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## An Examination of Some Rural Community Houses in Virginia

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**AN EXAMINATION OF SOME RURAL COMMUNITY  
HOUSES IN VIRGINIA**

**by**

**Coolie Verner**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
OF  
THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY  
FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS  
1950

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## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

Community centers are slowly growing into prominence in Virginia as major features of rural social organization. They can perform specific services in promoting desirable aspects of community growth. There is a need in Virginia for the rebirth of the democratic principles of rural community organization and these centers may assist in encouraging such action. To achieve more fully the goal of creating an awareness of the processes of community action, however, the organization of these houses must be achieved by the local community as a whole rather than by any special vested interest groups within the community.

### THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. This study is concerned with an examination of selected community houses in rural Virginia in order to arrive at an outline of the procedure that may serve most effectively as a guide to establishing such a community center.

### DEFINITION OF A COMMUNITY CENTER

The rural community center is a means through which the people and groups composing the rural community can share their

common existence. It provides a place to meet in which the social, recreational, and informal educational needs of the community can be met. In the Social Work Yearbook for 1941, F. C. Worman writes:

The community has been defined as a meeting place where residents of a neighborhood, town, county, or rural area in which common interests exist, join in educational, social, or recreational activities that stimulate growth, add to the general spirit of community cooperation, or make for better citizenship.<sup>1</sup>

In a bulletin entitled Planning for Community Centres, the Scottish Education Department describes the community center as:

. . . a place where the people of the community...mix socially and informally with their neighbors. From this social mingling will arise a feeling of common interest, a sense of 'community'; understanding and appreciation of other peoples interests will be created; dormant minds may be stirred; and in the give and take which will be necessary, people will learn by living them - the principles and practices of democratic government.<sup>2</sup>

In the rural community in Virginia this center is often an adapted structure or one especially built by the community as a whole as a center for its common life. It is generally small and unpretentious, lying idle and unused much of the time. Its importance as a specific factor in rural social organization is relatively recent.

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<sup>1</sup> E.C. Worman, "Recreation" in Social Work Yearbook 1941, New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1949, p. 465.

<sup>2</sup> Scottish Education Department, Planning for Community Centres. Edinburgh: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1947, p. 2

The rural community center, then, is an idea plus a structure. It is the idea of communality - - of common purpose - - of coming together, of sociability, and of cooperative action. It is an expression of the will of people to get together in concerted action upon the problems common to them all. It may include a building, but the idea can exist without it.

#### DISTINCTION BETWEEN URBAN AND RURAL CENTERS

The rural community center differs materially from the urban community center. In both instances the basic idea of a consciously created device enabling people to come together is held in common while principal differences lie in the origin, process of development, and in the character of the facilities, program and leadership.

Urban centers tend to fall into two classes: settlement houses and recreational centers. The urban settlement house evolved from the intent of relieving undesirable slum conditions through charitable and educational programs in neighborhood centers. These centers frequently developed extensive plants and programs under trained and competent leadership. They were rarely the result of needs expressed by the neighborhood. They were, instead, the imposition upon the neighborhood of an idea conceived and promoted outside the immediate area, although efforts were made to fit local needs. John McDowell in the Social Work Yearbook 1949 describes the purpose of the settlement house as follows:

... a settlement or neighborhood house may be said to have for its purpose (a) strengthening of relationships among people who live in a specified geographic area; (b) integration of the local community with its district, city, state, and nation; and (c) improvement of the standard of living as measured by family income, available housing, and social services of education, recreation, and health.<sup>3</sup>

The urban recreational center generally results from the planning and promotion of municipal recreation directors. Funds for its erection and operation are usually secured through appropriations from tax revenues. George D. Butler describes them as ". . . generally owned and operated by a municipal department and which are devoted exclusively or primarily to a diversified program of recreational activities."<sup>4</sup>

These centers engage full time program directors and play leaders. Programs are commonly designed for children although a growing trend toward the increased participation on the part of adults is evident. Facilities and leadership are frequently made available to community groups and organizations. Planning and control are largely the responsibility of the center director and the municipal recreation department.

These two types of urban centers differ sharply from the rural community center in Virginia. Whereas the urban center most frequently gains support from those beyond its immediate

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<sup>3</sup> John McDowell, "Settlements and Neighborhood Houses" in Social Work Yearbook, 1949. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1949. p. 464.

<sup>4</sup> George D. Butler, Introduction to Community Recreation. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1940. p. 272.

area the rural center develops from the people it serves largely through their personal contributions of money, labor, and materials. Since the urban center boasts paid directors, it operates a full-time program geared to the needs and wishes of its people. The rural center, however, rarely has full-time leadership and thus operates a very limited program. The program of the urban center is designed for personal use and participation while the rural center is used predominantly by groups and organizations.

#### THE METHOD

The method determined to be most effective for purposes of this study was that of social case investigation. This was selected because the primary purpose of the study was to analyze programs of democratic community self-help in the development of a community house. It seemed that this could best be accomplished through the examination of existing programs.

#### SOURCES OF DATA

It was thought desirable, in beginning this study, to determine to some extent the development of community houses in Virginia. To this end, inquiries were directed to selected leaders within the state having a wide acquaintanceship with

with rural communities.<sup>5</sup> These letters requested information concerning the existence and location of known community houses. The names and locations of one hundred community houses were supplied largely through the cooperation of the Agricultural Extension Service which has representatives in every county in Virginia. In most instances these representatives know their area intimately and are aware of most community houses therein. This list of one hundred houses, then, may be considered to be an accurate listing of such places existing in Virginia.

Using this list, additional inquiries were directed to county home agents or others in similar positions, for supplemental information where such was found useful. With this information at hand, the list was given a preliminary screening on the basis of the following factors:

1. The reported center provided the only facility available for community meetings and was neither a school nor a church.
2. The use of the facility was determined by a group representing more than one community agency or organization.

This screening served to eliminate those privately owned facilities that were not readily available for community use, and

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<sup>5</sup> These leaders included Miss Maude A. Wallace, Assistant Director, Extension Service, V.P.I., Miss R. Belle Burke, District Home Agent, Charlottesville, Virginia, and Mr. and Mrs. Jess Ogden, Extension Division, University of Virginia.



reduced the original list of one hundred reported centers to seventy-three buildings believed to be functioning as community houses. Forty of these centers were visited as a representative sample of the centers existing in Virginia. From these visits thirteen centers were selected for detailed study and inclusion in this report as samples of community houses in rural Virginia. Five other centers were selected for inclusion to present a contrast with the samples.

In visiting the forty houses, the author attempted to interview those persons most capable of giving a detailed and coherent story of the evolution of the structure. In collecting these case histories no attempt was made to make a complete formal survey. It was felt that any attempt to formalize the variable patterns of community action would inhibit the principal purpose of the study. There were numerous questions kept in mind to help bring forth the entire story. These questions included:

1. How did the idea originate?
2. Why was it developed?
3. How many people were involved?
4. How were people interested and how widespread was the interest among community people?
5. What means were used to keep the people informed?
6. Was an effort made to include many people?
7. Was leadership fixed or fluid?

