A good fire district is cheap insurance.

Despite this need the Colfax community defeated the first effort to establish a fire district. Here the value of the community council was proved. It is an organization with continuity which could keep the issue alive. Such a council can make a new approach if necessary to accomplish the same end. That is the course adopted in Colfax. The community now has a volunteer fire district with modern equipment to fight fires either on the farm or in town. The Octavia Fire District is a private corporation open to any citizen who wishes to become a member and buy a $50 share in the corporation to help finance it. Destruction of the old high school gymnasium by fire, an $80,000 fire in the business district, and several farm fires provided the stimulants necessary to put over the fire district idea.

III

Colfax citizens were severe in their criticism of the local weekly newspaper, the Colfax *Press*. Comments like these showed up frequently in their questionnaires: "Better weekly newspaper service is needed; more local news items, less boiler-plate copy, more newspaper advertising." "Home owned newspaper would be more likely to print local news fully." "Newspaper should be more of a positive factor in boosting all Colfax interests."

These comments, along with the others, were published in *The Pantagraph*. A. B. Woolley, editor and publisher of the Colfax *Press*, struck back. He published a bitter editorial attack against *The Pantagraph*. Said Editor Woolley:

> The Bloomington *Pantagraph* published an article in which, among other things, it stated that Colfax needed a home-owned newspaper. Before we purchased the Colfax *Press*, we were urged by Colfax merchants to buy the paper, as it was in a badly run-down condition, and was apparently getting worse each week. We not only purchased the newspaper plant,

but also real estate, and have spent thousands of dollars with Colfax merchants. We have always employed a manager who made Colfax his home. Furthermore, we reduced the price of advertising almost one-half from the price charged by the home-owner. As to coverage, we are sending out more copies of the Colfax *Press* than were being sent out when we bought it. We have been treated fine by the Colfax people, and we know we have given them a newspaper of which they can be proud. If anyone doubts this, come in and we will show you what you were getting before we bought the Press.

Now a word or two to *The Pantagraph* and the editor of which, H. Clay Tate, seems to have taken a great interest in the welfare of Colfax. How much does *The Pantagraph* contribute to Colfax and vicinity? Do they pay any taxes here, or contribute to the welfare of the community in any way? Did they treat the merchants of Bloomington as fair as we treated the merchants of Colfax? Of course not. We were told by a prominent merchant of Bloomington that when *The Pantagraph* purchased the Bloomington *Bulletin* (1927) they immediately raised their advertising rate 25 per cent, even though the merchant had been asked how he would like to pay less for his advertising, in case the deal was made to take over the opposition newspaper.

While we are on the subject of what is needed in towns and cities, there is no doubt but that Bloomington needs another daily newspaper—and the Bloomington merchants who are being pushed around by *The Pantagraph*, wouldn't even care whether it was home owned or not.

Mr. Woolley was good and mad and he was getting it all off his chest. However, some of the citizens pointed out to him that *The Pantagraph* did not say Colfax needed a better newspaper; it merely reported the fact that some Colfax people said they did. *The Pantagraph* did not reply at all. It could have said that merchants, to get full coverage, had to advertise in both *The Bulletin* and *The Pantagraph* before the merger. They got the same coverage in one newspaper after the merger. Their rate in *The Pantagraph* saved them hundreds of thousands of dollar in advertising as against what they paid to both newspapers. Mr. Woolley wouldn't find many Bloomington merchants who want another Bloomington newspaper today. Even Colfax readers seem to like it. Circulation there increased from 397 to 475 in the decade between 1942 and 1952. That covers 85 per cent of the homes in Colfax and rural routes out of Colfax. The community is getting

coverage from *The Pantagraph*—and that is service to the entire community.

The bad feeling over the local paper is unfortunate none the less. At least part of the fault lies with the citizens themselves. They are expecting more from a small weekly newspaper than it can deliver, and possibly more than they are willing to support in advertising. Some of the merchants say they would advertise more if *The Press* had more circulation and reader appeal. *The Press* has difficulty in developing more reader appeal and increasing circulation without added revenue.

Certainly part of the fault lies with Mr. Woolley, who could have capitalized upon this expression of opinion to get the kind of support he must have to publish a good local newspaper. He could have been more aggressive in taking full advantage of the news developments resulting from the improvement program. His local manager could have been more aggressive in boosting the program. Neither side appears willing yet to initiate proceedings which might lead to a better understanding, a better newspaper, and a better community.

IV

Raymond Rathbun does not give a first impression of being a leader. He is retiring to the point of bashfulness. He has trouble with spoken English. He is short and round and he talks barely above a whisper. Yet he has been mayor for sixteen years and he has been a strong force in every Colfax improvement during that time. He has managed to get every street in the village except four short blocks paved. He worked long and hard to get a modern water softening system for Colfax. He negotiated a contract with a private utility company to construct a complete new street lighting system. All this has been done without putting the village in the red. It ended the fiscal year of 1952 with a cash balance in excess of $5000. When people of the community showed lack of interest in the village election, Raymond Rathbun went out and persuaded a young attorney and two young businessmen, all under thirty, to accept posts on the village board.

During the period of its betterment program Colfax has improved its business district, added a subdivision, acquired a fertilizer plant, germinated a builders' supply plant, built a number of new homes,

arranged for laundry and dry cleaning service from nearby communities, obtained an electrical and supply shop, provided for the feed and seed needs of surrounding farms, moved the Cooksville State Bank bodily to Colfax and set it up in new quarters as the Peoples State Bank of Colfax, acquired a plumber, machine shop, and beauty parlor services. The people said they wanted a veterinary back in 1947. They have one today. They said they needed a young resident attorney. They have one. They are still seeking a dentist. They acquired a custom spraying service for farmers.

Most of the services and facilities they really wanted have been provided. Those requested but not forthcoming, such as a furniture store, a swimming pool, and a broader selection of merchandise, do not fall within the scope of the small village. These things can be provided better by a large center like Bloomington.

The community council has been dominated by the businessmen and village officials from the start. Much of the time the chamber of commerce under the guidance of Mayor Rathbun did the work. The interest of the women has never been utilized, and their cooperation has not been actively sought. While their influence in the school merger was much in evidence, the woman power of Colfax could be put to work to carry progress much farther. Neither have the young people been taken into the ranks of community builders except when they asserted themselves independently of the community council. Great progress could be expected if the base of the community council could be broadened and the membership given a real part in the various projects. The rift with the local newspaper also has handicapped progress.

But, despite its shortcomings, Colfax, an isolated, strictly rural service center, is in the process of emerging as the core of an enlarged community. It has held its own in population while many other villages in the area declined. The betterment program gave it a needed lift. It should be in a position to push ahead in the next decades.

Contrary to what many would expect, Cooksville and Anchor have not withered on the vine, although their eventual fate may not be determined for years to come. They are demonstrating that even the smallest village has a vitality that cannot be underestimated. Human will cannot be measured accurately in a column of statistics.

CHAPTER 17

Roanoke Would Not Die

T. P. "UNCLE TOMMY" Pettigrew, editor and publisher of the Roanoke *Review* for sixty years, did not escape criticism when the replies to Roanoke's questionnaires came in from the citizens. Better newspaper coverage was suggested. Specifically, the people asked for more local news items, more community promotions in special news items, and more leadership in community development.

Uncle Tommy didn't get his dander up. He said he would do the best he could. He didn't own a newspaper printing plant. Every week he prepared news and ad copy and took it to nearby Metamora to have his paper printed. He watched the process closely and brought back his printed papers to be put in the mail at Roanoke. He relied heavily upon townspeople for contributions. Any copy they furnished him in the way of community building was published. He attended every meeting of the Roanoke Civic Association, sparkplug of the betterment program. It was his special privilege to move adjournment, which he always did by including in the motion that the assembled group stand and sing: "God Be With You Till We Meet Again."

Uncle Tommy died early in 1953 and all Roanoke mourned. Miss Marjorie Thompson, one of the key figures in Roanoke's improvement surge, purchased the *Review* from his heirs. The local weekly newspaper under her management is a strong force for community development. It serves as a voice of all the people, although Miss Thompson has discovered that a positive newspaper policy does not please all the people all the time. That is a discovery Colfax people will make if they ever get a home-owned newspaper with an aggressive publisher. Miss Thompson got her taste of journalism by report-

ing Roanoke news to *The Pantagraph*. She has continued that practice since purchasing the *Review*. She finds no conflict in the interests of the two newspapers. That's the kind of spirit Roanoke people have. That is one reason Roanoke has made such a remarkable comeback after the town's coal mine, which was its main support, fell victim to obsolescence. Roanoke was not alone in this economic crisis. The thin veins of poor coal became unprofitable through most of Central Illinois. Roanoke could have gone the way of Cardiff.

Cardiff, which is not much more than an hour's drive from Roanoke, was once a community of 1500 hardy, hard-working Welshmen. Its economy was based on coal mining. Employment was good for a time and the community flourished. Choice lots sold back in pre-inflation days for $1000. Yet by mid-1943 at the peak of employment and national prosperity, Cardiff was a ghost town. Its once flourishing stores and homes are gone. Crumbling sidewalks lose themselves in the rank weeds. The bank's safe rusts away in a bramble patch which was once a thriving business corner. Cardiff's coal mine could not meet the competition of the big commercial operations and the inroads of new fuels. Cardiff's hardy Welshmen were dedicated to mining. They did not choose to become grocers, garagemen, carpenters, electricians, mill operators, feed makers, hardware dealers, and fertilizer salesmen. The land surrounding them is just as rich as most land in Central Illinois. Cardiff did not have a revival. When the mine failed, the citizens moved away. Now Cardiff is a memory.

Roanoke took a different course. It was down at the heels in the depression days of the 1930's. Many of its citizens were out of jobs. The approach and outbreak of World War II gave some respite. Roanoke citizens had time to catch their wind and determine their future course. The Roanoke Civic Association was organized. Businessmen, farmers, housewives, educators, and professional men joined together in a determination to make Roanoke a good community without a coal mine. The community was picking up momentum when Roanoke asked to be included in the Central Illinois Community Betterment Program. They do not hesitate to credit the program with much of their success. In 1949 the Business Men's Association passed a resolution commending the author, Professor Anderson, and the institutions they represent for their leadership in behalf

of the small rural community. "We recognize the fact that without this total effort, the resultant goodwill for our community engendered locally, statewise and nationally, could not have been possible," the resolution stated. A community meeting was held to pay tribute to those from *The Pantagraph* and the University of Illinois who had given them encouragement and consultation in their broad program of community improvement.

Roanoke had a remarkable decade of progress. Without outside aid, without special legislation, without grants or bequests the people of Roanoke lifted themselves by their bootstraps through cooperative self-analysis, self-determination, and self-help. In ten years Roanoke had a 35 per cent increase in population, jumping from 1000 to nearly 1400. Approximately half of all the young people graduating from the Roanoke-Benson Unit District High School each year can be absorbed into Roanoke industry and business. A large percentage of the others stay on the farm. Some get employment in Peoria. Between 175 and 200 Roanoke citizens are employed in Peoria firms, but they are not bedroom citizens. For the most part they are natives of the community and they take an active part in community affairs.

II

Roanoke's development has been on a broad base. The substantial, dependable, feet-on-the-ground character of the Mennonites, who predominate in its population, caused this community not to overlook the basic character of economic development. For the most part they concentrated on new business and industry that would supplement and service the farming interests of the community. They have to show for their ten-year effort the Prairie Alfalfa Dehydrating Plant, which is still growing, the Eureka Milling Company which manufactures poultry and livestock products of their own development, the Woodford County Farm Bureau oil, feed, and fertilizer distribution station for the entire county, the Illinois Building Material Supply Company which manufactures concrete blocks and similar material, the Ulrich Manufacturing Company which manufactures farm machinery and other mechanical equipment shipped round the world, the Altorfer Brothers Company which subcontracts on washing machines.

