

# RURAL COMMUNITY HOUSES HELP TO KEEP BOYS ON FARM

## New Centres Offer Everything From Movies to Billiards, with a Bit of Education Thrown in—Movement Extending to Outlying Sections All Over the Country.

A new factor is being utilized in rural districts to create and foster the community spirit. It is the community house, a magnet which draws the people of sparsely settled localities to meet frequently for their welfare both as individuals and as a group. It offsets to a degree the lure of the cities and makes for contentment. It provides much that the small city might offer in the way of social diversion with none of its drawbacks.

It is only within a comparatively short period that the community house appeared. Prior to 1900, there was no established place where dwellers living far apart in agricultural districts could meet, unless it was in the schoolhouse or church. A dance in the barn and the interchange of gossip furnished the usual forms of group social diversion.

This was equally true of New England, the middle west, the south and southwest and the far west. True New England had its clambrakes and camp meetings and county fairs, the middle west had barn raisings and corn roasts and fairs; the south barbecues, and revival meetings, and the west its rodeos, when widely scattered neighbors saw one another perhaps once a year. The county seats and village settlements of course, had a community life but these activities did not embrace the casual visitor, man or woman, who came to town on market day, or when it was necessary to replenish household or farm supplies, nor did they reach out into the daily lives of those who dwell many miles away from the main street.

There was no real community life outside the villages. Then the growth of cities and the extension of surface car lines brought rural residents nearer to the cities and increased their opportunities for diversion. The automobile made visits to neighbors and cities more feasible. But this did not mean more did it arouse the community spirit. The community was still a number of separate units. Amusement was the chief aim and each individual sought it in his own way. The Grange sprang into being and made rapid strides in membership and influence, but it was organized for the benefit of one class in the community rather than for the community as a whole. But all these improvements over the old conditions tended to cause a demand for an organization or symbol around which would center a community movement. The community house became this symbol.

Two hundred and forty-eight community houses have been built since 1900; 202 since 1912, and 90 since 1915. There are more than 500 of them. A census taken by the department of agriculture shows that 261 are situated in place of 2,500 inhabitants or fewer, 83 being in open country and 55 in towns or small cities having a population of more than 2,500, 9 are farmers' fraternal society buildings, 29 church community buildings, 20 of these being separate from the church, 9 are farmers' fraternal society buildings, and 8 are combined library and community buildings. The 83 buildings in the open country are controlled or dominated by the people of farming communities and a membership usually includes every family resident in the neighborhood. They are the homes of farmers' clubs of various kinds, educational, purely social, economic, fraternal and general.

There are three types of community houses which may be described as minimum, medium and maximum. The minimum type has an auditorium with a stage and dressing rooms, dining room, kitchen and a playground. Its activities on the economic side include agricultural society meetings, farm demonstrations, cooperative purchasing and marketing, fairs, canning and cooking demonstrations, and boys' and girls' club work. The educational and recreational features embrace lectures, entertainments, musicals, community singes, local plays, table games, debate and spelling bees. Purely social diversions take in club meetings, socials, dancing and supper parties and luncheons and teas. Political rallies, caucuses and elections are held there. A visit nurse gives instructions in hygiene and in some there is a union church and Sunday School and a church auxiliary.

The medium type has, in addition to the features possessed by the minimum, a library, woman's rest-room and committee room, and on its recreation side, adds basketball, volley ball, gymnasium games and tennis and baseball. The maximum type, in which the community house both structurally and in its appointments and the scope of its activities reaches far beyond the conceptions of the originators of the movement, has a gymnasium, a room for games, special rooms for various committees, municipal offices, a health room, bowling, club rooms, swimming pool and showers, war veterans' room, farm bureau room, amber of commerce room, red Cross or charities room, museum, stock sale pavilion, art room music room, and

lodge room, in addition to the facilities included in others.

The community houses have been constructed or acquired under a variety of conditions and serve different types of communities. For example, there is the building at Valrico, Fla. Many of the residents had left the north and west to go to that sparsely settled region and take up fruit farming. Church, school and fraternal ties of long standing had been severed. The newcomers were strangers to one another. But in 1915 they formed a community improvement association, and by the sale of stock with dues, and the proceeds of bazaars erected a community house of two stories 50 x 80 feet, containing a lobby, an auditorium, kitchen, assembly hall, stage dressing room, two community rooms and a motion picture booth. Much of the labor was done by volunteer members of the association. Maintenance expenses of \$220 a year are met by dues and receipts from entertainments.