8. What were the exact steps in the development?
9. What problems were encountered?
10. How were these problems met?
11. Were local resources explored?
12. Did community jealousies affect the development?
13. How was it financed?
14. How was it built?
15. Are there evidences of community growth resulting directly from the presence of the center in the community?
16. Are there evidences of individuals assuming more community responsibility because of their participation in the development of the center?
17. Is it a continuing and growing program?
18. Has it so established itself in the community that the withdrawal of individuals does not change its continuing effectiveness?
19. Are the average citizens of the community conscious of their part in it and do they speak of it as "OUR Community Center"?

With this information at hand each of the centers visited was appraised in terms of the criteria that have been set forth in Chapter III.

## CHAPTER II

### BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

#### HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF THE COMMUNITY CENTER

The community center movement may, perhaps, be traced back to the lyceum of the Greeks, the forum of Rome, the town meeting in New England or other similar historical forms. The present day community center movement, however, grew out of the urban settlement houses at the turn of the century. The distinctive contributions of settlement houses to community organization gave rise to a more general acceptance of the center idea in communities. This trend had its beginnings in the civic use of school plants.

In 1888 a group of Boston citizens, upon petition, achieved wider use of school halls. Wisconsin in 1910 enacted legislation expanding the school center philosophy. Gerald B. Fitzgerald in his book Community Organization for Recreation gives a detailed account of the movement in its beginnings.<sup>1</sup>

The first national conference on community center development met in 1911 at the University of Wisconsin; and, the National Community Center Association was organized in 1916.

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<sup>1</sup> Gerald B. Fitzgerald, Community Organization for Recreation. New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1948. p. 55 ff.

This movement continued through World War I, becoming merged in the general programs of community recreation through W.P.A. stimulus during depression years. This type of development has in most instances been confined to urban areas. Among rural communities the Extension Service of the Department of Agriculture has encouraged local home demonstration clubs to build houses to accommodate their activities.

In the main, the general movement was aimed at aiding local people solve their own problems. In urban areas an effort was made to raise the economic and social level of members of underprivileged areas through educational and recreational programs in settlement houses, while in rural areas the center idea arose from the need for a place to get together, as the consolidation of schools frequently had removed that facility from community use for this purpose. Quite often several organizations in a community sought to erect structures to house their own activities and the early recognition of the economic loss to the community through this duplication of facilities gave impetus to the center idea. C. A. Perry writing in The Community Center in 1921 concluded that so long as communities remained unorganized and without a mechanism for community cooperation, duplication and economic waste would continue.<sup>2</sup> He advocated the development of centers as means of effecting

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<sup>2</sup> C. A. Perry, "Ten Years of the Community Center Movement." The Community Center. July-August, 1921.

community organization to seek solutions to problems that were apparently insoluble in the ordinary course of government.

The value of the community center as an instrument of community organization was recognized early in the movement. At the meeting of the National Community Center Association in Chicago in 1924 the contributions of the center to community organization were enumerated as follows: The center

1. Provided a focal point for community action.
2. Developed in each community according to local needs.
3. Furnished a means of expression of the interests of the individual in community affairs.
4. Represented a means of coordinating the efforts of agencies, groups, and individuals.
5. Was essentially democratic.<sup>3</sup>

#### TYPES OF FACILITIES USED FOR COMMUNITY CENTERS

Any place where people gather in a rural community might perform many of the functions of a good community center. This study, however, is concerned only with those places having some communal character and a degree of acceptance in the minds of citizens as the community center.

Such facilities tend to fall into specific groupings and are classified herein as organizational halls, town halls, church halls, school centers, and community houses.

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<sup>3</sup> Gerald B. Fitzgerald, op. cit. p. 66

It is not intended to imply that a community must have a special building designated as the community center. A community may have numerous organizationally owned facilities adequate to meet community needs. Privately owned Grange or church halls may provide adequate space yet fail to function as community centers for they

. . . fail of the atmosphere in which the pure community sense can thrive. Those who enter such places must all the time feel themselves guests, if they are not members of the organization which owns the property. . . the ownership, and management, and purpose of such institutions are not those which cultivate effectively the community spirit and serve the broadest community ends.<sup>4</sup>

The degree to which a facility contributes to the overall development of the community is frequently dependent upon its universal character and upon its meaningfulness to the people as the center of their common life. This, then, determines whether it is the community center.

Organizational Halls: Many local organizations, fraternal, social, or other, have provided themselves with permanent quarters. The Masonic Lodge has erected halls in many rural areas; the American Legion has, in recent years, had a concerted and somewhat successful program encouraging local posts to build their own Legion Huts; and the International Order of Odd Fellows and

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<sup>4</sup> Joseph E. McAfee and Thomas L. Sorey, A Community House for the Oklahoma Town. University of Oklahoma Bulletin New Series No. 255, Extension No. 75. Norman: The University of Oklahoma, February 1, 1923. p. 7.

similar organizations have also built quarters. Visitors to small Virginia towns can find many of these structures, often dilapidated and ill kept, like those in Sperryville or Arvonnia. While many of these halls are rented to other groups on occasion, control rests entirely with the owners. Most of these physical structures were erected with funds solicited from the community as a whole and while providing the only space for large community gatherings, their effectiveness as a community center is limited.

Thirteen of the community centers studied had their beginnings in such specific organizations. Seven of these had been converted to full community use and control due largely to the inability of the parent organization to continue its maintenance alone. Nine of these thirteen halls were specially built and four were adapted structures (two formerly being school houses). Home Demonstration Clubs are more recent manifestations of organization development. There are thirteen centers that originated through club activity and twelve of these are still maintained for limited use while the one remaining center has converted to full community control. Ten of these club sponsored buildings were adapted structures being formerly schools, churches, a warehouse, and, interestingly, a fraternal hall. Most of the Home Demonstration Club activity in building occurred in the three years after 1936.

Town Halls: In some places in Virginia local governing units maintain town halls or similar structures suitable for meet-

ings. These were built through appropriations from tax funds, by gift, by funds secured through popular subscription, or by combinations of these methods. Control rests with the government and is often so cumbersome as to limit effective use by the community. Culpeper, Madison, and Bowling Green have such town halls with fewer inhibiting restrictions than most encountered; however, even these do not receive maximum use. The town hall tradition of New England or the Mid-west is not prevalent in Virginia.

Church Halls: Parish halls and other church buildings are almost universal in rural Virginia communities. In twenty communities these facilities are accepted as community centers for purposes of this study. In some instances church and community are so intertwined that distinctions are difficult to make between church hall and community center. This is noticeable in certain mountain hollows where the Episcopal or Brethren Churches have been most active and in sections of Warwick county that are wholly Mennonite communities. In other places having sharper distinctions the churches have made careful efforts to overcome denominational limitations and while wholly successful in a few instances, are, in general, only partially successful.