New business and services in this same period include the Peoples State Bank in a completely remodeled building, a jewelry store, two beauty shops, a cold storage locker plant, a men's clothing store, a new garage in a new building, a new automobile sales agency, a new moving picture theater built since World War II and in the process of being remodeled in 1953, a new implement company in a new building, a shoe repair shop, a resident attorney, a new service station, a new restaurant, an enlarged hardware and farm supply store, a lumber yard with display rooms and offices in a new building, a new dental clinic in a new building, the Roanoke Fire Apparatus Company, a new funeral home, and a dry cleaning service.

How did Roanoke do it? First they created a climate in which economic enterprise could thrive. Gene Bertschi, graduate of Roanoke High School, was doing well in a Peoria firm when he decided to go back home and start the Illinois Building Material Supply. He likes the life in a small town. He believes in the value of independent living. He could have gone to the top in big business. Instead he prefers to build on his own. It has paid off for him. Still a young man, he has a lucrative and growing business.

R. W. Ulrich, who grew up in Woodford County, started a little manufacturing business in a Southern Illinois town. He wanted to go back home because he liked the integrity, industry, and independence of Roanoke people. He started in an old garage building in the early 1940's. Now he has a fine new plant with the old garage remodeled into offices that would do credit to a Wall Street firm. He employs some 250 of his friends and neighbors.

People like Gene Bertschi and R. W. Ulrich get a friendly welcome in Roanoke. They find good dependable workers, good neighbors, and good living there. They received the backing of the whole community through such organizations as the Roanoke Civic Association from the beginning of their business ventures.

Roanoke has not lagged in civic improvement. Since 1946 the citizens have constructed 119 new homes in several new subdivisions. Today 35 per cent of all Roanoke residences are less than ten years old. Building is still in progress. There are virtually no homes for rent in Roanoke. Many people who would like to live there are forced to reside elsewhere until they can build or buy a home.

Every street in Roanoke has concrete curbs and gutters and blacktop paving, except in some developing subdivisions. The village water system has been extended and a softening plant constructed. Year-round tax-supported garbage collection has been established with weekly collections during the winter and twice-a-week collections in summer. A completely new street lighting system has been installed in the business district through voluntary donations of businessmen. A village fire tax was approved and new fire fighting equipment acquired. Rural people are organized into a voluntary fire district with equipment housed in a new Roanoke fire house. Public rest rooms were constructed in the new fire house and firemen serve as custodians.

A committee of citizens worked with the township assessor to set up a new and equalized assessment and evaluation policy which was accepted by the entire community. The people did not object to paying taxes for the facilities and services they wanted, but they made sure that they were paying no more than their just share.

In 1953 Roanoke adopted a comprehensive zoning ordinance setting aside specific areas for business such as retail shops and services, heavy industry, light industry, and residence. Standards are set for sewage and water facilities. Off-street parking space is required of new business and industry. Residence lots must be at least 8500 square feet in size with a frontage of 70 feet. A 90-foot frontage is recommended for new subdivisions. A ten-man committee spent two years drawing up the ordinance after consulting with the Bureau of Community Planning at the University of Illinois, independent city engineers and city planners. Under Illinois law the ordinance has some effect in regulating land use for a mile and a half beyond the village limits. A five-man appeal board is set up to hear complaints arising under the ordinance. Existing property and subdivisions laid out but not built up prior to the passage of the ordinance are not affected, but new growth of the community will take a pattern outlined in the lengthy and detailed document.

III

Cultural development has not been overlooked. Citizens raise money to pay drivers of school buses to take Roanoke children to Lake

Bloomington for summer Red Cross swimming instruction. A Boy Scout troop and a Girl Scout Brownie troop have been organized. Unlike many other Central Illinois communities, Roanoke did not take to softball. Citizens preferred the regulation national sport of "hard" baseball. The entire community supports the team which plays a full schedule, with home games in the community park. The Roanoke team responded by winning the Tri-County championship in 1952.

The people of Roanoke stumbled upon a way to turn a community liability into an asset. For years the southern approach to the village has been disfigured by a huge pile of slag from the abandoned coal mine. It juts high into the air like a miniature mountain of lava. Exhaustive tests have been made in an effort to find something that would grow on the heap. Agronomists and horticulturists have concluded that it is entirely barren. Roanoke had about decided to level off the area and utilize the space for some civic purpose. Notices to that effect appeared in the Roanoke *Review*. Then mail began to arrive from Roanoke young men in military service in all parts of the world. They had known the ugly pile as Jumbo since their childhood. They had "explored" Jumbo as Indians, cops and robbers, and wild game hunters. They said emphatically that they wanted Jumbo preserved. Roanoke would not be like Roanoke without old Jumbo. So Jumbo still stands sentinel to Roanoke's approaches. Each Christmas season a lighted star twelve feet high perches atop Jumbo Mountain. At Easter time a huge cross is to stand where the Christmas star held forth. On the Fourth of July community fireworks are exploded from Jumbo's peak, and people in the yards and on their farms from miles around can see the bursting baubles.

Nature has a way of healing her wounds. Some day a variety of hardy plants will take root and battle the elements and Jumbo's starvation diet in a struggle for survival. Some day it is possible that enterprising citizens, perhaps returning veterans skilled in remaking the earth's surfaces, will pock the hill with great holes and cart rich Illinois soil to fill the craters. Then bald Jumbo would burst forth in a new splendor of verdant greenery. Barren or lush with growth, Jumbo apparently is a permanent part of Roanoke's landscape.

In common with most other communities of Central Illinois, Roanoke had an educational problem. One-room schools dotted the

countryside and Roanoke's fast growing population taxed the village school's capacity. The village of Benson, a few miles away, found that its dwindling rural population did not produce enough children to populate a good modern high school. The rural school districts were hard pressed to find teachers, and they found the cost per pupil in such schools high and the offerings meager. Out of these common problems came the proposal and final approval of the Roanoke-Benson Unit District No. 60. But that did not solve the school problem. The need for building space was acute. A bond issue was approved for the construction of an addition to Roanoke High School soon after World War II. The district ran into rising costs and expended all its allocated funds by the time the shell was completed.

At this point the district became involved in a legal suit with the adjoining Minonk-Dana Unit District over a small area of land near Benson. The case dragged on for years during which time no bond issue could be floated to complete the much needed building. Classes were held in church basements. The case was finally settled with the disputed area going to Minonk-Dana. But it cleared the way for Roanoke to resume its much delayed building program. In the Spring of 1953 the district voted a $282,000 bond issue to provide adequate school building facilities. Approximately 80 per cent of the people of voting age in Roanoke went to the polls in that election, and the issue carried by a two to one margin. In addition to school buildings, Roanoke people have voted to erect homes for teachers in order to insure good teachers who will reside in the community.

IV

There have been failures. An effort to establish a library district has not succeeded. A small tract of land called the American Legion Park remains undeveloped. Moves to establish a park district have bogged down. A community beautification program has not gotten off the ground. A committee did take invoice of all the trees in the village and catalogued the condition of each, but no sound program of care and replacement has been developed.

One of the key figures in the development of Roanoke is Tilman R. Smith, who for many years was principal of the Roanoke High School. Under his intelligent and gentle guidance Roanoke not only

has recorded significant civic progress but has retained a highly competent representative group of its younger people. Virtually every person of responsibility in Roanoke today came under the influence of Tilman Smith during his formative years. Tilman Smith is not the bombastic type. He talks and acts softly. He has the ability to generate discussion and thought. When a decision is reached on community matters it is not his conclusion, but that of the entire group. He is generous with credit to others.

Students of Roanoke High School under Mr. Smith made an outstanding record in Peoria firms. So many passed examinations to get into the four-year apprenticeship of the Caterpillar Company that the firm sent a representative to the school to see what was being done. Roanoke was getting people into the course far out of proportion to the school's enrollment. The firm was so impressed that it called Smith in for a number of conferences on plant instructional problems.

"The only significant thing I think we were doing," Smith said, "was to impress upon the students that they had to work for what they got, that no one owed them a living, and that no one should be satisfied short of his best performance in every area of life."

While Roanoke has done much better than most small communities in checking its human erosion, it, too, has lost good talent to the larger areas. Mr. Smith recalls that during the depression days Roanoke had twelve young men working their way through the University of Illinois. It took determination to do that. Three became college teachers, four accountants in large firms, three doctors, one an engineer, and one a businessman—and not one is living in Roanoke. Ironically enough, one of Smith's Roanoke graduates is on the city planning staff for New York City. Roanoke graduates under Smith made an outstanding record in the armed services, where a fourth of them became commissioned officers.

There could be no better testimony to the influence of teachers over the lives of men and over the course of society than that provided by Tilman Smith in the little village of Roanoke. He was called from Roanoke to the Woodford county seat town of Eureka in 1949 to head up the new Congerville-Eureka-Goodfield Unit School District. He soon gained recognition there. The district was selected for a March of Time subject because of its smooth organization and opera-

tion. Mr. Smith is playing his part unobtrusively in a developing community betterment program in Eureka. With typical generosity the people of Roanoke gave him a farewell party. He was praised highly for the contribution he had made, and his leaving was used as a rallying point for continued community betterment. He had gone but he left a nucleus of competent leadership behind.

However, improvement campaigns tend to wear themselves out. Roanoke had been going at a rapid pace for a decade. One of the ironies of such programs is the high mortality rate among the civic groups that stimulate most of the progress. Roanoke has been no exception. The Civic Association, which had an unlimited membership without classification, was instrumental in the formation of a chamber of commerce and a parent-teacher chapter. As business improved a Lions Club was organized. And as these prospered the Civic Association withered and finally died. Its failure cannot be placed entirely at the feet of these two organizations, but they have taken over much of the male personnel formerly associated with the Civic Association. There were other contributing factors. The Civic Association flourished during the war years when food was scarce and transportation difficult. Regular association dinners afforded opportunities to cut down on the rationed home supply of food and to visit with friends and neighbors. It became increasingly difficult to get people to prepare meals and citizens to attend in the lush days following the war.

Roanoke is the loser because of the failure of the Civic Association. The same competent leadership is there, but it is divided between what is now the Business Men's Association, the parent-teacher chapter, the Lions Club, The American Legion, The Farm and Home Bureaus, and similar groups. There is no clearing house through which they can pool their interests and their efforts, such as the Civic Association afforded. The lack of over-all cooperative planning and action is felt keenly by many of the citizens. Efforts to regain some of the lost advantages are being considered. Formation of a community inter-club council or executive committee with representation from other principal organizations is one proposed solution.

After a ten-year surge, Roanoke is now on a plateau. Having attained most of what the people were willing to provide from the 1946 survey, the community is coasting on the momentum gained

during that period. But the vitality and competence of this unique community can break out anew at any time for another upward spurt. Roanoke can have anything the people want badly enough to work for. A second survey has been talked of at various times. If the citizens find the will to conduct it, Roanoke could repeat its performance of the immediate post-war period.

Not what we would, but what we must, makes up the sum of living.
—RICHARD HENRY STODDARD

CHAPTER 18

Relaxed Lexington

LEXINGTON GOT its name and much of its culture from the South. Southern Illinois was settled first and the migration from southern and eastern states moved northward. The first white family to settle in the vicinity of what is now Lexington was John Henline and his family in 1828. That same year Mrs. Henline made a trip by horseback to her old home in Kentucky and brought back young trees to plant around her on the Illinois prairie.

John Patton built the first home in what is now Lexington Township in 1829. All ten white families along the Mackinaw River, which runs near Lexington, were present for the house raising. The Kickapoo Indians, who were numerous in the area, joined in. The house, which is still standing, is believed to be the only house in Illinois which the Indians helped the white settlers build.

Lexington came by its joy of living and neighborliness honestly. It was in that spirit that Lexington joined in the Central Illinois Community Betterment Program in 1946—just 110 years after it was officially founded. This was the only one of the five communities in the program which did not have a problem of either absorbing other communities or of being absorbed by one. The City of Lexington, with its 1200 inhabitants, comprises almost exactly half the population of the Lexington community. The other 1200 live on 400 farms surrounding the city. The much prized Lexington Unit School District, the Lexington Library District, and the Lexington Fire District have virtually contiguous boundaries that enclose this compact and complete community of 1200 town residents and 1200 farm folk. Only one factor tends to separate them. That is the telephone service.