The Dixon township building at Argonia, Kansas, represents in the form of a community house, an attempt to unite the interest and aspirations of the farming community with those of the training center, the township serving as the unit. The state legislature permitted the township to vote bonds to the amount of \$5,000 for the erection of the building. It contains rooms for township officials, a library of 600 volumes, an auditorium with 600 opera chairs, and a balcony seating 175; a large stage with five drop curtains, one moving picture curtain and six wing curtains and dressing rooms. Between the stage and the seats, is a concrete floor 15 feet wide running across the building, with large double doors at each end. During fairs and stock shows the animals are brought into the building through these doors, there to be examined and judged before the public.

About eight years ago a boy went to the secretary of the Matinecock neighborhood Association of Locust valley New York and asked him to start a boys club, saying there was no place for boys to go for a good time except to the saloons of neighboring towns. The secretary found that there was in the village a young man's athletic club which met in a blacksmiths shop. He persuaded this club to join the Neighborhood association as a recreation department to provide recreation for the whole community. An executive committee was appointed, consisting of a timber dealer, a barber, three carpenters and a clergyman. Temporary quarters were found in an old barn, which was fitted up through a general contribution, the equipment including a phonograph, a piano, a pool table, a stove, dishes, an indoor baseball outfit and magazines. Soon 148 young men were governing themselves, financing their enterprise and furnishing suppers, dances, eueches and athletic entertainments for the community.

The barn soon became too small for them and as the Neighborhood association also was in need of a home an effort was made to get voluntary contributions for a building which would house both. The work had aroused the community spirit and 50 per cent of the families in the village contributed. With voluntary labor worth \$1,500, plus the fund raised, a community house costing \$32,000 was erected. All the work was done by residents of the community, every piece of timber and iron used in construction was fabricated in the village. There was provided an auditorium seating 500 persons, a stage, a social room, a motion picture booth, a room for the village fire department, five baths, four bowling alleys, pool tables, a player piano and kitchen china and cooking utensils. The building is in constant use, the attendance being an average of 800 persons a week. The annual budget of \$4,000 is met from receipts and dues. Motion pictures are given twice a week.

And so many other community houses all over the land are helping to make the country less lonely and to spread the mutually helpful spirit in the country.

## LEAVE THEIR ANCIENT HOMES

### Ancestral Mansions of France Are Passing Out of the Possession of Proud Families.

The old families of France are feeling the pinch of adversity and, as in London, Devonshire house and other ancestral homes are being turned to baser uses, so in Paris the famous mansions of the country's great families are finding new owners. The residence of the princess of Wagram is now the Spanish embassy, the wonderful hotel in which Princess Jacques de Broglie once gave her "ball of precious stones" is now the United States embassy; the new Czechoslovakian representative lives in the mansion of the ancient de Ligne family, while the residence of the late duc de Pomar, which was inspired by Mary Stuart's Edinburgh home, Holyrood manor, now shelters the Bulgarian ambassador. The Gaillard mansion, Place Malesherbes, a copy of one of the wings of the castle of Blois, is to become a branch office of the Bank of France, while the ancestral home of the Bourc de Bozas, in the Rue Pierre ler de Serbie, is now to be hired for dances or entertainments. Other ancestral homes, a Figaro writer points out, have been taken by antiquaries, notably the Sagan mansion and the Morny mansion. And the list could be continued.—From the Continental Edition of the London Mail.

## NOVELTY WOULD WEAR OFF

### Boss Had Right Idea as to How to Do Away With Excitement in Office.

He had been getting to work late with such regularity that the boss was aroused and so he resolved to begin arriving at the office more punctually. Anyhow, all the standard alibis, such as the alarm clock falling to ring, the crowded street cars passing him up at his corner, were about worn out in his case.

And so one morning all week he drifted with attempted nonchalance into the office among the early arrivals. The others of the office staff at once set up a clamor.

"What's the matter, couldn't you sleep last night?" some asked.

"He probably was out all night and hasn't gone home yet," others remarked.

"The clock at his house must have been an hour fast this morning," said another of the gang.

Then the target of all these remarks became indignant. Going to the boss' desk, he made his complaint.

"If it is going to cause so darn much excitement for me to get down on time, I guess I had better be late every day," he said.

"None," said the boss, without looking up from his work. "Get down on time every morning and you won't cause any excitement."