School Centers: It would seem that the school is the one social institution that could serve as the center for community life most effectively for it is most nearly common to all rural



areas. In the past, however, school officials have not been inclined to encourage the use of school facilities for community activities. More recent trends, though not universally accepted, indicate wider community use of school buildings. The American Association of School Administrators recognized the need for greater use of school facilities and in its Seventeenth Yearbook devoted to Schools in Small Communities emphasized this point:

A further argument for reorganizing the community unit is the fact that rural communities need a social center maintained at public expense for many organizations and activities which are necessary for the community welfare. Increasingly, as new school buildings have been erected . . . there has been a demand that they should be used as community centers...<sup>5</sup>

Such community use of school buildings will involve a wider participation by the community in the planning, designing, control, and use of the school plant in order that it be in fact, as well as in name, the community center. Some communities in Virginia have school administrators whose understanding of the problem of community organization has led to so wide a use of the school buildings as the center of community life that any other center is unnecessary. This is noticeable at Bruton Heights in Williamsburg,<sup>6</sup> Appomattox High School,

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<sup>5</sup> American Association of School Administrators, Seventeenth Yearbook Schools in Small Communities, Washington: National Education Association, 1939. p. 30.

<sup>6</sup> See Actual Needs and Practicable Solutions, New Dominion Series, Extension Division Bulletin No. 41, Charlottesville: The University of Virginia, November 1, 1943.

and Gore High School in Frederick County.

The strong movement toward consolidation has done much to retard the full use of existing school structures as community centers. "The consolidation of rural schools, of definite value educationally, has robbed the tiny crossroads village of its cohesive pattern."<sup>7</sup> With the removal of the local school there has been no replacement of it to continue to hold such organization as might exist in the community except in those instances, as at Mine Run, where communities themselves have taken over the abandoned building as a center. Consolidation crosses natural neighborhood community lines and the transfer of loyalty from the smaller, more intimate community to the larger, more divergent community of the consolidated school has been difficult for local people to accomplish.

Community Houses: Into this category are placed those community centers which had their beginnings, their growth, and their full development in the action of the community as a whole. The samples selected for closer study are included herein as examples of the community-wide process executed in a democratic manner.

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<sup>7</sup> Alabama State Planning Board, Public Recreation in Alabama, Montgomery: Alabama State Planning Board, July 1948, p. 27.

This total community sponsorship of the center exists in Virginia in 30 of the communities listed. Ten buildings erected under other auspices have become community buildings by the transfer of control and responsibility from an organization or special group to a broader organization representing the community as a whole. Among the 20 buildings originating in the community, 10 were built new and 10 were remodeled existing structures, including school houses and stores, mills, and similar types of buildings.

#### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Early publications considering community centers were concerned primarily with the physical structure of the building itself while more recent writings are showing an appreciation of the importance of such centers as means of aiding community organization. Emphasis is now on community houses planned and executed within the realm of community ability through the utilization of available resources and as a product of local effort.

Numerous publications in the field of recreation consider community centers with emphasis upon the design of the facility and directed toward urban centers. Such buildings as proposed in these publications are generally beyond the realm of possibility for the smaller rural community. No further consideration will be given to such material herein. Any community group seeking encouragement and guidance is apt to be discouraged by litera-

ture that proposes facilities beyond their ability to obtain.

The United States Department of Agriculture has published several Farmers Bulletins dealing with community buildings.<sup>8</sup>

These appeared in 1918 and again in 1938, and contain descriptions and plans of various types of community buildings including centers, markets, processing houses, and similar structures.

The Agricultural colleges of several states including Illinois, Arkansas and Montana, have published bulletins dealing with community buildings. These contain plans of buildings that have been erected in the various states or statistical studies of the community center movement in those states. One recently published by the University of Illinois<sup>9</sup> gave consideration to the procedure followed by communities in building and operating their houses. This bulletin approaches a practical consideration of the problem by presenting examples of buildings in Illinois that demonstrate helpful points in the planning, control and financing of such structures. It recommends a study of community needs and a consideration of available resources to meet those needs rather than merely listing the requirements of the center.

Some Canadian provinces have been actively engaged in for-

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<sup>8</sup> For an annotated bibliography of suggested bulletins see Appendix I.

<sup>9</sup> D. E. Lindstrom, W. A. Foster, and M. G. Fuller, Rural Community Buildings Circular 470. Urbana: University of Illinois College of Agriculture, March 1937.

warding the community house movement in Canada. Their publications, however, are not generally available to American communities. The University of Alberta, and the Departments of Education and Cooperation and Cooperative Development of Saskatchewan, have issued publications in the field. In all of these bulletins emphasis is placed on the necessity for a community council to accomplish the center, with recommended steps in the creation of such councils.

Practically all of the literature seems to place too much emphasis upon formalizing the plan of procedure to be followed by the community. It attempts to create fixed patterns without adequate consideration for the fluid character of community movement. Where community councils are urged it is for the purpose of accomplishing a specific job rather than as an outgrowth from the community as a solution to a recognized need. There is too little in the literature directly applicable to the problem in Virginia and little of value to community groups seeking aid in their development of a community center.

#### GROWTH OF COMMUNITY CENTERS IN RURAL VIRGINIA

The development of community houses as factors in rural living has never assumed the proportions of a movement in Virginia unless the awakening interest in the last few years might be so classified. There has been no overt sponsorship of the idea by any one agency although various agencies, such as

the Extension Service at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute, or the Community Services at the University of Virginia, have espoused the idea. At one time the Extension Service encouraged Home Agents to find permanent quarters for their demonstration clubs, but such encouragement was seldom more than the casual transmission of the idea, which came to fruition in numerous communities. There have been no bulletins or other materials published in Virginia encouraging the erection of community houses, as was done in Indiana, Montana, Illinois and Oklahoma among others.

Much of the stimulation to the idea of providing a community center grew in the communities themselves. Some stimulation came from professional leaders in the county; some from newspaper accounts of activities elsewhere; and some stimulation came through direct contacts of citizens with others in communities having centers. There is little evidence to indicate any geographic spread from county to county, although among communities within a county one might assume some spreading of the idea. In Frederick County this is shown by the three centers having developed out of Home Demonstration Clubs under a single leader. The same situation existed in Powhatan, Surry and Albemarle Counties. While contacts between counties were limited, the Gerow Community House in Dinwiddie County often was host to visiting delegations from other counties, although the extent of its influence cannot easily be measured.

In none of the selected communities was there found evidence of external pressure. In fact, very few of these communities received any assistance from beyond the circle of community members although some did turn to the Extension Service, the University, or to other communities for help in crystallizing ideas and formulating plans. The Plymouth Community in Lunenburg County worked for five years in developing its center without assistance and, in fact, its existence was unknown to county leaders until after its completion. The reason most generally encountered in explanation of the growth of a community house has been ably expressed by the people of the Gerow community: "We needed a place where groups of any size could meet for recreation, entertainment, or discussion of farm problems."<sup>10</sup>

In general, these communities that have created community centers have done so for two major reasons: (1) no facilities existed in the community adequate for community use; and (2) the community desired a place exclusively for community use.

