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## COST OF ALMSHOUSES

### AMERICAN ALMSHOUSES

Into a bulletin of fifty-four pages the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the United States Department of Labor has packed a mass of interesting information about almshouses in the United States. The study discusses physical equipment, types of inmates, and character of supervision, as well as costs, but its chief contribution is in an analysis of costs, some of the results of which are shown in the table in this issue of the News Letter. The figures presented, which are for the year 1923, show that the average total cost of maintenance per inmate per year in almshouses in the United States is \$334.64. Costs are further analyzed by grouping the almshouses according to number of inmates—1-10, 11-25, 26-50, 51-100, 101-200, 201-500, etc.

### Cost Decreases with Size

It was found that as a rule costs decrease steadily as the size of the institution increases. "The multiplication of almshouses is extravagant and ineffectual to a degree seldom realized." In North Carolina we maintain 97 separate county homes to care for 1,784 inmates. A study of the figures for North Carolina shows that there were 29 county homes with from one to ten inmates each. There were in these 29 institutions 176 inmates. To care for these inmates the counties employed 44 persons, or one to every four inmates. The annual cost per inmate was \$415.50, not counting supplies furnished by the farms. There were 42 county homes with eleven to twenty-five inmates each. In this group the counties employed one person for every seven inmates. The annual cost per inmate was \$353.49. Sixteen county homes had from 26 to 50 inmates each. The average number of inmates in this group to each person employed by the counties to care for them was nine. The annual per capita cost was \$251.59. Four county homes had between 51 and 100 inmates each. In these institutions the counties employed one person to every 12 inmates. The total cost per inmate per year was \$244.76. There was only one county home in the state with more than 100 inmates. In this institution there was one employee to 17 inmates. The annual per capita cost was \$300.27.

### Small Units Expensive

Studied in connection with the reports of the State Board of Charities and Public Welfare, these figures are still more interesting. Per capita costs in county homes with one to ten inmates range from \$109.76 in Avery to \$1,244.73 in Brunswick. But of the eleven county homes showing annual per capita costs of \$350 and more, nine have not more than ten inmates; and of twenty-one institutions with annual costs per inmate of \$400 or more only two have more than twenty-five inmates. Of the 2,046 almshouses included in the Department of Labor Study, 1,373 have 25 inmates or fewer. Of this number 787 had from 1 to 10 inmates. Of the 92 county homes in North Carolina, 71 had 25 or fewer inmates, and 29 had from 1 to 10. All of these, according to the study, fall below the number that is necessary for efficient and economical operation. The fault lies, in the opinion of the United States Department of Labor, in the smallness of the governmental unit operating most of the almshouses.

### Need District Almshouses

The Department of Labor approves the suggestion already advanced from several states that the solution lies in the district almshouses. In this state the State Board of Charities and Public Welfare proposed this solution in its biennial report in 1922. It analyzed the situation in the first congressional district and presented figures tending to show that a considerable saving in money as well as a great improvement in efficiency in the care of the poor could be effected by a district institution to take the place of the twelve small institutions with fewer than one hundred inmates, all told.

### Law, but No Results

Following the recommendations of the Board the General Assembly of 1923 enacted a law permitting the establishment of district hospital-homes by any two or more contiguous counties. But

although the State Board of Charities and Public Welfare has continued its agitation for such institutions, no such institutions have been established. There has been a remarkable quickening of interest in providing better buildings—twenty-five new county homes in five years, all but two of them costing from \$20,000 to \$175,000 each, and a total of \$1,000,000. But county officials seem unable to even think of an institution for the poor, in which they have invested the county's money, located outside the county. There seems little prospect for district almshouses in North Carolina by the voluntary action of the counties. And the erection of a large number of new county homes makes more difficult any sort of plan for the solution of this difficult problem by the districting of the state.—Roy M. Brown.

## COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The regular meeting of the North Carolina Club, October 19, was addressed by Mr. G. H. Lawrence, of Orange County, who spoke on Inter-Community Relations. The attendance was good and the discussion following Mr. Lawrence's paper was brisk and stimulating. The whole question of inter-community relations is one step in advance of community organization, and the research and thought of students have scarcely begun to grapple with it. Perhaps not until the local community is better defined will it be possible to say what the relations between communities are and wherein they are capable of improvement. Nevertheless, the subject is one that deserves consideration.

### Types of Communities

Mr. Lawrence classified communities in North Carolina as follows: Rural communities, small-town communities, industrial communities, and urban communities. "I mean by rural communities those places familiar to most of us where the population may be anything from fifty to about four hundred, although there are usually no well defined boundaries as to just where the community ends and hence the exact number of inhabitants cannot easily be counted. Such places are characterized by a few stores, one or two churches, usually a post-office, rarely a bank, often a consolidated school, and sometimes a railroad siding. In the main the people are farmers, although some may be engaged in lumbering or other occupations of a purely rural nature."

### Small-Town Community

"The small-town community is the next larger logical unit. It is usually the outgrowth of a rural community. Some of the prevailing characteristics of this type are definite town limits, at least one bank, often some paved streets, usually manufacturing on a small scale, several churches, some form of town government, one or more each of hotels, drug stores, barber shops, and moving-picture houses, the presence of lawyers, and the existence among the inhabitants of a definite feeling of town consciousness. The population may run up to twenty thousand or so, but when it becomes this large one or more industrial communities are usually included.

"The industrial community needs little explanation for the purposes of distinguishing it from other types. It consists of a place widely varying in number of inhabitants but where all interests center around a certain kind of manufacturing, either around cotton mills, furniture factories, tobacco factories, or other industrial enterprises which necessitate the employment of a considerable number of people. Industrial communities may be entirely separate geographical units, but they are often sections nominally of small towns or cities.

"I shall briefly dispose of the urban community by classifying it in general as a place of twenty thousand or more population.

"The first three types include by far the greatest number of communities in North Carolina, since we have only eight or ten cities of sufficient size to in any way qualify as urban communities."

### Influence of Size

"The geographical proximity of communities whether they be rural, small-town, industrial, or urban is naturally an important determinant in the amount

## MY COMMUNITY

"My Community." Did you ever say that and then stop to think seriously of what it really meant? Your community is the locality wherein you expect to make your home, where most of your property, if not all of it, is located. It is the place where your neighbors and best friends live, and where their children will grow up to become the friends and associates of your children. Its welfare is your own and that of your family. Its health should be a matter of profound interest to you. Its prosperity must of necessity, to a great extent, affect your prosperity. Its beauty should be your pride. Its roads, its schools, its churches are yours. Your community comes next to your home, and, therefore, should be of concern to you, if for no other than a selfish reason.—Albemarle News-Herald.

and character of community inter-relationships. These relationships are most extensive in adjoining communities, or at least they probably should be. Obviously small rural communities have practically nothing in the way of relationships with each other if the distance separating them is more than a few miles. But the larger and more important a community is the farther will be its radius of influence and the greater will be its sphere of relationships with other communities. The subject is of interesting complexity in proportion to the size and importance of the communities involved."

### None Self-Sufficing

"Since the day has passed, at least in this country, when any one community can satisfy all its needs it would be a hopeless task to try to explain every relationship between any one community and other communities. Even the ultra-conservative and self-complacent communities cannot exist without depending on other places for many of the necessities of life. It is necessary, therefore, to consider inter-community relationships in terms of a group of communities; the most logical grouping for North Carolina, then would be by counties. However, in some sections of the United States the unit might better be the township or even the state. While in many instances communities of one county form close relationships with those of an adjoining county we must draw the line somewhere or else we would be involved in the larger sphere of inter-county relationships or even of inter-state affairs."