Many farmers whose children go to school in Lexington, who are

protected by the Lexington Fire District, who read the books from Lexington's library, and who go to church in Lexington on Sunday have a telephone through an exchange from some nearby town. This is because of a number of small, independent phone companies whose area of operation is set out for them by the Illinois Commerce Commission. The individual farmers who want to be on the Lexington exchange are unable to do anything about it. The people of the community are fully aware of the problems and are doing everything they can to bring about a satisfactory solution.

This compact little community of 1953 did not just happen. It was part of the foresight and early planning of the citizens. Before they began a program of community improvement they set about under the guidance of the Reverend Walter Teesdale, a Methodist minister, to determine what constituted the Lexington community. They checked the drawing power of the bank, the veterinary, the school, the churches, the stores, the grain elevator, and the machine shops. They tried to determine realistically whether these limits already established were the maximum boundaries of the community, or whether they could reasonably expect to expand their horizons. They decided not to try to incorporate any other existing communities into the Lexington orbit. Rather they determined that a community half urban and half rural and comprising a total of 2000 to 3000 people would make a desirable place to live.

This determined, the people of Lexington set about to tie this area together in one neat package. The unit school district was the first step. It merged a dozen or so one-room schools with the Lexington system and thus united town and country people behind a common purpose—the education of their children. Original efforts to establish a rural fire district with the same general boundaries failed in an election, but a second attempt at a later date won approval. The library district proposal also was approved by the voters. How well they succeeded in unifying a community can be judged by a letter by twelve-year-old Jimmy Mohr, who won a county-wide essay contest on good fellowship between town and farm people sponsored by the Bloomington Association of Commerce.

County and city folks should work together for the common good because they each depend on the other for products and conveniences of

life [said this seventh grader]. As everyone knows the farmer raises the food to feed all people. But sometimes we forget that processing, transporting and selling of farm products provide many jobs for the city people. In return the farmer buys many of the refined products back for his own use. The farmer also buys machinery, automobiles, and household appliances from the city people.

Another reason the farm and city folk should work together is soil conservation. It's too big for the farmer alone, and some city people own farms and others have money invested in them. And good soil management protects their investment. Good soil conservation raises more food for the ever growing population of the world.

Now that most country children go to town school with city children, the city and country people know each other. The country people are interested in good schools and education for everyone. And by working with the city folks in paying taxes they have the money to build better schools and colleges.

Now that farm people have good roads and cars they enjoy going to town to meetings, movies, to the parks, and shopping. In turn, the city folks enjoy going to the country to hunt, fish and have picnics. So, farm and city people go to church together. They are both interested in a good standard of living for everyone and because of this they work together so everyone will benefit.

Jimmy won a purebred Angus heifer for his prize, and he demonstrated Lexington's success in an effort to erase boundary lines in order to envelop all the people of a small community.

II

While all this was in process, Lexington was undergoing a general face-lifting. Businessmen, stung by the criticism made by their customers in the betterment survey, began sprucing up their stores as soon as the results of the questionnaire were released in 1946. Within three years the whole business district had undergone a transformation. One visitor who had been in Lexington about the time the survey was made came back three years later. He said he had never seen as much improvement in a small town in so short a time. Store fronts were improved and interiors were redecorated. The motion picture house, which had been most severely criticized, added new equipment, new seats, and a decoration job. Retail stores and service or-

ganizations developed a new spirit of service. Businessmen cooperated in promoting special entertainment events for the benefit of the entire community.

New businesses that the people said in the survey they needed and would support were added. These included an electrical shop, plumbing shop, a ladies' ready-to-wear shop, furnace and tin shop, legal service, a second barber shop, three new beauty shops, a shoe store, daily bakery service, general farm supply store, new superservice gasoline stations, a soft drink parlor, a locker and cold storage plant with slaughter and processing service for every farm, a welding shop, a hybrid seed corn drying plant, a new motel, and two new lunch rooms. Other businesses expanded the lines of merchandise offered. Lexington's grocers have been so alert in providing the selections, quality, and price their customers want that two attempts of national chains to establish outlets there have failed after serious efforts.

Lexington built a modern water softening plant to treat the normally hard water from wells. In April of 1953 the people voted to add fluoridation. It was the third community in the county to do so and the first to take the issue to the people in a referendum. All principal streets have been blacktopped. The town park, a block of land studded by large trees, was improved and new equipment added. The park stands in the middle of Main Street at the east end of the business district and serves as a huge turn-around for traffic as well as a resting place for the citizens. Converging on it from different directions are four blacktopped roads to convey the farm trade into town. U.S. Highway 66 skirts the west side of Lexington.

Lexington had a unique experience with her five Protestant churches. For several months laymen of the various churches met to consider the possibilities of consolidation. They did not invite their ministers. They called in experts from various parts of the state to discuss the problems with them. And while they were weighing the issues carefully and objectively, they found something happening in Lexington. The clearly defined community limits had made Lexington the center for more people. Farmers who met townspeople at basketball games or band concerts began to come to Lexington to church. All the churches began to show increased attendance. As a corollary to this movement there developed closer inter-church activity. A

church council was formed. Union services are now held each Sunday night, with meeting places rotated between the churches. All the Protestant churches cooperate in special services and many of their youth activities are on an exchange or cooperative basis. The laymen who set out to weigh the values of church merger found that forces were at work to enlarge individual church membership on the one hand and to bring more cooperation between denominations on the other. While in 1946 there were only one or two resident ministers, all churches had resident ministers in 1953. The alternative to church consolidation is to recruit new members from the unchurched. Lexington churches, to enlarge their membership, reached out into the rural areas where country churches had been closed. There was no serious talk of consolidation in 1953.

Lexington went through the experience of setting up a recreation center in 1948-49. The guiding force behind it was Mrs. Valerie Beveridge, a relative newcomer to Lexington and a dynamo of energy. She closed her beauty shop and devoted full time to organizing Jive Junction for teen-age youths. She collected voluntary contributions, arranged to get the second floor of the power company building, gathered up ping-pong tables, furniture, juke box, coke bar, and all the rest. Under the driving force of Mrs. Beveridge and the support she could get from other adults Jive Junction became a beehive of activity. Youths came from miles around. Young couples helped supervise activities, but it was all but a one-woman show. Jive Junction received national attention in 1949 in an article in *Collier's* magazine. But Jive Junction is a memory today. It went the way of most such projects. Interest began to lag among teens themselves. Adults grew tired of devoting nights to supervision. Citizens became reluctant to contribute funds. Finally, Mrs. Beveridge moved away and Jive Junction collapsed. It probably could not have survived had she stayed. Her energy and drive did not fit into the relaxed mode of life in Lexington. Many citizens resented her intrusion. She set too fast a tempo for the recreational wants of Lexington. The foundation upon which she built has seldom proved adequate. The dream she had of a community center with year-round recreation for young and old evaporated—and yet it came true. It did not take the shape of a separate civic building but of a modern school building.

Recreation did not die. Lexington added a new seven-acre athletic

field to its school property. Tennis courts and a lighted softball diamond provide recreation for many during the summer. Basketball courts, some of them marked by nothing more than a hoop on a garage or tree, dot the town. Lexington takes basketball seriously. The high school "Minute Men" get unstinted community support. Even the women's literary club changes meeting dates so members won't have to miss a basketball game.

Lexington, like other communities, has found that the schools have a full schedule for youngsters during the winter. The community has provided a band tax with which to pay the music teacher for conducting summer band concerts. The churches hold a union Bible School for the small children, and 4-H and Rural Youth activities fill up the spare hours of those from ten to adulthood.

While Jive Junction was going the way of most such enterprises, Emile Rediger, a French emigrant farmer, was busy making bows and arrows from hedge wood on his farm in winter evenings. The youth of the community showed an interest. Archery clubs were formed and an archery range was established. Now many people of Lexington are experts with the bow and arrow. Rediger himself has bagged many rabbits and a few deer on hunting trips into deer country.

The entire community pitched in and built a Scout cabin near town surrounded by ample acres. It is available not only to Scouts but to everyone in the community. This and the school apparently supply the needs of the people for a civic center.

III

Much of the pattern for Lexington's betterment program was cut out by the Reverend Teesdale. He had studied sociology at the University of Illinois. His training for the rural ministry whetted his desire to help make life fuller and richer in towns like Lexington. He was chairman of the first community council set up under the program. He undoubtedly held together the little knot of people who kept it going in the formative years. This was done at some sacrifice to himself. Criticism that he was neglecting his church, or getting his nose in the business of others, was not uncommon. He had a keen sense of the importance of community-wide action. The community council approach appealed to him.

"If we don't keep the community council in harness we're going to

wind up just where we started—too many organizations and not enough common effort toward betterment for the whole community," he said. "Special groups of the community, such as patriotic, business and religious or social organizations, are eager to work on specific betterment projects. The initiative and man power of any such organization is an asset to the development of the community. But there is a potential danger in that the council may allow itself to become inactive in favor of individual organizations which appear willing to do the work. One or two such special groups may gradually find themselves carrying the whole load. Without realizing it such groups could direct their efforts toward their own special interests in unintentional ignorance of the needs or goals of the whole community."

Mr. Teesdale kept re-evaluating the betterment program. He often wondered aloud whether Lexington would not have advanced about as far without it as with it. Yet an enumeration of the accomplishments growing directly out of the 1946 self-analysis always fired him with impatience to get more and more done. He was a power of strength in a humble, sensitive, and halting sort of way. He finally refused to continue as leader of the movement and about halfway through the program he was transferred to another church outside the community. He left completion of the project to others.

Gilbert Elson, former Lexington mayor, was a strong and effective co-worker with Mr. Teesdale from the start. He is typical of the solid citizens of Central Illinois. His economic base is the rich farm land. He owns land and calls himself a farmer, but he lives in town and takes a keen interest in civic affairs. Mr. Elson with Ray Rickets, Mrs. Wallace Musselman, Dr. P. A. Ling, and Mr. and Mrs. Emile Rediger have been the standbys of the Lexington program. They have recruited a capable corps of younger people along the way. But Lexington's progress as a whole can hardly be attributed to any individual or group. Like a spring shower that comes up out of nowhere, Lexington spurted forward almost from the day the betterment questionnaire results were made known. It was a spontaneous, community-wide effort.

All the while Lexington's people remained calm, except on basketball nights. They recognize the importance of Bloomington to them, both as a shopping and cultural center and as a place of employment

for many of their people, including Mayor Glenn Watt. They recognize, and so stated at one of their public meetings, that some problems of small communities must be solved on an area basis. The people have no desire to make an industrial center of their community. They would like a few more small diversified industries to supplement, but not to supplant, farming. They have a good community and they know it. They are confident that they can make it better without breaking stride in a calm, unhurried, and pleasant life.

Lexington's newest project is one of community beautification. In mid-1953 they began consultations with landscape specialists at the University of Illinois in an effort to set up a demonstration unit on the community level. The university extension service already has carried on demonstration units for individual farms. Lexington wants the services to include the service centers for farms. The spirit of Mrs. John Henline still prevails. If she could ride on horseback over some three hundred miles of uncharted prairie and wilderness amid wild animals and Indians who were not always friendly to bring back trees to beautify her 1828 home, her descendants of 1953 should be able to find a way to beautify the entire community. And the chances are that Lexington has the patience, the persistence, and the perspective to get the job done.

CHAPTER 19

The Spunk of Minonk

MINONK HAS a good start on Lexington in city beautification. It started back in the depression days when William G. Sutton, owner of a coal mine, began planting flowers and shrubs along a broad mall between U. S. Highway 51 and an old slag pile accumulated from mining operations. Sutton's gardens have attracted tourists ever since. This spot of beauty greets the motorist as he enters Minonk from the north, and it remains in his memory as the trademark of this strictly rural city of 2000 inhabitants. Although the coal mine has been closed for years and Mr. Sutton is dead, the garden project is carried on by his sons, Harvey and Alonzo. The townspeople have caught the spirit and Minonk streets are lined with trees, shrubs, and flowers.