The first community house known to exist in Virginia was erected in 1908 at Timberville in Rockingham County. Three

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<sup>10</sup> The Community Builds a Home. Extension Division Bulletin, New Dominion Series, No. 7. Charlottesville: The University of Virginia, December, 1941.

communities had acquired houses prior to the First World War. These were erected during the period of the panic of 1907-1910. Four houses were erected during World War I and in the immediate post-war period. From 1923 to 1928 none came into being, while during 1928, at the height of post-war prosperity, three communities acquired houses. During the depression in the third decade, 32 communities erected centers and in the years of war tension in the fourth decade 31 communities completed their centers.



### CHAPTER III

#### ESTABLISHMENT OF CRITERIA

#### THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS OF GROWTH

It is firmly believed that the continuation of our American way of life, the preservation of our form of government, and the defense against less desirable ideologies rest in the understanding and practice of the processes of democratic living in the community. This involves an awareness on the part of all citizens of their responsibilities in government for "Every government degenerates when trusted to the rulers of the people alone. The people themselves, therefore, are its only safe depositories."<sup>1</sup>

Local community leaders, then, must be constantly alert for opportunities of educating the citizens to their responsibilities. They must

. . . educate and inform the whole mass of the people. Enable them to see that it is their interest to preserve peace and order, and they will preserve them. And it requires no very high degree of education to convince them of this. They are the only sure reliance for the preservation of our liberty.<sup>2</sup>

Such education can best be accomplished through the common everyday acts of community living; through cooperative activities

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia. London: John Stockdale, 1787, p. 248.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Jefferson, in a letter to James Madison, Paris: 20 December 1787.

within the community designed to meet a recognized need involving participation of all the people. In rural areas education for democracy is both very necessary and very difficult. "The rural community is exceptionally democratic in the sense that each individual has a worth of his own, but is highly undemocratic when it comes to the practice of community cooperation."<sup>3</sup> Wise leaders, therefore, will seek every means of emphasizing the democratic process of community growth.

This process implies that all people will work together on problems affecting the common good.

The common good does not call for complete uniformity in conduct but requires variation in things that are not common. Effectiveness is determined not merely by the complete concentration of the power to decide, but also by that general good will and cooperativeness without which wise decisions cannot be made, or, if made cannot be carried out.<sup>4</sup>

This democratic process can be defined most simply as ". . . the cooperative deliberations and planned action of citizens who are discharging their civic obligations to the best of their ability."<sup>5</sup> The development, understanding, and implementation

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<sup>3</sup> Carl C. Taylor, Rural Sociology, New York; Harper and Brothers, 1926, p. 401.

<sup>4</sup> Charles E. Merriam, on the Agenda for Democracy. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1941, pp. 96-97.

<sup>5</sup> Jean and Jess Ogden, These Things We Tried, The University of Virginia Extension Division Bulletin XXV, No. 6. Charlottesville: The University of Virginia, October 15, 1947. p. 413.

of this democratic process is essential in order to:

Create a race (sic) of men who can understand, in which rivals can and will work together for the common weal, realizing that in unity, among individuals, in communities and nationally, lies national strength, through which American institutions and ideals may be preserved.<sup>6</sup>

Through this process the extent of community cooperative action for self-development is unlimited. With the grasp of the process in building its center the community may tackle other problems with greater assurance and may then be in a position to control the direction of the inevitable change about them. A democratically achieved community center may, then, be the instrument for developing continuing democratic action. In evaluating the community center it then becomes necessary to have some means of measuring the extent of the operation of the democratic process in its development.

#### CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

The democratic process of community action assumes no inviolate form. Its very essence lies in its constantly changing character to meet continually varying situations. This

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<sup>6</sup> William A. Smith, How People Can Educate Themselves to Help Themselves. (Unpublished manuscript in the files of the Extension Division University of Virginia.) typed 60 pages. p. 6.

enables the community to build for better living on all levels.

It is the unique strength of democratic methods that they provide a way of stimulating and releasing the individual resourcefulness and inventiveness, the pride of workmanship, the creative genius of human beings whatever their station or function.<sup>7</sup>

The statements which follow are chosen as general indices of the quality of democratic action and are applicable to community processes in general.

Planning. All persons within the community whose lives are to be affected by an action must have an opportunity to participate in the planning.

This is the basic principle in democratic community action. All age groups and social strata must be represented or afforded an opportunity and be encouraged to participate in the planning of any community project if it is to have meaning to them. Planning must be done with the people, and not for them. "It must recognize that real individual progress can be made only to the extent the individual participates in the formation of a plan affecting him, and applies his energies and intelligence in its execution."<sup>8</sup>

Community-wide participation in the planning does not necessar-

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TVA - Democracy

<sup>7</sup> David E. Lilienthal, TVA - Democracy on the March. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949. p. 76.

<sup>8</sup> Smith, op. cit., p. 2.

ily involve every member of the community, although in many instances it has been known to do so. It must, however, reflect the common will of the people.

Such community-wide participation in planning has wide implications for the total social structure not merely for the specific project to which its energies are directed.

Furthermore, when the citizens of a county [i.e. community] assume the responsibility for cooperative planning and action on their problems, they build on the foundation of local strength and resourcefulness, local pride and confidence, local determination and self-sufficiency, without which they become socially soft and flabby.<sup>9</sup>

Participation in the planning of the community center is of vital importance so that all parts of the community may feel pride of ownership in the structure. Such cooperation in planning may enable people to think cooperatively on a common problem, thus crossing lines of demarcation. "Community planning to establish community centres should understand from the beginning that the most important thing about the centre is the people who are going to make it."<sup>10</sup>

Such cooperative action furthers the development of democracy on a community level.

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<sup>9</sup> J. T. Reid, It Happened in Taos. Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1946. p. 112.

<sup>10</sup> Donald Cameron, Community Centres in Alberta. Edmonton: University of Alberta Department of Extension, 1940. p. 7.

To live democracy every person in a neighborhood must learn about common problems, must discuss them with his neighbors, and must cooperate in solving them. That is the simple idea of the community center, an idea which may be summed up in the phrase, more cooperation between all neighbors in the community.<sup>11</sup>

Acceptance of this principle of participation in planning is far from universal. Most leaders fail to recognize this in their community activities and wonder why communities often fail to follow their leadership by not supporting their projects.

The naive assumption that any group of persons will fall in with any plan about which they have not been consulted and which has not taken the social situation into account has been proved false so often in history that its survival is one of the world's mysteries.<sup>12</sup>

Needs. The specific needs of the community and all of its elements must be considered.

Any project undertaken within the community must be designed to meet the needs of the community in order to gain the necessary widespread support to insure its successful completion.