### County-Unit Proposed

The county as a unit for promoting better inter-community relations is suggested by Mr. Lawrence, but in this case it is necessary for county loyalty to predominate over the more provincial loyalty to small communities. "That competition should exist between communities of a similar size and character seems to be inevitable. It is probably advisable. But there must be a point somewhere where competition bows to cooperation. To what extent is inter-community rivalry a thing to be desired, and how far can it be carried before it becomes a hindrance rather than an incentive to progress? Perhaps if communities would think and act more in terms of being cogs in the wheel of the county as a whole much of the cut-throat tactics of communities with each other could be eliminated. "Communities must look at the facts as regards themselves and their neighboring communities in an unbiased light. Neighborliness must be emphasized, since it is just as important for communities to get along together as it is for neighboring families."

## FLOWERS AND BOOKS

Henry Ward Beecher, who began his ministry on the western frontier and had to make long journeys into settlements where there were no hotels, always picked out a house that had flowers as a place to spend the night. "If there were no trees for shade, no patch of flowers in the yard, we were suspicious of the place," he wrote. "No matter how rude the cabin or rough the surroundings, if we saw that the window held a trough of flowers, and some vines twisted about strings let down from the eaves, we were confident

## RURAL ELECTRIC POWER

### XI. AMOUNT OF CURRENT USED

In the last article of this series, various uses of electric power, both in the household and around the farm, were briefly indicated. This week some samples of current requirements and expenses of household appliances will be given, while in the next article the same will be done for apparatus used in actual farming.

Electric current is sold by the kilowatt hour. If a customer has ten light bulbs of 100 watts each, and he lets all ten burn for one hour, he has used a thousand watts or 1 kilowatt of electric current for one hour, thereby making a kilowatt hour (abbreviation, K. W. H.). Rates charged for current vary greatly in different places and depend on many factors, among them being the amount of power a customer can make use of. A farmer who uses electricity for a good many purposes can usually get a better rate than one who uses only a little power. The average rate calculated on country-wide data is a trifle over 8 cents per kilowatt hour, but for the sake of caution the table given below is based on a 10-cent rate.

The following table gives samples of the amount of current used monthly in lighting a farmhouse and running the

electric appliances, together with the cost based on a 10-cent rate:

	K. W. H.	Cost per month
Lighting farmhouse.....	16.7	\$1.67
Pumping water.....	9.1	.91
Washing machine.....	4.2	.42
Electric iron.....	6.0	.60
Vacuum cleaner.....	4.2	.42
Toaster.....	2.5	.25
Sewing machine.....	1.4	.14
		\$4.41

An electric refrigerator uses more current than all the above put together, and accordingly was not included in the list. A refrigerator uses about 70 kilowatt hours per month and accordingly would cost \$7.00 per month.

Below is given an estimate of the first cost of electric household equipment:

Refrigerator.....	\$350
Water pump.....	225
Washing machine and wringer.....	125
Dish washer.....	100
Vacuum cleaner.....	60
Sewing machine motor.....	20
Flat iron.....	8
Toaster.....	8
Percolator.....	8
	—A. T. Cutler.

that there was some taste and carefulness in the log cabin . . . We were seldom misled. A patch of flowers came to signify kind people, clean beds, and good bread. But in other states of society other signs are more significant. Flowers about a rich man's house may signify only that he has a good gardener or that he has refined neighbors and does what he sees them do. But men are not accustomed to buy books unless they want them. If on visiting the dwelling of a man in slender means we find that he contents himself with cheap carpets and very plain furniture in order that he may purchase books, he rises at once in our esteem . . . Give us a house furnished with books rather than furniture. Both, if you can, but books at any rate! To spend several days in a friend's house, and hunker for something to read while you are treading on costly carpets and sitting on luxurious chairs and sleeping on down, is as if one were bribing your body for the sake of cheating your mind."

