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COUNTRY COMMUNITY LIFE

VII—FARM VILLAGE LIFE IN SOUTH GERMANY

The most impressive and the most important single fact about farm life in Europe is the compact farm community. These farmers live together, close together, in little groups of four, five, or a dozen dwellings, in hamlets large enough to have a name and place on the map, in villages like Winterbach and Schorndorf, the first with nearly 600 dwellings and the last with perhaps 1,600. But always they live together, in communities large or small, and never in solitary farmsteads a mile or several miles away from a neighbor, a school, or a church, as in North Carolina and the rest of the United States. And when I say never, like the gallant captain of the Pinafore, I mean hardly ever.

The farm village of Europe and the East is significant. It is of course the product of economic and social forces operating through countless centuries. But I cannot now stop to speak of the origin and development of farm village life. I merely refer the interested reader to two books on this subject, and pass on. They are a volume by Sir Henry Maine and another by Sims.

A Fundamental Contrast

In America our villages and small towns are groups of people engaged primarily in store keeping, banking, buying and shipping cotton, tobacco and other farm products, running garages, operating movie picture houses, factories—doing almost anything and everything but farming. They are retreats, to be sure, for retired farmers who live on rents, or for farmers who farm at long range in automobiles or by proxy with farm foremen. But in the main, our small-town populations are consumers not producers of farm products.

The villages I am studying in South Germany are in sharp contrast with the villages I am used to at home. Here they are groups of farmers and, until within very recent years, of nothing but farmers, every one of them engaged daily in farming. They are not trading centers, they are farm producing centers. They are not banking centers, except for the cooperative credit unions of farmers who during the last seventy years have learned how to use the banks at a distance to finance themselves locally. They are not garage centers, for these farmers do not own automobiles. Oftentimes they are even not freight stations, although they are on or near a railroad. For instance as I write, I look down upon Pfarrdorf, a little place of some 500 farm dwellings in the valley below. It is within a stone's throw of the railway to Nuremberg, but it has neither a freight nor a passenger station. Here is a little town of two thousand inhabitants living within a five-minute walk of the railway and with nothing but a little rain shelter for occasional travelers on the local trains. But Pfarrdorf is like nearly half of the twenty nearby farm towns that I am busy with these days. It is a farm town and almost nothing but a farm town. It has no factories of its own and it furnishes few or no factory hands for the little factory towns along the railroad. It is a village of farmers, all or them out of debt and many of them rich. They live in their own homes and in quiet ways they are manifestly proud of their estate in life.

Marketing Wares

They sell their surpluses and make their small purchases in Schorndorf, a farm village that has turned into a factory town in recent years. It is a mile or so away. To this place and back they trudge afoot with their wares in baskets on their backs or on their heads if the beast of burden happens to be a woman as is usually the case; or in little wagons that look like the toy wagons of our children in America—wagons of all sizes pulled and pushed by the women and children; or in larger wagons of similar build drawn by an ox, oftener by a cow, pulling alone on one side of the wagon pole, for farm vehicles in this region do not have shafts for single work animals. The rich farmers use teams of oxen, and sometimes a horse or a team of horses. Farm horses are rare in Wurtemberg. The

work animals are oxen and cows, commonly cows.

A Noteworthy Picture

What I am trying to picture is a farm village in Germany—the kind of village in which more than two-thirds of all the German farmers live. The rest still live in villages but they are farm villages that have changed into factory towns, for the most part since 1914—factory towns where work people are the families of home-owners.

Imagine if you can a little town in North Carolina as large as Chapel Hill or Carrboro, or larger than both of them together, composed of farm dwellings housing farm animals on the first floors and farm families above—a little town of farmers and almost nothing but farmers—a little town with a manure pile in the front yard of every house no matter how handsome or picturesque it may be.

Basis for a New Civilization

Such are the farmers and the farm village groups of Germany—small-home-owning farmers living in compact farm villages. They save the country civilization of Germany from the unchecked cityward drift of farm populations. They save the factory workers who live under their own rooftrees in country villages and travel to their factory jobs and back daily on the trains and trams for almost nothing (from Winterbach to Stuttgart and back, thirty-three miles, for less than four cents a week). They save the cities from tenement houses and slums as we see them in England, Scotland, and the Great Industrial Area of the United States. They save the producing enterprises of capital from the paralyzing effect of destructive socialism—a type of socialism that the great cities of Germany are struggling with, but that factory owners know little about in the country villages. In Germany as everywhere else home-owning farmers are opposed to radical socialism. They are conservative in their philosophy of life because they own something to conserve—farm lands and firesides and farm animals of their very own. The thirty-six million people in the farm village homes of Germany are a steadying factor of national life today, and tomorrow they may be the best of all that Germany has left to build a new civilization on.