... the needs of all the people of the community - - boys and girls, young men and women, and adults - - must be recognized when plans are being made and outdoor as well as indoor activities must be considered.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Walton S. Bittner, The Community Center, Extension Division Bulletin Vol. V, No. 6. Bloomington: The University of Indiana, April 1920. p. 5.

<sup>12</sup> J. H. Kolb and Edmond de S. Brunner, A Study of Rural Society. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1949. p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> Lindstrom, op. cit., p. 7.

The community center is successful to the extent that it provides the community with a common meeting place. As Arthur E. Morgan has pointed out:

The community as a whole can have a much better realization of its existence if it has some place in which as a community it can express its common life.<sup>14</sup>

This is important to the total growth of the community for the:

Lack of a suitable meeting place is, in many communities, a serious obstacle to the development of highly desirable community activities.<sup>15</sup>

Merely providing a meeting place for the community is not alone a measure of the success of the community center but proper and careful consideration of needs will help assure wide community resources. In all probability the study of local needs in planning a community center will unearth or accentuate previously unrecognized needs in other areas giving continuity to community cooperative action.

Resources. The community must study and make maximum use of its available local resources, human, natural and institutional.

Recognition and awareness of the many resources available

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<sup>14</sup> Arthur E. Morgan, The Small Community. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1942, p. 244.

<sup>15</sup> Lindstrom, op. cit. p.

for use within the community will often make needs seem less difficult of satisfaction when means for their solution are readily available. Wise recognition and use of local resources indicate a maturing community life. ". . . the mark of a humane and enlightened civilization is its willingness to use resources to raise the general standard of living, to conserve those resources at the same time, for the benefit of future generations."<sup>16</sup>

Most local communities have available sufficient resources to enable them to meet most of their needs, but they must learn to ". . . develop and utilize local resources - - human, natural, agricultural, social (including religious and spiritual as well as educational) - - in a manner to provide an adequate and well-rounded living for all."<sup>17</sup>

The many community organizations and institutions are major items on the list of available resources. Wise use of these in cooperative action will do much to strengthen community solidarity. In any community action ". . . the over-all program will depend for its success on the cooperation of many

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<sup>16</sup> Paul B. Sears, "Man and Nature in the Modern World," in Education for Use of Regional Resources. Washington: American Council on Education, 1945. p. 26.

<sup>17</sup> Ogden, op. cit., p. 16.



agencies and many individuals with varying backgrounds."<sup>18</sup>

Financing. The project must be financed and supported through community-wide activity and effort.

Financing the community center is generally considered to be the most important aspect of its development. It is imperative that the community do its own financing for through this process the citizens will feel their ownership more strongly. "Every man, woman, and child in the community should, in some form or another, contribute something to the building of their community centre (sic)."<sup>19</sup>

A community center, or any other project undertaken in a community, will have little meaning to the citizens unless they are responsible for its financing. It will fail as a step in the democratic process of community self-help ". . . communities do not learn to help themselves by having something done for them."<sup>20</sup>

Local community financing of its community center is an

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<sup>18</sup> Committee on Southern Regional Studies and Education, Education for Use of Regional Resources. Washington: American Council on Education, 1945. p. 16.

<sup>19</sup> Hugh H. Harvey, Cooperative Community Centres, Part I. Bulletin No. 1-A. Regina: Department of Cooperation and Cooperative Development, 1945. p. 14.

<sup>20</sup> Ogden, op. cit., p. 72.

important means of developing community solidarity.

The community method of financing, if contributions are distributed among the members of the community, develops community cooperation, promotes unity, and reduces local antagonism by bringing together different organizations and factions in a common project.<sup>21</sup>

Ownership of the center should be held by a group representing the community as a whole rather than by any one organization within the community. This would extend the feeling of ownership to all citizens for ". . . no one in the community should be excluded because of failure to contribute."<sup>22</sup> The community may form a center association to hold title to the property. In such event ". . . no person in the community should be deprived of membership in the Community Centre (sic) through his or her inability to pay a membership fee."<sup>23</sup> The center then becomes the community home:

. . . a home in which any and every member of the community is not only welcome but is significant; a home where all are equal and in the running of which all take an active and responsible share; a home, in short, which belongs to all, is of the people, by the people, and for the people.<sup>24</sup>

Use. All elements within the community - institutional,

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<sup>21</sup> Lindstrom, op. cit., p. 18.

<sup>22</sup> Rittner, op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>23</sup> Harvey, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>24</sup> Citizen Centres for Adult Education, London: Education Settlements Association, 1943, p. 15.

and individual - - must have free and unhindered access to the center within the limits of community imposed regulations.

The ultimate measure of the effectiveness of the democratic process in the development of the community lies in the character of the use of the facility and its availability to all segments of the community within the limits of self imposed restrictions. In so doing, it truly becomes a means of achieving community solidarity and furthering the democratic principles of community living.

Whatever other class cleavages there may be forming to destroy the solidarity of the community life, our community house should cover and do away with . . . Let our group organizations and their equipment serve such interests, but let our community house stand for and serve those needs which are shared by the whole people . . . all should feel a proprietary right in it, and all should value it because it actually serves their needs.<sup>25</sup>

The organization operating the center should not ". . . deny the use of the building to deserving groups lacking the ability to pay high rental fees."<sup>26</sup>

Hugh N. Harvey states that:

A good community centre (sic) is one which is lived in by the community as a whole. It has no room for petty jealousies, racial or religious differences or personal greed. The community centre (sic) should be a home for the community family.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> McAfee, op. cit., p. 17.

<sup>26</sup> Lindstrom, op. cit., p. 18

<sup>27</sup> Harvey, op. cit., p. 6.

In considering the use of the center it is desirable that individuals have the same rights to the center as do organized groups in so far as this is feasible.

Membership of a true community centre (sic) would not be limited to persons belonging to groups possessing some specific interest. The essential qualifications for membership will be that the person belongs to the community.<sup>28</sup>

The value of the center then is to be measured in terms of its use:

. . . for the building to be a truly serviceable community center - - a center of neighborliness - - . . . the persons in charge must see that the buildings and grounds are freely available to the whole community and not just to certain groups or cliques.<sup>29</sup>

Growth. The center is a continually growing idea that secures the continued interest and support of the community working through it to enrich the total life in the community.

If the process through which the center has been achieved is successful it will reflect the continued interest of the people. The center will serve as a means for the further enrichment of community life.

It should be clearly understood in the first instance that community needs are not static and constant. Over

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<sup>28</sup> Scottish Education Department, op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>29</sup> Lindstrom, op. cit., p. 7.

a period of time a community either progresses or retrogresses, it never remains stationary. Consequently, your community centre (sic) should do more than meet the needs of the moment.<sup>30</sup>

One aspect of the continuing growth of the center may be found in the development of the physical plant.

In no case is the centre (sic) likely to appear complete in all details at one time. Community centres (sic) are organic structures and there will be constant growth and change.<sup>31</sup>

This acceptance of change on the part of community people and their concern in its direction as reflected in the operation of the community center is one of the attributes of the impact of the center upon the community that is of utmost importance in reflecting the democratic character of community growth.