Minonk entered the Central Illinois Community Betterment Program late. It was April 1947 before results of the questionnaire were available. No time was lost in getting under way. The chamber of commerce, which has taken the lead all the way, got busy in response to community demands as revealed in the questionnaire, and sponsored a summer recreation program in 1949 with voluntary contributions. This was followed by a proposal to place community recreation on a firmer foundation with tax support, and the people gave strong approval in an election early in 1948.

Strange as it may seem, the weather played a part in building cooperation in Minonk. It was on New Year's Day, 1948, that a devastating sleet storm hit the community. Fallen trees cut electric and telephones wires and blocked every street in town. The city had no money to pay for cleaning up the debris. It was still there nearly two months later, except for the narrow paths which had been cut to permit a minimum of traffic.

Then the chamber of commerce decided to do something about it. February 27 was set as cleanup day. Businessmen, laborers, farmers—people from all walks of life—reported for duty. A fleet of twenty trucks and a bulldozer were rounded up and Minonk was in for a face-lifting. Men worked harder and had more fun than they had had in years. They became better acquainted with the neighbors and nearby farmers as they groaned and grunted over heavy logs and utility poles. At noon they all went to Bob Morrison's restaurant for a hearty free meal provided by the chamber of commerce. Since then Minonk has been able to do just about anything the people set out to accomplish. The recreation tax was an example, coming as it did soon after the big cleanup. The weather taught them the lesson of cooperative strength.

In the succeeding years Minonk has maintained a steady and persistent program of improvement, and a spirit of unity has prevailed. As an example, the Catholic church has provided a skating rink for all the children of the community. Children from the five Protestant churches far outnumber the Catholics on the rink floor most of the time. Another example of community unity is the use made of the new American Legion Hall. It was built and financed by the Legion Post, but it is used by just about every organization in the community. No one is denied access to its facilities.

All has not been sweetness and light, of course. There was the time in 1948 when *The Pantagraph* stirred up a hornet's nest by revealing that there were ten cases of undulant fever in Woodford County with half of them concentrated in Minonk. Possible source of infection was traced to a Minonk dairy herd where state tests found several cows with positive reactions to Bang's disease, which is one source of brucellosis, or undulant fever, in humans.

Minonk officials, the Minonk *News-Dispatch*, and some citizens first tried to smooth the matter over, but John Denson of the *News-Dispatch* took a second look and joined in the fight for pure milk. Dr. H. E. Bearss, who was mayor at the time, came through after initial reticence and offered a resolution to the city council requiring Grade A milk for the city. John Denson didn't think that went far enough. He wanted pasteurized milk and cited health authorities to prove his point that Grade A milk, if not pasteurized, might still be contaminated. In the meantime the dairy with the reacting cows went out of

business and the problem was solved. The willingness of these people to change position and close ranks for the benefit of the community rather than stand firm because of a false sense of pride was testimony to their underlying unity.

Of the twenty-six soil experiment stations conducted throughout the state by the University of Illinois, the plots west of Minonk have stood out through more than forty years of testing as having the best soil in the state. Minonk is a natural retail outlet for farmers of this rich area. Under the leadership of the chamber of commerce, it has made the most of the situation. Since 1947 every store in town has been remodeled and there is not a single vacancy. New business added as a result of persistent requests made in the self-analysis questionnaire includes: A laundry, radio shop, jewelry store, drive-in restaurant, blacksmith and welding shop, implement business, drug store, and several small service shops.

II

One of the largest additions to the economy of the community is the Granert clothing factory which employs 110 workers. The plant, on the north edge of the city, has its own airport, cafeteria for employees, and a retail display room which attracts people within a radius of one hundred miles. Robert Granert, head of the firm founded by his father, was looking for a location soon after World War II when his plant in a near-by town burned down. C. R. Denson, father of John and publisher of the Minonk *News-Dispatch* for half a century, saw an opportunity. Minonk had a large building on a forty-acre site which was owned by the U.S. Government. It had been built during the war for a hemp processing plant to provide rope for the navy when the nation's Pacific supply was cut off by Japan. The elder Denson got Mr. Granert on the telephone as soon as he heard of the fire and told him about Minonk's vacant building. Granert investigated, liked what he saw, and bought the property from the government. He has since closed a plant near Chicago and concentrated on the Minonk operation.

Granert does things with daring. An aviation enthusiast himself, he uses air transport whenever possible to dispatch his merchandise. Up through 1951 he staged an annual aerial roundup of friends and cus-

tomers that outgrew the community. The last one in 1951 attracted 563 planes. At times more than fifty craft were in the air at once awaiting the signal to land. When they did come down there was hardly room for the planes to race to a stop without crashing into others on the ground. The event was abandoned as a safety precaution.

Bob Granert shows his aggressiveness in other ways. In 1953 he talked the chamber of commerce into expanding its advertising program beyond the natural Minonk community. He inserted weekly display ads in *The Pantagraph* calling attention to special bargains in Minonk. They worked. People came from miles away to take advantage of the leader sales—and stayed on to make many other purchases. Merchants of Minonk, population 2000, were using the same advertising medium as the merchants of Bloomington, and they got results.

Minonk has another thriving enterprise to broaden its economy. Nearly twenty years ago Arthur Zivney came down from Wisconsin to start a small cheese factory in the heart of the corn country. On his first day of operation he received 2224 pounds of milk. Two decades later he was receiving more than 80,000 pounds of milk daily. His own trucks gather up the cans from farms in the community. Art Zivney has shifted from cheese-making to butter and powdered milk. His little plant with a handful of help turns out 22,400 pounds of butter a week and 44,800 pounds of powdered milk. Most of the powdered milk product goes to the bakery industry. In 1953 the plant was being expanded to supply a quality for use in cottage cheese, ice cream, and similar products. Much of the grain grown in the Minonk area which formerly went to market in the raw stage now is fed to dairy cows whose milk is processed at Minonk into butter and powdered milk. This plant is another demonstration of how a small community can keep its economic wheels turning.

The energetic chamber of commerce has not confined its activities to serving members. In addition to spearheading the recreation program, it sponsors an annual community picnic as a closing event of the recreation season. It helps finance summer band concerts. It took the lead in getting streets identified, homes numbered, and mail delivery established. No such program can be generated without the

drive of personalities behind it. Quiet, round, polite Bob Morrison has been the keystone to Minonk's success from the beginning. He has not made it a solo performance. In fact he has kept in the background much of the time. But he was chairman of the community council which was set up at the beginning of the program and he has remained the stabilizing force. He was president of the chamber of commerce at the same time and he naturally turned to his co-workers for assistance. But instead of turning the community betterment program into a private chamber of commerce affair, he transformed the chamber of commerce into a community affair. Farmers were drawn in and they frequently outnumber business men at the meetings. While women are not an integral part of the chamber of commerce, that body lends full support to projects of women's organizations. The campaign of the Junior Twentieth Century Club for library improvement won full community support. The library is on a sound tax-support basis with an endowment of $5000 for use in purchasing new books.

III

While Minonk has more services on a tax base than many similar towns, any small town must depend in large part upon voluntary contributions for needed improvements. Success of these efforts depends in large part upon the type of person available to do the collecting. Minonk has a natural community fund collector in friendly, voluble, likeable, warm-hearted Harry D. "Babe" Smith. He has been known for years for the entertainment of his German band. A parade in Minonk would not be complete without his band, with Babe leading the way while dividing his time between beating the drums and waving at the spectators, virtually every one of whom he knows by first name. Babe just drifted into the job of town collector of voluntary funds. Back in 1914-15 he helped collect money to buy a new fire truck. In 1926 he donated his two-year salary of forty dollars as a volunteer fireman to help pay for a fire siren. In 1938 he helped raise money for new oxygen equipment and has personally taken it out and set it up wherever needed without charge for a period of fifteen years. Between 1943-50 he collected hundreds of dollars from lodge members to buy everything from storm windows to new heating

equipment. He is president of the Masonic Club and has a standing offer to donate to any worthwhile cause in the community. He has been a member of the Minonk Fire Department for nearly forty years and takes personal charge of the equipment and records, all for the sum of twenty dollars a year which he usually donates to some of the many causes he supports.

Babe graduated into the big league in Minonk when he almost single-handedly took $1186 from Minonk people to pay for new street signs and help get city house-to-house mail delivery. He headed up a drive for funds to buy a new fire engine and collected enough to pay for a $15,000 machine and still turned nearly $2000 over to the city to help remodel the City Hall. In 1953 he was hard at work on a campaign to raise $10,000 to pay for the new vapor seal street lights.

Babe Smith has collected for so many things for so long that people just expect it of him. He tells of an experience while he was gathering funds for the street signs and house numbers. One resident had been pestering him for the number of his place of business. Babe finally got the numbers assigned and called across the street one day to his friend:

"Your number is four-thirty-eight."

Without a word the man came across and handed Babe five dollars.

"What's that for?" Babe asked.

"Well," said the friend, "didn't you say you wanted four-thirty-eight from me?"

Another experience was in the Minonk postoffice. Babe walked over to a fellow citizen to tell him one of their friends had died. The man pulled out his wallet and handed Babe some money without a word. Babe had to explain that he wasn't collecting for anything. On still another occasion Babe met a townsman on the street. As they neared each other Babe reached in his pocket for a handkerchief. By the time he had finished blowing his nose he had a five dollar bill in his hand. Again he remonstrated that he was not collecting. "Well, just keep it to apply on the next collection you make," his trusting friend said.

"Between collections and fire fighting I try to make a living doing electrical work," Babe says. A community is fortunate to have men like quiet, persistent, team-worker Bob Morrison, effervescent and

hardworking Babe Smith, and cautious, skeptical, but deadly serious John Denson of the *News-Dispatch*, and promotion-minded Bob Granert.

Minonk is one community which has tackled the parking problem. The Illinois Central Railroad tracks run north and south through the center of the town. Railroad right-of-way is far in excess of needs for trackage. The chamber of commerce made arrangements with the railroad to prepare and utilize two areas of this space for parking lots. It is a good example of cooperative effort to take advantage of undeveloped assets.

Other improvements proudly listed by Minonk citizens covering the gamut of economic, social, and civic projects include: A baseball league organized for men of the community, football re-established at the high school, athletic field lighted for night games, city park cleaned up and landscaped, new rules established for tavern closing hours, city alleys cleaned up and paved, City Hall and fire station completely remodeled, a new Methodist church constructed and other church property improved, and modern elementary and high school buildings erected as the center of a new unit district serving Minonk and surrounding areas.

Minonk still has unsolved problems. The community faces a costly sanitary sewage disposal system. It needs to expand its water supply. Minonk has natural fluoridation of water. In fact the community was used in some of the original scientific studies to determine the value of fluoridation. But the water is hard, the distribution system limited, and equipment is becoming obsolete. A zoning ordinance with emphasis upon developing new industrial sites is one of the unrealized goals. Modern street lighting on which Babe Smith is working is another need.

But Minonk has made remarkable progress in a few years. The people have tasted success. A revival of interest was evident in 1953. There was some talk of another community betterment questionnaire to chart a new course. Much of the credit for the coordinated, broad based advancement since 1947 is credited to participation in the Central Illinois Community Betterment program.

CHAPTER 20

The Power of Example

THE FIVE communities of Stanford, Colfax, Roanoke, Lexington, and Minonk have reaped great and permanent benefit from the Central Illinois Community Betterment Program. Each of them might have made some progress if the program had never been developed. But none of them would have had the consistent, broad-based improvement that followed if it had not been a part of this program. The stimulation, encouragement, know-how, and occasional prodding emanating from the university and *The Pantagraph* spurred them on. Most citizens of the communities are fully aware of this.