## WILTED BEFORE THE THREAT

### Student Saw Awful Possibility in Two Words Addressed to Him by Prefect of Study.

Fifty-five years ago a certain Indianapolis man was a student or, as he always insists, a pupil, at Notre Dame university. At that time he was only a youngster and, he admits, "cut up a little."

One fatal day, he took with him to the study hall a copy of "Billy Bowlegs," which he hid in his geography and began to read avidly. In fact, he became so interested that he failed to hear the prefect of study when the latter called on him for a recitation. Finally the prefect called him to the desk in the front of the room. There was no opportunity to get rid of the book, so up to the desk he walked, book in hand.

The prefect unsuspectingly took "Billy Bowlegs," handed our hero his geography and told him to return to his seat.

Several days later, when the Indianapolis man of today began to whisper and to grow fractions, the prefect said to him just two words.

"Now, Billy."

Instantly, the pupil became very quiet and always in the future was a model student, while in that class.

For he feared the prefect would disclose the dreadful truth and he would go through school, branded with the name, "Billy Bowlegs."—Indianapolis News.

## MAKING STUDY OF CHIMNEYS

### Johns Hopkins University Professor Has Planned Careful Experiments Concerning Their Behavior.

Why are factory chimneys built the way they are? The answer to this question, according to Prof. A. G. Christie, of the department of mechanical engineering at Johns Hopkins university, is that the first smoke-stacks happened to be built "that way," and everybody else has followed the example. Little is really known, says Professor Christie, of the internal action of the gases in a chimney, and he is accordingly undertaking some investigations into the matter. He has constructed on the grounds of the university a chimney with two platforms, one 25 feet from the ground and the other 25 feet higher, both of them reached by an iron ladder. At each platform the masons have left openings, which will ordinarily be plugged up, but will be cleared whenever the observers are at work. Through each aperture it will be possible for the experimenter to project instruments for the study of the gas flow. Careful records will be kept as material for a more precise knowledge of the factors on which an effective draught depends.

An explanation will thus be found, it is hoped, of the difference in the behavior of chimneys—why, that is to say, one smoke-stack will draw like a vacuum cleaner, while another will choke like a "flivver" which has lost a cylinder or two.

## FAN SAVES COAL

### Long Island commuters, who are among those hardest hit by the coal shortage, have adopted many expedients to eke out their supplies and to make the utmost of what fuel they have.

One of them tested an idea with so much success that many other users of hot-air furnaces are following his example. He closed the damper of his stove pipe, shutting off all air from the outside, and placed a small electric fan in the cold-air duct between the outer wall of the cellar and the furnace.

The fan drives the hot air into his room heated to a much higher temperature than it formerly was when drawn from outdoors.

He says the cost of running the fan is of no account compared with the improvement in the heating of the house.—New York Sun.

## FACING THE FACT

My employer, who most strenuously objects to smoking, comes to the office every morning and invariably leaves at noon for the balance of the day. Immediately upon his departure I draw my pipe from my pocket and enjoy it to the fullest extent.

One afternoon he gave us a surprise by walking in. I hastily put my pipe in my pocket, not knowing what else to do with it. While bending over my books he kept remarking about smelling something burning.

Finally the stenographer procured a glass of water, and as she dashed it on my burning coat I will confess it was the most embarrassing moment of my life.—Exchange.

## OWNED HOUSES; LIVED IN COWSHED.

An almost unbelievable case of a woman with six children living in a cowshed has come to light in Leicestershire, Eng. when the husband, who has been nine weeks in a sanatorium, and is shortly returning to the cowshed, appealed to the council to get them rooms in the workhouse. They have lived in the cowshed for 13 months. "It moved on us as we lay in bed last winter," the man said. "We cannot stand another winter there." One girl of seven had died from the cold. The curious part of the matter is that the man owned four houses, but could not get possession of them, owing to governmental leasing regulations.

## Noiseless Riveters.

Noiseless riveters operating on a rotary vibratory system are now offered, of bench or pedestal type, which it is claimed will rivet the most intricate job in silence, at a speed limited only by the operator's ability to feed the work.—Scientific American.

## FARM DRUDGERY LESS

### 300,000 Farms Lightening Work by Electrical Means.

On Others Women Carry an Average of Forty-five Tons of Water Every Year.

Old fashioned drudgery without any social compensation is decreasing among the farms of America. This can be positively stated after examining a survey of farms made by electrical interests. The chief revelation of that survey was that one-tenth of all the farms of the United States are equipped for electrical operation.