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<sup>30</sup> Harvey, op. cit., p. 8

<sup>31</sup> Cameron, op. cit., p. 29

## CHAPTER IV

### SAMPLE COMMUNITY HOUSES

Numerous communities in Virginia have provided themselves with meeting places. Not all of these have been successful. Some, however, have become important in the life of the community and have made substantial contributions to its development. From among these can be selected some that illustrate the ability of local people to provide for themselves. These samples will, in most instances, meet the qualifications previously established for good democratic community houses and have been selected on that basis. From them can be made certain observations that indicate the process of community action which resulted in the center.

#### PLYMOUTH - LUNENBERG COUNTY

The Plymouth community is difficult to define for it consists of forty-five widely scattered families. There are no determinate boundaries to designate the limits of this community in Southside Virginia, nor is there a church, school, or store that might be considered the center of its life. Despite this, Plymouth is a community of people living and working together cooperatively.

The families in the Plymouth area live in houses too

small to accommodate many visitors. They needed and wanted some space for get-togethers and to accommodate activities in which they all could share. These thoughts were voiced when people got together for occasional visits but no action was taken.

One man in the community finally decided that if anything was to be done some one must start action. He invited everyone to come to his house to talk about their need for a center. From this beginning spontaneous approval was given to definite plans which held promise of meeting the community need. The community which had been unconsciously divided into two groups became as one in determining their course of action.

At this first meeting an organization was formed to provide a nucleus for their work. Membership was open to everyone in the community. One member of the group offered a small plot of ground in a central location as a spot for the building. After giving due consideration to the problem of financing the building the membership voted a tax upon themselves but this was no barrier to membership and participation in the center activities. This tax was computed at ten dollars for each adult, five dollars for each teen-ager, and anything they could give for those under ten years of age.

With the tax collected the group still found themselves

far short of the money needed. A committee consulted with the banker in a nearby town and he agreed to lend the money provided every adult member sign the note. With this money and with contributions of labor and materials the Plymouth Community Center was constructed.

During the construction, which was at nights and on weekends, everyone worked on the building. Often thirty or more men would be found at work with wives and children helping out or just visiting. Careful records were kept and each got a receipt for labor, materials, and money contributed to the program. This was done to protect their investment in case dissension or disaster should terminate the project.

To assure free and maximum use of the building a calendar is maintained upon which anyone may reserve a date for the use of the building. Weddings and receptions, church services, plays, programs, community meetings, and private parties keep the building constantly in use.

Completion of the first part of the building did not bring an end to the planning. Even before the first debt was entirely liquidated the community completed their dining room and well-equipped modern kitchen on the second floor. Additional plans include rest rooms, and smaller meeting rooms in a wing to be added later. A stage has been provided in



the main room and a piano and chairs have been purchased. The area surrounding the building is being landscaped and designed to provide out-of-door picnics and play areas.

Comment: This is an outstanding example of community house development. The unique features of the process in the organization of this center are the voluntary tax levy and the receipts issued members for their contributions of labor, materials, and money. Because of the widely scattered nature of this rural community, the value of the center as a focal point for community life is emphasized.

#### LACKEY - YORK COUNTY

Lackey is a Negro community clustered around one of the entrances to the Yorktown Naval Mine Depot. During the war it expanded rapidly from a few scattered homes of poor quality into a sizeable community. The USO built a large standard type recreation center in the heart of the community that served the Negro naval personnel of the Depot. With the cessation of hostilities this center was closed and the building and equipment offered for sale.

Interest in keeping the building as a community center was created among the seventy families in the area. This was instigated by a well educated member of the community and soon expanded into the formation of the York County Cooperative

and Welfare League with sixty-six members. Membership in the League was available to any one with the ownership of at least one share of common stock available at twenty-five dollars. For investment purposes, members might buy more than one share of common stock or preferred stock at one hundred dollars per share. Through the sale of stock the League purchased the building in April 1947, for \$6,000. An additional \$5,000. was borrowed for needed repairs and remodeling.

The League has attempted to include in the center practically every community need. There is a snack bar, cooperative store, an auditorium, meeting rooms, library, and office space which is rented to a doctor and a dentist who come regularly from Williamsburg.

The League is primarily interested in promoting greater service to members of the community rather than in making money. It has not paid dividends as yet for most of its earnings are applied to removing the indebtedness. Money is earned through the cooperative store, through movies held in the center two nights each week, and through other miscellaneous activities.

The center is in constant use by various community groups. Special committees of the membership assume responsibility for sponsoring various community activities such as boy and girl scout troops and other youth activities. Two adjoining acres are rented for outdoor recreation and a director is provided by the League. The auditorium is used by the local school as

a gymnasium as no other facility is available. Activities in the center are closely correlated with those of the school.

Comment: Cooperative group action can bring increased community services and this center is an excellent example of such action. Planning for total community growth is emphasized through the incorporation of the cooperative store and through increased medical and recreational services. The financing of the center through the sale of stock both for membership in the organization and for investment is distinctive with this center.

#### WATERFORD COMMUNITY HOUSE - LOUDON COUNTY

The Waterford Community House is closely tied into the development of the entire community and grew out of total community planning. Sparked by the creative leadership of a "newcomer", the people in the town of Waterford have organized the Waterford Foundation, a non-profit corporation designed to foster and encourage the preservation of the simple colonial beauty of this old town. The foundation has developed long-term plans for the restoration of the town. Individual home owners are encouraged and assisted in the restoration of their own places while certain other buildings are held for the town as a whole. The foundation is composed of every citizen of the town, white and Negro.

As a part of the restoration program and in search of ways of alleviating poor economic conditions, the foundation sponsored

handcraft classes, through which citizens learned or re-learned the native crafts. This program met such an enthusiastic reception that a craft exhibition was scheduled. This first fair attracted over one thousand visitors and the fairs have since become annual events attracting more and more visitors each year. They have swelled the coffers of the foundation and provided markets for local crafts products as well.

Need for space prompted the foundation to purchase an old brick mill that long had been a landmark in the area. This was done in 1945 at a cost of \$2,000. Investigation uncovered structural weaknesses that have deterred the full use of the building as originally planned. These are being corrected as money becomes available but in the meantime it is being used for small group meetings and for craft classes. It has also served as the central exhibition hall for the annual fairs.

Long term planning includes the development of a craft shop, library, and a general recreation area on the three floors of the mill. The work of reconstruction progresses slowly for it is accomplished entirely through voluntary contributions of labor and materials.

Comment: In this community the center was but a part of the plan for the restoration of the entire community. The crafts classes and the resulting annual crafts fair are examples of the use of the center for the educational and economic growth of the community.

## MINE RUN - ORANGE COUNTY

For many years the Mine Run School had an active PTA group. When consolidation threatened to close the four-room school in 1945, the PTA determined to oppose it. After considerable discussion it was agreed that consolidation would offer better educational opportunities to their children and that it did not mean that they necessarily must cease to exist as a group. The purchase of the school building seemed to be an answer to their problem. When the building was offered at auction the representatives of the PTA were the only bidders.