Great has been the benefit to these specific communities, and even greater benefit has been the example set for scores of other communities in Illinois and other states. These five pilot communities have served as bellwethers for the rest of Central Illinois, and the story of their progress has reached areas far beyond the circulation orbit of *The Pantagraph*. In 1953 there were twenty-two Illinois communities, ten of which were in *Pantagraph* territory, actively engaged in an organized program of improvement along lines developed in the five original towns. Some forty-five others, fifteen of which were in *Pantagraph* territory, had shown enough interest to hold community meetings and discuss the betterment program with Professor Anderson. "Almost without exception I found that there are many people in these communities who are sincerely anxious to do what they can to improve their community," Professor Anderson said.

In addition to the five original towns, those actively carrying on a betterment program in the eight counties where *The Pantagraph* circulates are: Flanagan, Gibson City, Mahomet, Paxton, and Normal.

Others in Illinois are Amboy, Arthur, Litchfield, Meredosia, Millstadt, Mokena, Mount Sterling, Newton, Palestine, Paw Paw, Rankin, and Sparta.

Those taking initial steps toward launching such a program in *Pantagraph* territory are: Chenoa, Cullom, Delavan, Eureka, Gilman, Gridley, Hopedale, LeRoy, Mason City, Piper City, Rutland, San Jose, Secor, Washington, and Waynesville. Others in this class in Illinois are: Albion, Assumption, Bushnell, Capron, Carthage, Cerro Gordo, Cissna Park, Concord, Crossville, Fairmount, Farmington, Geneseo, Gillispie, Glasford, Illiopolis, Knoxville, Lenzburg, Manteno, Milford, Momence, New Berlin, Niantic, Nokomis, North Chicago, Ottawa, Sheldon, Tonica, Valmeyer, Waterloo, and York Center.

But that does not cover the crusading influence of the program. Literally hundreds of communities in all parts of the country have written for guidance in launching programs of their own. The circular *Community Survival*, prepared by Professor Anderson and myself and printed by the extension service of the College of Agriculture at the university has been requested from interested citizens and educators in every state and from many foreign countries. My own files are bulging with requests for more information on the subject.

Then within *The Pantagraph*'s own territory there are scores of communities which have not launched a formal program but which have been spurred to action by the daily news accounts of what others are doing and possibly by the numerous editorials pointing out the good examples and making suggestions for aggressive action toward community betterment. It has been a campaign of evangelism for community betterment for more than a decade, and it has borne fruit.

II

A *Pantagraph* survey made in mid-1953 revealed, for example, that the communities within *Pantagraph* reach had spent more than nine million dollars on new school buildings and equipment since the close of World War II. They have spent more than that on increased teacher pay and broadened educational offerings. The same area led the State of Illinois in reorganizing its school districts into more adequate units. This brought forth an unsolicited letter from John Cox of the Illinois Agricultural Association commending *The Pantagraph* for its fifteen-

year campaign for better schools and pointing out that the *Pantagraph* area had set the pace in Illinois in school improvement.

The school improvement program has gone on with a minimum of friction. In replies received from more than fifty small communities in the area, forty-eight said definitely that their schools had been improved and not one objection was raised to consolidation. This was the opinion of experienced local lay observers in each of the communities. It does not mean, of course, that there would not be individual critics in most communities. But it was significant that in every case where towns had lost their high school because of reorganization the report came back that the schools had been improved for the children. That had been the keystone of *The Pantagraph*'s campaign for school reorganization: The welfare of the children should come before sentiment, business, or sheer stubbornness.

But this virile area did not stop with school improvement. Since World War II it has spent nearly two million dollars on new churches and hundreds of thousands on remodeled church buildings. They put nearly two million dollars in new and improved hospitals. The same communities spent well over a million dollars to improve and expand their water systems. They spent another million on street and sidewalk improvements and another million on sewage plants and drainage projects. Close to half a million was spent on new civic buildings such as city halls, fire stations, community centers, and public rest rooms.

Twenty-five parks in the area were improved following World War II and three new ones were established. The area is dotted with libraries, virtually all of which have been improved. In several cases the library district was enlarged to take the rural area surrounding incorporated places.

These same communities spent at least 100 million dollars on 10,000 new homes, not including the vast market that opened up for furnishings, interior decorating, landscape development, and the other things that go with pride in home ownership.

Since World War II these communities in the small-town and rural areas of the eight counties served by *The Pantagraph* added four hundred new retail establishments employing approximately 1500 persons. Only forty of these businesses had failed by mid-1953. Some forty new industries were established employing four hundred persons,

and by far the greater number germinated within the communities. There were some unfortunate experiences with larger plants moving in from outside and closing after a few months because of labor trouble or weakened markets. The more successful industries were those processing what the area grows, or producing goods the area can consume.

Larger cities in the area like Bloomington and Normal and places like Pekin on the edge of *Pantagraph* territory were not included in these statistics. They would add many millions of improvements in every category. Bloomington alone has spent 3 million dollars or more on new churches and as much on additional hospital facilities.

III

The Pantagraph, as the daily textbook of the Bloomington tertiary community, is given, and rightly deserves, considerable credit for the forward movement of the area. The campaign is not a personal project. It is the expression of the personality and character of a newspaper now in its second century. The same forward look was embraced by its publishers and editors who had gone before; it will be embraced by those who come after. Editors could not carry on such programs without the understanding and support of publishers. Publishers could not give that understanding and support without the backing of the stockholders. And that frequently means cutting down current earnings. It takes money to maintain a staff of reporters to cover eight counties. It takes time from busy lives to roll up sleeves and dig in on improvement in scores of communities. As we indicated in an earlier chapter, the returns do come back in growing circulation and increased reader confidence, but only stockholders with vision and publishers with judgment enough not to hold too tight a rein can create a climate where such work can be done.

From its founding *The Pantagraph* has worked for better government, better schools, better roads, better public services—better living. In the early days there were no outside awards to spur its policy makers on. They labored under the impelling desire to leave the community a better place than they found it. Since awards became fashionable, *The Pantagraph* has had its share. It was given national first place back in 1925 for general excellence in its class. A national

first in its class for community service and general excellence came in 1935. With an average of more than an award a year for a quarter century, *The Pantagraph* received the first Inland Daily Press Community Service Award presented by the University of Missouri School of Journalism in 1949 in competition with four hundred other daily newspapers large and small. The award was given not only for the newspaper's work in the Central Illinois Community Betterment Program but for its long record of community effort. Whoever edits *The Pantagraph* works in a great tradition. Whoever works on the paper faces the challenge of outstanding service for more than a century. It is no accident that *The Pantagraph* would pioneer in a team with a great state university and the people of Main Street and Jesse's Fort Road in a program of betterment for the entire area.

The greatest service was not in preachments, but in bringing the accomplishments of communities to their neighbor communities. People are motivated to community action by the power of example. The best example is the success of a nearby community in solving problems common to other communities. The newspaper is the messenger to report these successes and failures and to interpret their importance. It is the medium through which the citizens themselves can discuss their problems.

But that could not have been done without citizens who have the energy and the knowledge and the desire to devote some of their time from their daily lives to their communities. Community leadership is vital to community improvement. Of what does it consist? Who is a leader? We have met some already in this book, men like Ned Dolan, Clarence Ropp, Tilman Smith, Walter Teesdale, Raymond Rathbun, Bob Morrison, and Homer Caton. We shall describe others and how they operate in the next chapter. They will all be counterparts of people in your community—many of them still unrecognized.

CHAPTER 21

Community Leadership

A HEMLOCK tree has taught me a lot about leadership in the community. The hemlock stands not far from a Chinese elm in my garden. The hemlock swings with the pressure of the wind. It bows before the inevitable, but it always reverts quickly to its original form when winds die down. The elm stands firm. It will not deviate from its course for the wind. And it ends up with many broken branches.

When the winter snow and ice form their unwelcome coat around the hemlock it bends almost to the ground. There it remains until the heat of the sun consumes the icy garment, and again the hemlock returns to its natural form. But the elm holds rigidly to its position as the ice coat thickens. Eventually the branches break under the strain.

Occasionally the topmost branch or leader of the hemlock falls victim to sun scald or some other ailment. Ever so slowly a top branch begins to move into an upright position. Within a year or two a new leader has developed and the hemlock continues its destiny. Not so the elm. If the wind or the ice takes out its top, it remains topless. The elm grows faster, but it doesn't last as long. The hemlock is a distance runner.

Once when the leader died out I tied what appeared to me to be the next logical leader into an upright position against a splint. But the hemlock crossed me up. My selection hardly grew at all and a branch on the other side of the trunk moved up to become the natural leader.

Some communities are like the hemlock and some are like the elm. The hemlock communities are made up of people who are aware of the winds of public opinion. They know that the demands of some strong-minded individual often must be endured in the interests of

the welfare of all. The hemlock communities understand that there will be periods when effective action appears to be blocked. They just endure the ice coating until the climate becomes more conducive to resumption of their course.

The hemlock communities accept their natural leaders, but they do not lean slavishly upon them. When the natural leader is removed by death or departure the next logical choice begins to act like a leader and within a relatively short time he is a leader. They give leadership a chance to develop.

The hemlock has taught me that there is no one rigid pattern to which a community must adhere if it is to flourish. It can and should have a goal. It should set up the best possible blueprint for action. But it must remain flexible. If one job cannot be done now because the town banker or the principal property owner balks, then some other job can be tackled. If the Rotary Club and the American Legion are jealous of their leadership prestige, then try to give each a project with which the organizations can be identified. Patience, tact, and death are great allies of community progress.

There is a large reservoir of good will in most communities if it can be tapped by people who, like the hemlock, stick to their purpose but don't get all wound up in rigid procedures. Once people begin doing things together they find that there is plenty of credit for everyone. Pretty soon they forget about who gets the credit and concentrate on getting the job done. They don't even get discouraged by the wind and the ice.

The hemlock is gentle and humble as compared with the proud and rigid character of the Chinese elm. All the successful community leaders I have known have this same gentleness and humility in common. They know how to listen. They never approach a problem as though they knew the answer in advance. They can think in and with a group. They are willing to accept good ideas from any source. They do not consider themselves as leaders but as workers. They have not set out to dominate, but to get something accomplished for the common good. They are even capable of remaining silent when some more bombastic citizen steps in to take credit for the job they have done. Good community leaders live the Golden Rule whether they profess it or not.

It is not surprising that most of those who carry the community load are devout people. Their community consciousness was developed in Sunday School classes and in church pews. It was strengthened by the examples set by parents and respected friends. It was nurtured and given direction by public school people of vision and character. When a child has had that kind of a beginning, he is properly conditioned for wise high school and college teachers. While he may show outward signs of drawing away from the formalities of religion, he demonstrates the impact of his early training by his zeal to make the world a better place. Society owes a great debt to those teachers who can give motivation and direction to high school and college people. Society has been done a great wrong by those teachers who stress personal material success over a life dedicated to the welfare of all.

The medium-sized rural town churches and schools and the small, independent colleges have done the best job of developing such community workers. Statistics frequently released by the A. N. Marquis Company, publishers of *Who's Who in America*, bear testimony to this fact. The small, independent college with religious background and emphasis is the breeding ground for community workers. It does not and should not concern itself with the development of professional leaders in the field of community relations. Its best service is in imparting understanding of community problems and instilling a desire to help solve them. Then when the graduates go back to their home communities, or settle in other communities, they will find their place among those who get things done. The small community does not need trained, professional workers from outside. It needs informed and competent citizens who are a permanent part of the community. Work in this field by Illinois College, Parsons, Earlham, and others was described in Chapter 10.

II

Reference already has been made to the gentleness and humility of the effective community worker, and to the fact that the most effective seldom think of themselves as leaders at all. This can be illustrated by reference to a few real-life examples in Central Illinois.