Country Community Real

Country Community has come to be a stock phrase of late years in America in our text books on Rural Sociology. We have the phrase but not the fact. In Europe they have the fact but not the phrase. The weiler, the dorf, the mir—such are some of the terms in use for farm villages in continental Europe. Commune long since passed out of use as a name for country communities in Europe, even in France and Russia. The farm village has been a fundamental fact in Europe for long centuries, and it will play a decisive part in the rebuilding of these stricken countries, for when wars and debased currencies have done their worst, the civilization of Europe will begin again with these groups of home-owning farmers.

Its Significance

Even now they are salting out salvation the civilization of these perplexed peoples, for, no matter how many boys and girls may work in factories in the home town or in neighboring towns, they live at home and the home is almost always the home of a prideful home-owning farmer who holds on to it as he holds on to life itself. These young people may work in factories in other towns but they live as a rule under the shelter of their own rooftrees. They do not leave their village homes to herd in city tenements in Germany; they live in the country towns and travel in vast multitudes to their city jobs on the work trains in the morning and back again to their homes at night.

An Amazing Spectacle

He would be a hopelessly stupid observer who missed the immense social significance of a fact like this. I look about for the slum quarters of every German city I get into and I do not find

KNOW NORTH CAROLINA

North Carolina in the past year has paid into the Federal Treasury \$125,000,000.

Those who view the state debt with alarm should get a pleasant reaction by regarding the latter figure, too. A state that is taxed by the Federal Government for a great deal more in a year than the total of its debt is not approaching bankruptcy.

Gilliam Grissom, the collector of internal revenue, announces the figures paid into the Federal Treasury for the year, and calls attention to the fact that they are larger than those in California, the seventh state in the Union last year in amount of Federal tax paid, when this state stood eighth.

This huge sum that North Carolina has furnished the central Government was a levy on North Carolina production. It was paid out of the earnings of factories in this state, operated by capital, labor and materials that largely originated within the state. These resources are not ephemeral and they are assets of North Carolina that guarantee that the state was not pursuing an unsound policy in investing in the further development of its territory.—The High Point Enterprise.

any. I find areas of poverty, but not slums as I see them in American cities. Germany is deliberately preserving her country village populations and making city slums impossible, and she is doing it with railway rates that are so cheap that they baffle belief. For instance, I traveled on yesterday from Winterbach to Baden-Baden, ninety-seven miles, for eleven cents, which is about one-tenth of a cent a mile. Think of going from Durham to Salisbury for eleven cents! But the country-dwelling factory workers of Germany travel on commutation tickets for less than one-tenth of the rates I pay—in fact for about the one-hundredth of a cent per mile. These simple facts explain the volume of travel in Germany. The swarming multitudes of country workers and shoppers moving into and out of every German city and little factory center every day and all day long is the most amazing spectacle I have so far looked upon in Germany.

A Firm Basis

Another fact is worth considering. American farmers have always found it difficult to get together and to stick together through thick and thin for any purpose whatsoever. So because their lives are lived in widely scattered country homes, a few to the square mile—in North Carolina only seven per square mile on an average the state over. What cooperative farm enterprise lacks in America is compact country community life, and this lack is usually fatal to farm organizations of every sort. Successful farm cooperation must be based on country community life. How could it be otherwise?

The German farmers—the small land-owning peasants—do not have to bother about getting together. They are together already, have been together during a thousand years of history. Their children play together, sing together in the village schools, dance together in the seasonal holidays, practice together in the village bands and song clubs. They come to know one another through and through. They know after awhile who among them has the grace and grit to stick tight in a farm organization—say, in a cooperative credit union, a type of organization that exists in almost every farm village in Germany.

Cooperative Farm Credit

Membership in a credit union is a certificate of character and a badge of honor—a public acknowledgment of the fact that the member is a man of industry, thrift, sense, sobriety, and complete trustworthiness. German peasants have done almost nothing with cooperative buying or selling organizations—in these fields the Danish farmers have beat them hands down; but they

were the first farmers in the world to see the fundamental necessity for adequate, suitable credit in the business of farming and to bunch up to finance themselves in cooperative credit unions. Credit is the very first condition of farm prosperity, they say. In America it is the very last thing our farmers have thought about and even now they are thinking not about self-help in cooperative farm credit unions, but about government loans on farm lands, livestock, and farm products in general.

Essentials for Success

The point I am trying to make is this: In Germany the cooperative credit union succeeds because it is based on country community life—on the life lived by home-owning farm villagers who know one another thoroughly.

In America cooperative farm enterprise lacks the background of country community life, and it is a fatal defect. It must be cured or our country regions will be progressively depopulated as the years go on, and farming as a business will face steadily increasing difficulties. It can hardly survive the difficulties it now faces, but worse conditions are easily in sight unless American farmers can get together and stick together in credit organizations, in marketing associations, and in cooperative buying—I mention these essentials in the order of causal dependence. But they are not likely to stick together in any phase of farm business unless they live together in farm communities.

Our Imperative Need

We do not need more farmers in North Carolina. What we need is country communities of home-owning farmers—farm colonies like Durham and Delhi in California. We cannot have the European farm village, and we ought not if we could; but farm village life we must have and it must suit the conditions of farming as a business and as a mode of life in North Carolina. The MacRae colonies are pointing the way in the Lower Cape Fear country.