It sounds significant to say that 300,000 farms are now "doing it electrically." But it sounds even more significant to state that there are 1,700,000 other farms where electricity is unknown.

On these latter the old burdens are borne in the old way. The women feel them probably more than the men. Any farm woman who has reached middle life and who has never had an electrical appliance in her house knows how drudgery can kill the spirit.

The investigation mentioned brought out certain information. It was found that 61 per cent of the farm women on electrified farms carry water from the well every day and average about forty-five tons of water a year. Often the women assist in the dairy work of the farm, and 88 per cent of them wash the milk pails, while 65 per cent clean the cream separators.

In their daily housework—the same sort of work that city housewives perform—94 per cent of the women do their own baking and 95 per cent of them do their own sewing.

They cannot fall back upon the convenient corner bakery or grocery for a loaf of bread or a dozen or so of eggs.

## CHURCH SOCIAL WITH BIG SURPRISE FOR ALL

### Electric Lights Brought About a Regular Transformation.

The most memorable church supper and social that has occurred in years in a certain town in the middle west took place last winter. The town is a rural community in the center of a farming territory of considerable extent.

Because of the scattered population the church supper is one of the annual occasions when everybody meets everybody else and a whole year's supply of gossip is exchanged in the course of a single evening. More than that, however, the supper enjoys a big reputation. And when the last one was announced the whole countryside planned to be on hand.

When the farmers began driving in, shortly after dark, they were amazed upon coming in sight of the church to perceive a blaze of light pouring out of every window. Out in one corner of the churchyard a little gasoline engine was chugging away, and inside, suspended from various points about the building, were a number of gleaming electric lights, replacing the battery of kerosene lamps with which the church had previously been lighted.

The curious farm folk soon discovered the "system"—a self-contained farm electric light and power plant, consisting of the gasoline engine, an electric generator, the necessary wiring and the Mazda lamps. It was a contribution to the success of the social by the town's electrical supply agent, and it certainly made a hit. The whole church was filled with the rolls. Neither can they readily call in a dressmaker when they want to have new clothes. And on most farms the noonday meal is the big meal of the day, representing an appalling amount of labor. Then, if ever, they need a power aside from their own hands if black drudgery is to be overcome.

On farms where electric power has been put to work the story is not what it used to be. And the spread of the electrical idea among farmers is brightening the future for young farm wives just "getting up" with their husbands, so that these young women may avoid the bowed backs and untimely traces of advancing age which their mothers and their grandmothers suffered.

The new emancipation, most observers will say, is going to come among those 2,700,000 farms where electricity has not yet taken up its abode.

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## Captain Also Had Grievance.

One of the petty grievances of private soldiers and non-commissioned officers at Camp Taylor during the late war was the ban on rolled leggings. But they were frequently smuggled in and worn on trips home. On such an occasion a private from Camp Taylor had reached Vincennes, Ind., in the full glory of borrowed and illegitimate leggings. However, his pride of possession was short-lived, for he soon saw a captain whom he had known slightly in civilian life. The captain, after looking at him intently for a while, strode up to him and our private had uncomfortable visions of a panorama from the guardhouse to the firing squad. "Do they allow you to wear rolled leggings at Camp Taylor?" the captain demanded with a flashing eye. "No, sir," the private stammered. "Humph," said the officer indignantly, "they don't at Camp Grant, either, and I think it's a gosh awful shame!"

## Panel's Interesting History.

A gruesome story attaches to a Flemish glass panel of the fourteenth century, which was on exhibition in London, with other stained glass work centuries old. On the panel is represented the suicide of Judas Iscariot, with vividly circumstantial and morbid details. In old books of the period reference is made to a glass painter, known as Charles of Ypres, who is known to have executed a great part of the most remarkable work of the time, having hanged himself to a tree. "This and other evidence makes it probable that the panel was the actual work of this very man. Another panel represents what is probably the only contemporary portrait on stained glass of Richard III. It recently came to light after being stored away in an Essex mansion for 113 years.

## Comparatively New Game.

The history of the game of rackets, the world's championship of which was recently disputed in New York, is a comparatively short one, for it only came into vogue early in the Nineteenth century. Dickens refers to it in his "Pickwick Papers" in connection with Fleet prison, where insolvent debtors endured the monotony of their life by playing against a single wall. It was noisily played at the back of taverns.

The name is supposed to have been derived from the Arabic r'ahat, meaning "palm of the hand," but lives is the only near survival of that form of the game.



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