Raising the money to purchase the building was not too difficult. Fairs, dinners, dances and other forms of entertainment were given, and these produced enough to pay off the loan. More money was raised, in fact, than was needed. Various improvements, repairs, and furnishings were added to the center.

Money raising activities of various kinds continued to bring in funds and the group looked about for other needs that they might meet. Fire protection seemed to be one of the most urgent needs so the group organized and equipped a volunteer fire company. This equipment is housed in the center and the company services a much wider area than that encompassed by the center.

The center is constantly in use. Every organization in

the community makes its headquarters there. Parties and entertainments are frequently offered by these organizations with part of their proceeds going into the center's treasury. Private individuals as well as community groups utilize the center facilities for parties.

This center has become so active that it has drawn into it the members of the nearby Locust Grove community who had maintained a small inadequate community house for some years. While the Locust Grove center is still used occasionally, principally by the local Home Demonstration Club, there is little community spirit there and most of the citizens have transferred their interest and allegiance to Mine Run.

Comment: Of all the examples of the continued use of an abandoned school plant this center shows more clearly the possibilities of community growth resulting therefrom. The development of a fire department as a result of the center shows the continually growing nature of the community group. The early pattern of the school serving as the center for community activities is continued after consolidation had closed it from further school use.

#### MCGAHEYSVILLE - ROCKINGHAM COUNTY

McGaheysville is a small but active and thriving com-

munity with two community houses. The first of these was built by the community around 1910. The full story of its origins is not available. It is kept in use by every community organization and group including the high school across the road. The building has two floors and it is not at all unusual for different groups to be utilizing both of them at the same time.

This building is controlled by the adults of the community. Their meetings were generally held on the ground floor with youth groups meeting above. Often the noise of the young people would disturb those meeting below. Soon this became a serious problem creating much dissension in the community.

Across the road from the center and nearer the school is an abandoned church. The younger people of the community decided to purchase this building for a youth center. Through various activities this group raised the needed \$300. and with labor and materials contributed by its members the church was renovated and remodeled. Many people objected to the church being used for a center. The youth group was able to convince the community of their interest in preserving it as one of the oldest churches in the 'valledy' and spent their first efforts in cleaning and restoring the adjoining cemetery.

Boy and girl scout troops, 4-H Clubs, and the Future Farmers of America are the principal youth organizations interested in the center. The building is controlled by a youth committee with adult advisors and it is known as the McGaheysville Youth Center Committee. In a mimeographed report distributed to the community they stated:

The purpose of this center will be to build up and broaden the character of our young folks, being ever mindful of the religious background of the old church. The institution will be strictly non-denominational, non-partisan, and non-proselyting. The by-laws now in the process of formulation will inculcate the idea that this center will be 'Of all the people; By all of the people; And for all of our young people.'

Comment: The long pattern of community center life enabled this community to build a new center for the youth when conflict between youth and adult prevented the amicable use of the existing center. Appreciation of the past is reflected in the use of an historically important abandoned church as the youth center. Of particular interest in this community is the monthly news letter that kept the people informed of the progress of the work on the youth center.

#### CENTERVILLE - JAMES CITY COUNTY

Consolidation closed the three-room school in the Centerville community. The building had originally been

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<sup>1</sup> McGaheysville Youth Center Committee in a mimeographed newsletter, 1948.



erected through the help of the Rosenwald Foundation and was in excellent condition at the time of the closing.

During the time that the Centerville School was in operation it had a very active Parent-Teacher group. News of the closing of the school brought a feeling of great loss to this group. At a meeting in which the closing of the school was discussed, the rural supervisor suggested that this did not mean that they could not continue to use the building nor that the local PTA need to cease to exist. After considerable discussion a committee was appointed to approach the school board and succeeded in getting a long term lease in exchange for the maintenance and proper use of the building. While title for the property continues in the hands of the school board, complete control of the building has been turned over to the community group.

Interest in the care of the center has grown beyond the interest in the school. The group has painted the roof and the inside of the building. It has been wired for electricity and furniture and draperies have been installed. Materials and labor were contributed by the group. Plans have been made for further improvements and additional construction.

The building is constantly in use. Church services, Home Demonstration Club meetings, agricultural classes, and

similar activities are held in the center. All types of community-wide social activities have developed since the center came into existence and these have provided recreation for community members. These include among others, chicken fries, fish fries, box suppers, and dances which serve also to help finance center improvements.

The PTA of the old Centerville school continues as the central community organization. Special interest groups such as the Hunt Club are growing out of this parent group. Regular meetings of the PTA are called to handle center business and through discussion at these meetings exploratory work is being done toward the development of extended cooperative activities centered in the community house.

Comment: The development of a community center is not limited by the educational, economic, social, or racial position of the community members. Centerville is an example of the growth of a center in a small sub-marginal Negro community. Of primary interest is the ability of the existing Parent-Teacher organization, through wise leadership, to continue its existence in the abandoned school and the development of varied community activities through the existence of the center.

#### KENT STORE - FLUVANNA COUNTY

The Wilmington Grange was the major organization in the Kent Store community. It had maintained its own meeting hall

in a one-room school building rented from the school board. When consolidation closed the big four-room school at Kent Store the one-room school was re-opened for primary grades and the Grange was evicted.

The Grange regretted losing their quarters and considered the possibilities of re-opening in the now abandoned Kent Store School. This time, however, they were determined to own their building. In investigating the possibilities of acquiring the Kent Store School the Grange found that it was impossible for them to do this alone, so they decided to form a community-wide center association.

The Kent Store Agriculture and Recreation Center Association was formed. Everyone in the community is entitled to membership and dues are assessed at 25 cents per month. Membership rolls at present list nearly every resident of the area. The Association borrowed money from a citizen of the community to finance the project. This was soon repaid through various activities held in the center. Additional money was raised by the same means for repairs and furnishings.

The center is available to everyone in the community for parties or meetings or other activities requiring space. Regular square dances are held by the association and these became so popular that there was insufficient space to accommodate the crowds. Cards were issued to members that entitled them to two

dances each month instead of one each week, thus giving everyone an equal opportunity to participate. These cards served also to exclude undesirable visitors from outside the community. The grounds surrounding the building have been developed for baseball, picnics, and other summertime activities. The Grange, Home Demonstration Club, 4-H, and similar groups utilize the facilities of the center.

Comment: The development of the spirit of cooperative action on community problems enabled this community to develop another center to replace the one that they lost. The new center was larger and better equipped and offered greater opportunities for growth. Of particular interest is the manner in which the group handled the problem of too many people in attendance at public dances through the use of admittance cards.

#### WATERLICK COMMUNITY CENTER - WARREN COUNTY

The Waterlick Community Center was once an abandoned one-room school located at a fork in the road in open country. For eight years the building deteriorated - unused and unwanted. It was taken over in 1948 as the home for the Fork Improvement Association.