North Carolina must develop her own type of farm community, and she must do it rapidly, or the chances are that every dollar now invested in farm properties will be lost or in jeopardy in the next quarter century.—E. C. Branson, Baden-Baden, May 24, 1923.

CAROLINA BANK CAPITAL

The state of New York has nearly twice as much bank capital and surplus as all the Southern States combined.

Pennsylvania has almost as much bank capital and surplus as the entire South.

New Jersey has nearly three times as much bank capital as North Carolina.

Rhode Island, no larger than one county in this state, has two-thirds as much bank capital and surplus as North Carolina.

We have nearly twice as many people as Connecticut, and rank ahead of her in the total value of farm and factory products, but she has nearly 50 percent more capital and surplus.

We far outrank Virginia in agriculture, manufacture, and population, but she has sixty percent more bank capital and surplus.

Is there any legitimate reason why Maine should have 35 dollars of bank capital and surplus per inhabitant while North Carolina, with all her agriculture and industry, has accumulated only 21 dollars?

The answer lies largely in the difference between wealth production on a total basis, and wealth production and accumulation on a per inhabitant basis. But aside from that, the habit of thrift is a big factor. Until we become more thrifty we will continue to pay tribute to the people in other states who buy our bonds, who supply us with the money with which to build our roads, our schools, to make our town improvements, and even to carry on much of our trade.

ASSEMBLING RECORDS

The University Library is interested in completing back files of North Carolina periodicals, documents, reports, proceedings of societies, and the like, for the North Carolina Collection. Some of the reports of road, railroad, and canal companies to be completed are

listed below. The Librarian will be glad to hear of available issues of these publications.

Railroad Reports

Atlantic and N. C. Railroad Proceedings of Stockholders.
Albemarle and Chesapeake Canal Co. Report.
Blue Ridge Railroad Report.
Cape Fear and Deep River Navigation Co. Report.
Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railroad Proceedings of Stockholders.
Charlotte, Columbia, and Augusta Railroad Proceedings of Stockholders.
Charlotte and South Carolina Railroad Proceedings of Stockholders.
Chester and Lenior Railroad Proceedings of Stockholders.
Fayetteville and Western Plank Road Co. Report.
Fayetteville and Western Railroad Report.
Neuse River Navigation Co. Report.
North Carolina Railroad Co. Proceedings of Stockholders. Issues of 1859, 1871, 1901, 1902, 1910.
North Carolina Railroad Report.
Northwestern North Carolina Railroad Proceedings of Stockholders.
Petersburg Railroad Co. Report.
Petersburg, Greenville, and Roanoke Railroads Report.
Raleigh and Gaston Railroad Proceedings of Stockholders. Issues for 1858, 1868.
Raleigh and Gaston Railroad Report.
Seaboard and Roanoke Railroad Report.
Western N. C. Railroad Proceedings of Stockholders, issue for 1870.
Western N. C. Railroad Report.
Wilmington and Manchester Railroad Proceedings of Stockholders.
Wilmington and Raleigh Railroad Proceedings of Stockholders.
Wilmington and Raleigh Railroad Report.
Wilmington and Weldon Railroad Proceedings of Stockholders.
Wilmington, Charlotte, and Rutherford Railroad Proceedings.

COMMUNITY LIFE

A community is ideal just in the degree that its citizens as individuals are self-respecting, considerate, loyal, and sympathetic; and its business interests intelligent, cooperative and energetic. There is nothing mysterious about the progressive and forward-looking community for these terms are convertible with human nature at its best. When business rivalries beget harsh, unjust and malicious antagonisms, not only is community progress arrested, but social standards are made to suffer and personal attributes lose their virtue. To enter fully into the spirit of these verities, it is only necessary to recollect that the community is but the individual amplified.

A community is what its average citizen makes it, for leadership can do nothing more than leaven the lump, and the standard is low or high just in the degree that the lump is receptive and capable of rising.—Wilmington Star.

TRAINED WORKERS WANTED

The School of Public Welfare of the University reports a large demand at excellent salaries for men and women trained to do community work, both in administrative and field work. The educational institutions also are calling for teachers of the social sciences at salaries ranging from \$2000 to \$4000. A young woman who just completed a year in the School of Public Welfare is community worker and probation judge and is happy in her work with an unusually good salary. The call is now for students of rare ability to enter into training for social work.

GROWING BETTER COTTON

The proportion of cotton of improved varieties grown in North Carolina has increased 50 per cent within the last eight years, according to reports to the United States Department of Agriculture. Community crop improvement work with cotton was begun in the state by agricultural experiment station and extension workers eight years ago. The plan followed has been to establish community test farms throughout the state to demonstrate the best variety of cotton to grow in the locality and the value of the use of selected seed. Efforts are made to secure the growing of this variety alone in the community. When the work was begun, it was estimated that 90 per cent of North Carolina cotton was produced from seed of low yield and mixed, small boll varieties.—Press item, U. S. Dept. of Agriculture.