Hollis O. Frey and his son, Bill, operate a garage and an automobile sales agency in Bloomington. Hollis is a quiet, soft-spoken, polite,

and unobtrusive person. He has helped ring door-bells for just about every community effort in Bloomington in the last quarter century. Sometimes he is a member of a team; sometimes he is named captain or even a major. It doesn't matter to Hollis. He does the job assigned. Hollis belongs to the usual clubs and serves on his share of committees. He is never in the limelight. He was taken completely by surprise in 1953 when he was asked to be president of the Community Chest of McLean County, which raises approximately $160,000 a year for fifteen social, health, and welfare agencies. It was difficult to persuade him to take the job because he genuinely felt that he was not competent. He had just never thought of himself as heading such a community effort. He finally accepted and he has been doing an outstanding job in his quiet, thorough, soft-spoken way. He never makes snap decisions. He discusses problems with others and respects their views. Hollis O. Frey is an invaluable community leader without knowing it.

David William Gipson died of an accidental gunshot wound at the age of eighteen. But even in death he is a community leader. He had become a community-minded citizen of some stature while still in high school. He had learned to grapple with the problems of mankind to an extent sometimes never attained by adults. Dave Gipson was a straight "A" student. That in itself is not too startling; excellent scholarship can be found in every age group. He was a good athlete; and that isn't at all uncommon. He was a natural leader; there are many of them, also. He was a good public speaker; so are thousands of others. He could project his intelligence and his personality into writing; scores can do that. He was a good musician; thousands take to music. He had a keen sense of civic responsibility; the number of those who do is too small but still impressive. He had a charming personality; many have. He had a contempt for snobbery and false pride; those who agree are legion.

It is only when you find all those qualities in a single youth that it becomes unusual. And Dave Gipson was an unusual youth. He gave promise of being one of the Bloomington region's most illustrious sons. That is the evaluation of those who taught him and knew him. That is what won for him the statement from two men who interviewed the brightest young men of the nation for Harvard scholarships

lake area a completely developed and fully used recreational area. He has spent a lifetime fighting the cause of the downtrodden, helping them to help themselves in building homes, making gardens, developing skills, and making wholesome social contacts that make life bearable for those who have so little. Frank Breen preaches the gospel of sharing, of neighborliness, of purposeful living.

The record of every public or private project for the general welfare from the early part of this century until his health failed after World War II has Lloyd Eyer's name and personality indelibly scrolled upon it. Community chest, parades, Boy Scouts, sporting events, civic clubs, church affairs, home talent entertainments—you name it; Lloyd Eyer found time to take a leading part in making it tick. He enjoyed every minute of it. How he found time and energy to do it remains a mystery. But, being so willing, he got the jobs. The entire community virtually said: "Let Lloyd do it." He died in 1951, a poor man on a salary. By the measure of unselfish community service performed with a stroke of genius, Lloyd Eyer deserves a place at the top of the list of Bloomington's truly great men.

III

There you have it. Community leadership comes from educators like Tilman Smith, farmers like Clarence Ropp, businessmen like the late George Washburn, youth like the late David Gipson, officials like Judge Underwood, housewives like Vera Snow Hummel, preachers like Frank Breen, working men like the late Lloyd Eyer, undiscovered leaders like Hollis Frey.

This is not intended to be a complete list of those who have contributed their full share to progress in Central Illinois. Rather these personality sketches are presented as typical community leaders. Yet they are not leaders; they are workers for community good. Every community has them. They are able and eager to build better communities if given a chance. If you doubt it, make a list of those in your community who are or could become counterparts of those described here.

CHAPTER 22

Formula for Community Improvement

GREAT STRIDES have been made by some communities because of the force and vision of a single individual. Many have moved ahead without a specific plan or formula. There are always exceptions, but progress is more likely in the average community if some attention is given to a plan for improvement. This formula is given as a guide. It is not advanced as the only road, or even the best road, to improvement. It has been tried and it works. Here are the six recommended steps growing out of the experience in Bloomington and surrounding area:

1. A few public spirited citizens can start a community betterment program. They need not be officials of the town nor officers of any organization. All that's needed is a sincere interest in the future of the community. These few citizens must be willing to do the initial work in arousing public interest and enthusiasm for community self-analysis and self-improvement. They must be interested in getting the job done without concern about who gets the credit. They should take the time to inform themselves on community improvement. There is no substitute for knowledge in tackling any problem. A bibliography of some of the better books on the subject is included in this volume. This initial group should make use of them and discuss them before rushing into a betterment program.

2. A public mass meeting is the logical next step. At this meeting, there should be opportunity for a free exchange of ideas. Everyone should be encouraged to speak his mind. The experiences of other communities with improvement programs can be discussed. Specific needs of the community can be reviewed. The interest and enthusiasm shown at this meeting will largely determine the future success of a

betterment program. For that reason, it is exceedingly important that plans for the meeting be well made. The time, place, and purpose of the meeting should be well publicized in advance. Every effort should be made to get all segments of the community represented at the meeting.

3. Some group or agency should be authorized at the mass meeting to take the lead. If your community has an organization that is representative of all the interests, it should be given the assignment. If an existing organization even with limited representation can be persuaded to expand its membership to include all interests, it should get the assignment. If there is no agency or organization capable of assuming the leadership and representing the entire community, then a community council should be organized. Experience has shown that the community council is not the perfect solution. The community council is not active today in any one of the five towns in the Central Illinois Community Betterment Program. The task has fallen to older and more firmly established organizations.

But whether a community council is the answer, or there is some other organization to take the lead, it should serve as the over-all planning and directing force of the betterment program. It should insure the flow of authority from the people to a smaller working group. It should be a broadly representative group. Its members should come from the various occupations and interests of the community, including youth organizations. Such a group will number from thirty to fifty or more members. It will authorize surveys, appraisals, and studies of various phases of community life. And it will formulate general policies as guides in developing action programs. It should meet at least three or four times a year, and it should report regularly to the public on progress.

4. An executive committee should be drawn from the members of the community council. This is the first step in setting up action machinery to transform general policies into definite projects. This committee should hold regular monthly meetings—more often if programs make it seem desirable. The main duties and responsibilities of the committee can be listed: (a) to plan and direct surveys, appraisals, and studies, (b) to analyze results of these surveys, appraisals, and studies in formulating action programs, (c) to review and approve

plans and programs developed by action subcommittees and any other committees (special assignment committees) appointed to deal with specific problems or projects, and (d) to encourage other organizations in the community to accept responsibility for carrying out approved action programs.

5. Action subcommittees are needed to follow through on specific programs. Usually, three such subcommittees, organized as standing committees, will be needed—economic, social, and civic. Each of these committees may operate directly, assign certain phases of a project to a special assignment committee, or work with some other organization that is taking the lead in carrying out a specific project. The main duties and responsibilities of each committee are: (a) to analyze and study questionnaire answers relating to its particular field, (b) to assemble from other sources information which bears on any particular problem being considered, (c) to develop specific long-range betterment programs made up of a series of separate but related projects, (d) to submit its program to the executive committee for consideration and approval, with recommendations on how each project can best be carried out, and (e) to assume responsibility for following through on action programs in its field, with some other organization taking the lead or directly if necessary.

6. Committees must go to work and stay at it. Community improvement involves persistent and intelligent effort. There is no substitute.

It is essential to bear in mind that self-appointed community leaders, or even the experts, don't know all the answers to your community problems. The plain people from both sides of the tracks have some ideas too important to overlook. They represent a fertile source of help in any program of community betterment. They are seldom utilized to full advantage.

The problem of cliques can be erased in most cases if a sufficiently broad base for representation is set up. Cliques form because of a special interest, real or imagined, and they can be recruited in a program of community improvement if care is taken to appeal to that special interest.

There are always a few people in any community who oppose virtually every proposal which might affect the status quo. They are a

relatively small number who, for too long, have commanded too much respect in most communities. Many of them can be won over and those who remain adamant can have little influence.

But the greatest problem in community improvement work is to overcome apathy. That is why some such formula for setting up an improvement program with a broad base and continuity as set forth here is so important.

A few people of good will, an ability to listen, and a willingness to let credit go where it may, can lay the foundations for a long-range community improvement program.

CHAPTER 23

The Next Step

EXPERIENCE GAINED in the Bloomington experiment and the Central Illinois Community Betterment Program for small towns points the way to sound future action.

1. The force of a betterment surge such as any of these communities experienced tends to spend itself in five to ten years. If progress is to continue there must be new stimuli and, in many cases, new leadership. Bloomington has bridged the gap through the efforts of the All Bloomington Committee and the New City Plan Commission. Each of the other five towns would profit by a new community-wide questionnaire to determine what the citizens believe to be their problems and how they should be solved. Much more can be done than has been done to improve any individual community through periodic self-evaluation and self-determination by the citizens themselves.

2. The dozens of other communities in the area, having experienced many of the fringe benefits of the betterment programs in these specific towns, should examine the possibilities of conducting a full-fledged economic, social-cultural, and civic improvement program, as already has been done by Flanagan, Gibson City, Mahomet, Paxton, and Normal. It will be a part of *The Pantagraph's* long-range editorial program to encourage this effort.

3. These studies magnify the fact that the village, town, small city, and rural area is incomplete when it stands alone. Each depends upon the other to make up the whole community. There is a need for a greater appreciation and development of the tertiary community.

The statement of Frank Larson in Chapter 12 in which he suggests a regional council is a recognition of that need. The Lexington Community Council early recognized the fact that there are some problems

of the small rural community which cannot be solved by the community itself, but must be tackled by the larger community. Yet the field is virtually unexplored.

There are numerous planning bodies for regions of various sizes and they have various motives. There are zoning boards and study groups, but the cooperative effort of people themselves to cope with the economic, social, and civic problems on the tertiary community level is virtually unknown today. The will to launch such a project is lacking for the most part and the techniques to put it into effect are non-existent.

People of the small community and rural areas do not yet fully realize their dependence upon the primary center, and the primary center tends to make its faltering gestures toward cooperation too obviously an effort to ring the cash register rather than to elevate the quality of living. The suspicion with which people at the local level look upon any suggestion of cooperation with the outside is deep. Time will be required to remove it.

This can be illustrated by the attitude of a majority of the people in Normal. At no point are Normal and Bloomington separated by more than a street. The people have lived side by side for a century. Yet Normal maintains a separate municipal government, a separate library, police force, fire department, school system, and all other municipal services. Only the electric, gas, and bus service is shared by the two communities. These are provided by private companies. Even though Bloomington's lake water supply flows in mains through the town of Normal, the citizens of Normal maintain their own well water supply. When in 1941 they had an opportunity to buy Bloomington water by turning a faucet or spend more than $100,000 to improve their own well water supply, they voted for the latter by an overwhelming majority. The one chink in the armor of individuality is the sanitary sewer system which is maintained by a district including both communities.

Furthermore, Normal maintains her facilities at a cost equal to, or lower than, those in Bloomington. Normal has excellent municipal management. Her tax rate is slightly lower than that in Bloomington and her treasury is in better shape. Logical as merger might appear, there are no convincing arguments for it at the moment. Simple as the

choice of water source appeared to the outsider in 1941, the decision of the Normal people was the correct one. Bloomington could not have supplied all of Normal without extensive improvement which her citizens, in turn, refused to indorse.

While a majority of the residents of Normal make a living in Bloomington, the home-town loyalty persists. The spirit of independence is demonstrated by business men of the two communities. They maintain separate chambers of commerce and observe different store hours.

Yet the communities are growing closer together. The kindred feeling growing out of simultaneous efforts of Bloomington and Normal through planning commissions naturally draws them together. Normal has accepted the formula of self-analysis, self-determination, and self-help as developed in the five original towns. Normal's planning commission is informal. Bloomington, on the other hand, had not fully determined in 1953 which procedure to follow. Its Plan Commission is set up under Illinois law and has more legal rights, such as having land-use control a mile and a half outside the corporate limits.

With all these differences, the two communities are much closer together than they were ten years ago. They at least are nearing the stage where they can cooperate, which is vastly more important than merger. It would be foolish indeed to set out now on a campaign of merger. That is not needed to further the interests of the tertiary community. Unity of purpose is more important than uniting governments.

II

Even the large metropolitan areas have found that they must break down their governmental units. The Municipal Year Book recently reported that there are more than 1000 governmental units in the New York City metropolitan area and more than 800 in the Chicago area. Super-governments for regions like that of the Bloomington area would be in contradiction to everything in this book.