### The Joy of Books

That so many people should pass through life without ever knowing the joy of reading books and owning them is a tragedy. I had the good fortune to grow up in a parsonage. Preachers cannot overeat, even if they want to; their faith that God will look after them protects them from worry, and they

have no part in the struggle for social prominence. Hence they live to good old age and enjoy their days. Their principal dissipation is books, which they will have, even though it means skimping on such non-essentials as food and clothes. Surrounded as he is with books of biography and history and travel, with essays and poetry and popular science, the preacher's child learns to love books long before he goes to college. But college deepens the love.

It is a good habit to keep yourself constantly in debt to your library, to buy one or two books a week whether you get time to read them or not. It is a satisfaction to see the shelves fill up, and a book once bought and put on the library table looks up at you with a glance of mingled invitation and reproof until it gets itself opened and read. Of all friends, books are the least obtrusive and demanding. They fit every mood. They come to you when you ask for them and are not hurt when you cast them aside. Said Sir John Herschel, "If I were to pray for a taste that would stand me in good stead under every variety of circumstances, and be a source of happiness and cheerfulness through life, and a shield against its ills however things might go amiss and the world wrong upon me, it would be a taste for reading."—Bruce Barton, in Good Housekeeping.

## THE PER INMATE COST OF ALMSHOUSES

### For the States of the Union in 1923 and 1924

The following table shows the rank of the states in the cost of almshouses per inmate per year as revealed in a recent bulletin, The Cost of American Almshouses, issued by the United States Department of Labor. The maintenance cost of caring for inmates in almshouses—called county homes in North Carolina and in most other states—does not include products supplied by the farm.

In Nevada it cost \$865 per inmate to maintain her almshouses. In Alabama the cost was only \$188 per inmate per year. In North Carolina the cost, exclusive of supplies furnished by county-home farms, was \$235 per inmate, distributed as follows: Superintendent \$53.64; matrons and nurses \$7.62; cooks, domestics, etc., \$6.40; labor \$7.68; other expenditures \$169.90. The per inmate income for maintaining county homes in North Carolina is derived as follows: Public funds \$217.02; sale of farm produce \$18.81—other sources \$1.72; refund \$2.00. The cost is far from uniform in North Carolina, ranging from \$1,244.73 per inmate in the most expensive county to \$109.73 per inmate in the least expensive county. The Scotland county home showed a profit to the county of \$45.00 per inmate.

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Department of Rural Social-Economics

Rank	States	Annual Maint. Cost per Inmate	Rank	States	Annual Maint. Cost per Inmate
1	Nevada.....	\$865	25	Ohio.....	\$322
2	Wyoming.....	695	26	Illinois.....	322
3	Vermont.....	640	27	West Virginia.....	314
4	Arizona.....	590	28	Indiana.....	312
5	South Dakota.....	567	29	Texas.....	309
6	North Dakota.....	522	30	New York.....	299
7	Montana.....	519	31	Arkansas.....	296
8	Maine.....	502	32	Pennsylvania.....	296
9	Minnesota.....	491	33	South Carolina.....	296
10	Nebraska.....	462	34	Wisconsin.....	290
11	Massachusetts.....	449	35	Kansas.....	285
12	Connecticut.....	431	36	District of Columbia.....	278
13	Rhode Island.....	425	37	Maryland.....	269
14	New Hampshire.....	417	38	Oregon.....	262
15	California.....	415	39	Georgia.....	259
16	Idaho.....	382	40	Virginia.....	243
17	New Jersey.....	375	41	Missouri.....	239
18	Michigan.....	371	42	Louisiana.....	238
19	Utah.....	361	43	North Carolina.....	235
20	Iowa.....	358	44	Colorado.....	228
21	Florida.....	352	45	Tennessee.....	221
22	Delaware.....	339	46	Kentucky.....	216
23	Washington.....	337	47	Mississippi.....	214
24	Oklahoma.....	323	48	Alabama.....	188

Note: New Mexico no report.