The author could accept Lewis Mumford's statement before the American Institute of Architects in 1950: "Regional planning is not a method for prescribing to a small town a more effective way of

becoming big than the older centers followed; nor is it a method of preparing the small town to accept and hasten its ultimate fate of being devoured and absorbed by the continuing expansion of the neighboring metropolis. The kind of regional planning that concerns the small town is that which is devoted to giving the region as a whole, and the small town as an integral unit in the region, the advantages that were hitherto monopolized by the big city, whilst safeguarding the rural primeval elements in the region. . . . Only under a regime that seeks to establish a balance between industry and agriculture and that keeps the open country close at hand, can increasing leisure time that industry now promises provide opportunities for active recreational activities throughout the year."

Mr. Mumford, like most others grappling with this problem, realizes the lack of authority to develop a region in this manner. When, however, he proposes a regional authority with power to float bonds, to make investments in new communities, to zone urban and rural areas, plan new cities, buy land for public use, fix industrial sites, and so on, the author cannot agree. It is a much slower process, but more democratic and, in the long run, more permanent if people will rally around their common interests as they develop until they find the cluster of communities making up a region working voluntarily in harmony for the good of all. That is not too much to hope for if one has faith in the principle of the sanctity of the individual and the soundness of the democratic process.

The major effort toward developing the tertiary community on the broad scope envisioned here must be confined for the time being to education. The main medium for such education is the regional newspaper. Full, honest, and intelligent reporting of efforts in this direction and editorial policies just far enough ahead of the mass thinking to stimulate the reader, but not so far ahead as to lose him, can have an effect in time. In some areas it might take a decade, or even a quarter of a century; in others cohesion might set in earlier. But time will be required. The essence of salesmanship of goods or an idea is repetition. The regional newspaper should continue to stress the idea of community self-improvement in as many ways as possible.

The classroom can do more than it has done to stress the fact that the tertiary community rises or falls as a unit. Full use is not made of

the laboratory technique in taking classes to town meetings, court trials, police hearings, tax appeals, library board meetings, and other functions that show the creaking machinery of fragmented communities.

Civic agencies could take the lead in breaking the ice. It might be a chamber of commerce, a regional college board, a ministerial association, a woman's club, or any of a hundred such agencies. Quarterly meetings of officials of all the areas of a tertiary community could be called for discussion of common problems.

III

In Bloomington an effort is to be made to combine all these forces in an educational program. City planning commissions, community councils, chambers of commerce, Illinois Wesleyan University and Illinois State Normal University, *The Daily Pantagraph*, the various governing bodies, and interested citizens are to be challenged in the years ahead to cooperate in an educational program to build a stronger tertiary community for the benefit of all. There must be surveys, studies, conferences, cooperative effort—but never compulsion.

I can envision a time when an industrial council will work for the development and establishment of factories in each of the towns of the area with special reference to the needs of each. I can see a time when businessmen of village, town, and city in the area will cooperate in developing retail interests to meet the needs of all the people. I look forward to an era when highway programs will be developed by people from the entire tertiary community without thought of village, township, or county lines. Their concern will be for expediting traffic for the people. I am confident that eventually the people of the Bloomington tertiary community will plan libraries, art centers, recreational facilities, religious institutions, welfare services, cultural festivals, parks, and educational opportunities without regard for political subdivisions but with regard only for the quality of living in the region.

I have faith that these things will come because the alternative is the disintegration of the local community and dependence upon a central government for everything. I believe the people know that such centralization means total elimination of the liberties they love—that they gradually will see that the choice is not between the status quo and

totalitarianism. The best course is the development of the tertiary community to its highest potential through self-analysis, self-determination, and self-help in which the beginnings have been made in Central Illinois.

This will not take place next year, or possibly in the next decade. But it will come in time because it must.

There can be no end to a book like this. So many questions remain unanswered. We don't know if Homer Caton will be able to preserve Stanford's high school. The quest of Colfax for better transportation facilities to link the village with the outside must go on. Whether Roanoke continues her upsurge or settles peacefully upon her plateau rests with the future. Lexington's beautification dreams remain dreams so far as this book is concerned. Where Minonk's expansionist drive will lead will have to be another story if it is ever told. What Normal's new betterment program will develop is an unanswered question. How far Bloomington can go with its new council-manager government and its Plan Commission will have to wait on history. Whether the whole cluster of villages, towns, cities and the fertile farms by which they are linked can lift themselves up by their own bootstraps to the higher level that the well rounded tertiary community can provide must be left, for the time being, to the imagination and, we hope, the good wishes of the readers. There can be no final answers now or ever, because new community problems develop as old ones are solved.

This book defines an idea and makes a progress report. It seeks to do nothing more. If the idea is kept clearly before the people and if it is right, progress will continue.

It is a good life here in Central Illinois. It is rich and wholesome and challenging. It offers opportunity and it rewards effort. There are such communities all over this great nation, far from the stale city which saps so much of the people's energy. If only the youth of the nation will see these things! I would like to close this book as it was begun:

Go home, young man, and build a better community.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THE OPINIONS expressed and conclusions reached in this book are mine alone. However, my work in community betterment on which the book is based could not have been carried on had I not been editor of *The Pantagraph*, or without the support of Loring Merwin, publisher, and Joe Bunting, general manager. For that I am grateful.

The contents of Chapters 11 and 22 are taken in large part from the composite knowledge and experience of the extension staff of the University of Illinois College of Agriculture as originally compiled by Professor Alvin T. Anderson. Professor Anderson was co-worker and a stabilizing influence in all phases of the Central Illinois Community Betterment Program. Much of its success and growth is due to his wisdom and tact and vision. I have drawn freely from the University Extension Service Circular 633, *Community Survival,* in these and other chapters. Valuable assistance was given by the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the U. S. Department of Commerce in supplying original source material. However, I wish to make it clear that all of these people and agencies are blameless for any shortcomings of this volume. None is responsible for the interpretations or conclusions.

I appreciate the patience of Frank Larson in discussing the project. We spent many winter evenings together and he offered helpful suggestions. The Reverend Rudolph Loidolt gave both inspiration and invaluable help. Various members of *The Pantagraph* news staff and the people in all the communities involved in this story gave generously of their time and knowledge. To them and to the scores of other individuals and groups who offered assistance and encouragement, I wish to say: Thank you.

Finally, but for Baker Brownell the book never would have been started. He persistently urged that it be written and, once it was begun, he was fair but forceful with his criticisms, and fruitful with suggestions.

H. C. T.

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INDEX

Action committees, 155, 219
Advertising, 35
Agricultural Information Bulletin, 80
Albert, Allen D., 128 f., 141, 146, 149; *quoted*, 127
Alexander County, Illinois, 79
Alexander, Frank C., 124
Alger, Horatio, philosophy, xiii, 4, 33
All Bloomington Committee, 221
Allin, James, 14
Allin Township, Illinois, 160
American Council for the Community, 85
American Country Life Conference, 22, 65
American Economic Association, 16
American Federation of Women's Clubs, 87
American Legion, 87
American Municipal Association, 21
American Passion Play, 124
American Political Science Association, 16
Anchor, Illinois, 172 ff., 179
Anderson, Alvin T., ix, xv, 150 f., 153, 155 f., 206, 227; *quoted*, 114, 205
Anderson, Clinton, 22
Andrews, Jerry, 28
Antioch College, 88
Apathy, 220
Area Development Division, 11
Association of Commerce, 132, 137
Atomic age, 10
Atomic energy, 8, 19
Automobiles, 20, 39
Aviation, 138-39, 200

Barford, George, 125
Barton, John, x
Bearss, H. E., 199
Beautification program, 73-84, 141, 185, 197 f., 226
  rural, 78
Beich, Paul, 123
Benson, Illinois, 56, 186
Bertschi, Gene, 183
Better Bloomington Committee, 130 ff., 138 f., 143, 145 f.
Beveridge, Valerie, 194
Biddle, William, 91
Bigness, 5 f.
Bloomington, Illinois, ix-x, 3, 11 f., 14, 31, 36, 65, 107, 115 ff., 147 ff., 158, 208, 212 ff., 222 ff.
Bloomington Experiment, 123-46
Breen, Frank, 215-16
Breimyer, Harold F., *quoted*, 22
Brooks, Aaron, 129
Brownell, Baker, ix, xvi, 227; *quoted*, 88
Building lots, 80
Bulletin, The (Bloomington), 177
Bunting, Joe, 130, 227
Bureau of Community Planning, 80
Burnet, Texas, 87
Butler, Arthur C., 20
Byerly, L. M., 143

Calvert City, Kentucky, 26
Cardiff, Illinois, 181
Carlock, Illinois, 148
Carnegie, Dale, 72
Case, H. C. M., 150 f.
Caterpillar Company, 70, 187
Caton, Homer, 160, 164 f., 169 ff., 226
Central Business District, 16 f.
Central Illinois Community Betterment Program, xv, 33, 152 f., 159, 181, 190, 198, 204
Central Soya Company, Inc., 24
Centralization, 3-13, 45, 225
  and churches, 60 f.
  early development of, 7
  at the local level, 42, 44
Changing Times, 124
Chenoa, Illinois, 148

Chicago, Illinois, 20, 223
Chicago Executives' Club, 22
Childhood experiences, 47-51
Christian Century, 61
Christianity, 59-60
Churches, 59-67, 70, 72, 193-94
  community, 62-64
  Negro, 64
  rural, 91
  see also Religion
Cities, central, 12-13
City Plan Commission, 146
Civic association, 180 f., 188
Civic enterprise, 100-102, 126 ff., 163, 183-84
Clark, Charles W., 174
Colfax, Illinois, 152, 158, 172-79, 226
Colleges, *see* Antioch, Earlham, Eureka, Illinois, Parsons
Colleges, small independent, 89, 212
Collier's magazine, 194
Committee for Economic Development, 126
Communism, 17 f.
Communities, growth of, 71
  "hemlock," 210-11
  too many, 39-46
Community, definition of, 106
  the complete, 106-120
  the good, 96-105
  tertiary, 106-120, 224 ff.
Community betterment workshop, 157
Community council, 155, 172, 174, 176, 179, 195, 218
Community Dynamics program, 91
Community improvement, 217-20
Community Service Bureau, 87
Community Service, Inc., 88, 229
Community Service News, 88
Community spirit, 42
Community study group technique, 88
Community Survival, 206, 227
Compliment Club, 72
Cone, Cecil, 134
Converse, P. D., *quoted*, 39
Cooksville, Illinois, 63-64, 172 ff., 179
Cordiner, Ralph J., 12
Corn Festival, 56
Counties, 42
County council, 110
Cox, John, 206
Crane, George W., 72
Cropsey, Illinois, 172
Cultural development, 102-105, 108 f., 124-26, 184-85
Current Economic Comment, 40

Daily Pantagraph, The, see Pantagraph, The
Danvers, Illinois, 57
Davis, David, 14
Decatur, Illinois, 140
Decentralization, 7 ff., 12, 20, 24, 139
Delinquency, 92
Democracy Is You (Poston), 88
Denominationalism, 61 ff.
Denson, C. R., 200
Denson, John, 199, 204
Detroit, Michigan, 8, 11
Diagnosis of problems, 85-95
Dirksen, Everett M., xv
Disease, 19
Dispersal, 11
  see also Decentralization
Divisive factors, 31 ff.
Dolan, Ned E., 129 ff.
Donovan, Frank, 129
Dormitory towns, 83
Dunn, Robert S., *quoted*, 112

Earlham College, 91
Economic development, 97-100, 182-83
Education, 19, 102-103, 141-45, 187, 224 f.
  adult, 56, 87, 150, 152
  see also School districts
Eisenhower, Dwight D., *quoted*, 45
Eldorado, Illinois, xii f.
Electricity, 7, 19 f.
  see also Rural electrification
El Paso, Illinois, 56
Elson, Gilbert, 196
Employment, 162, 164
Entertainment, 8, 172
  see also Recreation
Eureka College, 66
Eureka, Illinois, 56, 66, 188
Eureka-Williams Corporation, 123
Example, power of, 205-209

Express (Terre Haute), 14
Extension service, university, 89
Eyer, Lloyd, 216

Fairbury, Illinois, 28 f., 148
Fairfield, Iowa, 90 f.
Faith, 49
Family, the, 60
Farm Bureau Farm Management Service, 27
Farms, 7, 18, 20
Fell, Jesse, 14
Festivals; corn, 56
  pumpkin, 56
  tulip, 76
Fire protection, 175-76
Fitz Henry, Louis, xii
Ford Foundation, 86
Fortune Magazine, 21
4-H Clubs, 53-55, 174-75
French, Ralph, 172
Frey, Hollis O., 212-13, 216
Funk, Ike, 123
Future Farmers of America, 54

Garst, Elmer E., 159
Garst, Maude K., 159
General Electric Company, 11 f., 20, 138
Genseal, Walter, 160
Gentleness, 211 ff.
Gibson City, Illinois, 24 f., 29, 148
Gipson, David William, 213-14, 216
Good, the, 96-97
Gossard, Paul, 129, 141 ff.
Government, 223
  commission form of, 134 f.
  council-manager, 135, 226
  local, 41 ff.
Granert, Robert, 200 f., 204
Greeley, Horace, *quoted*, 14
Greenwalt, Crawford, H., *quoted*, 22
Gridley, Illinois, 40
Group therapy, 94

Hamilton, Stanley, x
Hammond, Clarence E., 83
Harper's Magazine, 20
Hayes, Mark W., 128, 133 f.
Health, 103-104, 139-40, 199
"Hemlock communities," 210-11
Henline, John, 14, 190
Henline, Mrs. John, 190, 197
Hicks, Charles, E., 175
Hicks, Granville, x
Highways, beautification of, 78
Hilpert, Harry, 160
Hitch, Earle, 88
Hogs, 28
Holland, Michigan, 76
Home rule, 44
Honegger, Sam and Frank, 27 f.
Hoover Commission, 6
Hoover, F. Louis, 125
Housing, 136-37
Human erosion, 14-19
Humility, 211 ff.
Hummel, Vera Snow, 214, 216

Idealism, 37
Illinois, 41
Illinois College, xi ff., xiv, 91 ff.
Illinois Congress of Parents and Teachers, 165, 167
Illinois Education Association, 167
Illinois State Normal University, 14, 107, 124
Illinois, University of, ix, xv, 3, 28 f., 40, 80, 84, 114, 141, 148, 150, 152, 158, 200
Illinois Wesleyan University, 107, 124
Indians, Kickapoo, 190
Individual, the, 5 f., 39
Industrial council, 225
Industrial revolution, 20
Industrial-rural counties, 22
Industry, 137-38
  centralized, 8
  decentralized, 9 f., 12, 20, 24
  germinating, 21 f.
  rural, 22 ff.
Initiative, individual, 10
Inland Daily Press Community Service Award, 209
International Council of Community Churches, 62
International Livestock Exposition, 175
Ivy, Andrew G., 151

Jacksonville, Illinois, 92, 94
Jones, Paul, 52
Journal (Jacksonville), xi
Journalism, 37
Jumbo Mountain, 185
Junior Achievement, Inc., 29 f.

Kankakee, Illinois, 139
Kerbaugh, L. Park, 160
Kiplinger's Magazine, 124

Labor, organized, 9
Land reform, 18
Landscaping, 76, 79, 141
  rural, 77
Larson, Frank, 221, 227; *quoted*, 113
Leadership, 10, 209, 210-16
Lexington, Illinois, 14, 152, 158, 190-97, 226
Liberal arts college, 92
Liberty, 6, 9, 17
Libraries, 126, 207
Ligutti, Luigi, x
Lindstrom, David E., 150 f.; *quoted*, 117
Ling, P. A., 196
Livingston County, Illinois, 27 ff.
Loidolt, Rudolph, 96 f., 105, 227
Loose, Mrs. Isaac A., *quoted*, 165
Lord, I. Q., *quoted*, 11
Los Angeles, California, 16

McClusky, Howard, x
Machine age, 10
McLean County, Illinois, 40, 43, 54, 107, 116, 126, 141, 152
March of Time, 187
Mass production, 5 f.
Mecherle, George J., 123
Merwin, Loring, 124, 227
Metropolitan areas, 20 f., 47, 51
Mid-American Foundation, 90
Millsap, Kenneth F., 90
Minnesota, 41
Minonk, Illinois, 52, 152, 158, 198-204
Mitchell, Don G., *quoted*, 10, 25
Mohr, Jimmie, *quoted*, 191
Montana State University, 87
Morey, Lloyd, 152
Morgan, Arthur E., x, 88; *quoted*, 60
Morrison, Bob, 52, 199, 202 f.
Morrison, Charles Clayton, *quoted*, 61
Morton, Illinois, 69-71
Mosher, M. L., *quoted*, 27 f.
Mussleman, Mrs. Wallace, 196
Mumford, Lewis, 224; *quoted*, 223

National Council of Churches of Christ, 64
National Council for Community Improvement, 85
National Dispersal program, 11
National Industrial Zoning Committee, 21
Neff, Mrs. Hardin, 160
New City Plan Commission, 221
New Industrial Location in New York Metropolitan Area, 10
New York City, 16, 223
News-Dispatch (Minonk), 155, 199 f.
Newspapers, 155, 158, 176-78, 180-81, 199
  community, 34-36
  regional, 36-38, 157, 224
Nichols, James Hastings, *quoted*, 62
Normal, Illinois, 222 f., 226
North Central Land Tenure Research Committee, 77
Norton, L. J., 150

Octavia High School, 173
Octavia Fire District, 176
Ogden, Jean and Jess, x, 87
Organizations, 31-32
Otto family, 42-43
Owen, Jimmy, 124
Oxnam, G. Bromley, *quoted*, 61

Pantagraph, The, ix, xv, 3, 14, 36 f., 110, 114, 117, 120, 124, 133, 147, 152 f., 155, 157 f., 176 ff., 181 f., 199, 201, 205 ff., 221, 227
Parker, Mary, 125
Parking problem, 9, 15-16, 139, 204
  see also Traffic congestion
Parsons College, 89 ff.
Patience, 84, 110
Patton, John, 14, 190
Penney, J. C., *quoted*, 86
Peoria, Illinois, 69 f., 182

Perkins, T. M., *quoted*, 24
Pettigrew, T. P., 180
Philosophy of life, 51, 57
Population, 20
Poston, Richard W., x, 88
Postwar Farm Jobs and Farmers' Purchase Intentions, 116
Poultry, 27 f.
Power, atomic, 8
  steam, 5, 7
Prayer, 49
Presbyterian Tribune, 62
Press, The (Colfax), 155, 176 ff.
Pride, 74 ff.
Primer for Protestants (Nichols), 62
Production, 4, 9
  mass, 5 f.
Pulaski County, Illinois, 79
Pumpkin Festival, 56

Quay, Russell, *quoted*, 161
Questionnaires, 153 ff.

Radio, 86
Railroads, 39
Ralston Purina Company, 138
Rambler (Illinois College), xi, xiv
Rammelkamp, Henry Charles, xi f.
Rathbun, Raymond, 178 f.
Raup, Philip, *quoted*, 77 f.
Reavis, William, 141
Rebuilding Rural America (Hitch), 88
Recreation, 47-58, 104-105, 140, 162-63, 174-75, 194-95, 198 f., 201
  adult, 56
  definition of, 47
  informal, 47, 52
  organized, 47, 51
  see also Entertainment
Rediger, Emil, 195 f.
Regional council, 110, 113, 221
Regional development, 115-17
Regional planning, 223-24
Regional Planning Association, 10
Reid, Paul, 11
Religion, 58-67, 103
  see also Churches
Research, 108 ff.
Review (Roanoke), 155, 180
Rickets, Ray, 196
Roanoke, Illinois, 152, 158, 180-89, 226
Rockefeller Foundation, 87
Rogers, Will, 109
Ropp, Clarence, family, 53-55, 216
Rosenwald, Julius, 87
Roterus, Victor, 26; *quoted*, 16, 17
Rule, Andy, xi
Rural areas, 22 ff.
Rural electrification, 7
Rural Electrification Administration, 24
Rusk, H. P., 150 ff.; *quoted*, 27
Russell, Ramona, *quoted*, 39
Rust, Adlai H., 129 f.

Sanders, Irwin, x
Schacter, Harry, x
Schimpff, Frances and Mary, 125
School districts, 41 ff.
  Colfax, 172-74
  Stanford, 164-70
  unit, 41, 164 ff., 172-74, 185-86
  see also Education
School improvement program, 207
Scruggs and Hammond, 83
Security, 10, 19, 39
Shearer, Tom, xv, 91; *quoted*, 90
Shopping centers, 11
Shopping problems, 110-12
Shoup, Fred E., 129
Sinclair, Harold, 125
Small Communities in Action (Ogden), 87
Small Community Conference, 88
Small Town Renaissance (Poston), 88
Small towns, 20-30
Smith, Harry D., "Babe," 202-203
Smith, Tilman R., 186 ff., 216; *quoted*, 187
Social service center, regional, 119
Social welfare, 103
Sohl, Jerry, 125
Solberg, Earling D., 80; *quoted*, 81
Soule, John Babsone Lane, 14
Soybean industry, 24-25, 137
Spangler, Julius, 162
Sperry, Floyde, 130 f.

Standard of living, 4
Stanford, Illinois, 152, 158, 159-71, 226
Star (Stanford), 155
Stark, Paul C., *quoted*, 86
State Division for Youth and Community Service, 92
State Farm Insurance Companies, 123
State Register (Illinois), xii
State universities, 89
Steam power, 5, 7
Steel strike of 1952, 5
Stevenson, Adlai E., xv, 135; *quoted*, 45
Stewart, Charles L., *quoted*, 77 f.
Stewart, Malcolm, 94
Stoddard, George D., *quoted*, 150, 151
Stoddard, Richard Henry, *quoted*, 189
Stores, 106
Stoutmeyer, Elsie M., *quoted*, 110
Stubbs, Bob, xii
Suburban areas, 12-13, 68 ff.
Survival, national, 10
Sutton, William G., 198
Sylvania Electric Products, Inc., 10, 25

Tazewell County, Illinois, 79, 83
Tate, Ernie, xiv
Tate, H. Clay, ix-x
Tate, Joan, xiv
Teamwork, 31-38
Technology, 18
Teesdale, Walter, 191, 195 f.; *quoted*, 195
Tertiary community, 106-120, 224 ff.
That All May Be One, 62
Thompson, Marjorie, 180
Totalitarianism, 6, 226
Towanda, Illinois, 57
Traffic congestion, 16, 20
see also Parking problem
Transportation, 39, 175, 226
public, 9
Trowbridge, Jo, xii
Tucker, Wilson, 125
Tulip Festival, 76
Tyler, D. A., 165

Ulrich, R. W., 183
Underwood, Robert, 140 f., 214, 216
Unit-Journal (Lexington), 155
U. S. Department of Commerce, 11
Unity, 31, 223
Universities, *see* Illinois, Illinois State Normal, Illinois Wesleyan, Montana State, Virginia, Washington
Universities, state, 89
Upchurch, John D., *quoted*, xiii
Utah, 19

Virginia, University of, 87

Washburn, George, 215 f.
Washington, University of, 88
Watt, Glenn, 197
Wells, George N., 143; *quoted*, 145
Welsh, O. Lloyd, 136
Wichman, William C., *quoted*, 12
Williams, Walter, 123
Wilson, Woodrow, *quoted*, 45
Witaschek, E. N., xii
Wochner, Leonard, 134
Woodford County, Ill., 56, 152, 199
Wooley, A. B., 177 f.; *quoted*, 176
World Council of Churches, 64

Yellow Springs, Ohio, 88, 114, 229
Your Community—Which Way? (Anderson), 153

Zivney, Arthur, 201
Zoning, 80-84, 184

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