This Association was started in 1947 by a few citizens who were interested in improving their community. Today it represents some eighty families and for its 'community' embraces

all the territory between the north and south forks of the Shenandoah River at their junction and the mountains on the west.

In its beginning, the Association met in the homes of its members. With its continued growth, however, it soon outgrew these accommodations and a committee was selected and charged with the responsibility of finding suitable quarters. First plans called for the erection of a building but further study by the groups settled on the plan of taking over the abandoned Waterlick school house.

Upon petition to the school board, the Association was granted free use of the building with an option to purchase it if their plan proved successful. Further plans were developed and work began immediately on the renovation of the building. Electricity was installed and over seventy window panes were replaced. The large central room was cleaned and repaired and the small vestibule converted into a coat closet and storage room. Simple outdoor lighting was installed to enable summer time use of the area surrounding the building. All of the work and most of the materials were supplied by the members of the Association.

The rehabilitation of the building for use as a center consumed but a small portion of the energies of the group. Other community needs were recognized and many of these were

deemed more urgent than the center. While the center was being repaired, the Association began using it for money raising activities in order to tackle the more urgent community needs.

From the money raised through the center other community needs were met. Each of the one-room schools in the area received funds, equipment, and labor to improve their conditions. Gravel was spread on school yards, bookshelves were built, and teaching supplies were provided.

The center is being improved slowly for the members of the Association feel that work on it can be postponed, yet they are constantly doing little things to keep it in repair. Long term plans envision a summer playground, an addition to the building to provide more space, and the provision of an adequately equipped kitchen. At present the group is planting shrubbery, making a parking lot, and building indoor and outdoor furniture. The center is not always in use but it is available and may be used by all organizations in the area and by private members when they have need of it.

Comment: This community began thinking in terms of a large adequate community center but upon examining total community needs the group began working in many areas with the result that a small abandoned school was taken over as the center. The primary energies of the group have been directed toward other community needs while at the same time making some minor improve-

ments on the center.

#### MT. WILLIAMS - FREDERICK COUNTY

In a mountainous section of western Frederick County is a small white building known as the Mt. Williams Community Hall. It was erected in 1935 by the thirty families that compose the community.

For a number of years the Mt. Williams community has been famous in that section for its Community League and Debating Society made up of all the members of the community. This Society had always held its meetings in the two-room school house in the area. In 1934 this school was closed through consolidation and sold immediately afterward by the school board to a family who converted it into a residence. Following this, the Society was at a loss for a place to meet and decided to erect its own permanent quarters.

A plot of ground was donated by one of the members and with materials and labor contributed by the membership a small, neat, one-room center was erected. The center is used by everyone in the community. Present community organizations having their headquarters in the building include the Home Demonstration Club, the Hunting Club, the Baseball Club; 4-H Club; the Community League and Debating Society; and a two weeks summer Bible School. All of these organizations except the Debating Society have come into existence since the center was built. Church services are often held in the center to supplement those of the nearest church

four miles away. Of these organizations, the Debating Society is the only all-inclusive one that includes all the community.

Title for the property is vested in five elected trustees. There are no dues nor membership fees, and money needed for repairs or improvements is raised through dinners, lawn fetes, and similar activities. Currently, the community is erecting an addition to house a kitchen which will serve many purposes. Everyone in the community shares in the development and in the activities of the center. Leadership is widespread. "Like any hall or any building, it is run by about a dozen of interested families and when any program is put on all of the community joins in."<sup>2</sup>

Comment: The Mt. Williams Community had for years maintained a community-wide organization in the school. When the school was sold the group continued to function and erected a building for themselves. With their own quarters they broadened the activities available to the community through varied interest groups and religious activities. The construction of the center was a natural outcome of the tradition of cooperative action.

#### REDLANDS COMMUNITY BUILDING - FREDERICK COUNTY

In the northernmost corner of the State of Virginia is the

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<sup>2</sup> Delilah Bell, in a letter to the author dated 15 January, 1949.



Redlands Community Building. This center was originally a two-room school building that was closed in 1935 through the consolidation of several nearby schools. It is situated in a nicely wooded area in which there is also a neat white Methodist church with its adjoining cemetery. This area is surrounded by approximately fifteen houses forming the Redlands or Whitacre Community.

After closing of the school, members of the community sought some means of keeping the building for community use. During its period of operation as a school, the building always had been available for community and church functions. This long-time use of the building had accustomed the people to look upon it as the center for community activity.

Consultations by individuals from the community with school officials brought to light the fact that the ground and building were originally deeded to the community when the school first opened many years previously. This removed any problem of the legality of its continued use by the community and the school board relinquished their custodial rights in favor of the adjoining church.

Through socials, suppers, rummage sales, and similar activities, enough money, materials and labor were provided to permit an extensive remodeling program. The building has been wired for electricity and it has been papered and painted inside and out. Furniture, draperies, and kitchen equipment have been added to the

an extensive remodeling program. The building has been wired for electricity and it has been papered and painted inside and out. Furniture, draperies, and kitchen equipment have been added to the interior.

Long-term plans provide for further internal improvements and for the beautification of the grounds. The community contemplates regularly scheduled programs of supervised play for the children. At present the center is used by various civic, Home Demonstration and 4-H Clubs in addition to the neighboring church and individual members of the community.

Two smaller neighboring communities became interested in the center at Redlands and considered the development of their own. The people of Redlands persuaded these communities to join with them in the one center. This enlarges the sphere of the center to include some fifty families in the surrounding area.

Comment: The presence of the center enabled this community to widen its bounds bringing two other neighboring groups into one cohesive community. This action prevented the unnecessary duplication of local institutions and enabled the three communities to have together a large and more adequate center than either could have had alone.

#### FRIENDLY GROVE - FREDERICK COUNTY

The people in the Friendly Grove Community had a tradition

of using their one-room school house for community functions. When consolidation closed the school in 1936 the group formed a community committee and purchased the building. Members of this committee were made trustees of the center. For several years it was used infrequently and the formal organization did not function actively. All of the elected trustees lived along the border of the community and transferred their allegiance to a newer, more active center in a neighboring community. These trustees voted to sell the Friendly Grove Building and combine their efforts with the neighboring community.

This action of the trustees without consultation with the other community members aroused new interest and considerable conflict among the people surrounding the building. They banded together and secured a court injunction preventing the sale of their building. New trustees were selected. This resulted in the formation of the Friendly Grove Community Association. Membership in this Association was open to everyone in the community with annual dues of one dollar per person. Since its formation dues have been reduced to twenty-five cents and everyone, including small children, are active voting members.

Every year on the Fourth of July and on Labor Day the Association holds annual community picnics and lawn parties, with the proceeds being applied to the development of the center.

These affairs attract former residents to return to their home community, keeping alive and strong their 'old-home' attachments.

At the present time the building is in good repair inside and out. Papering, painting, furniture repairing, and landscaping have made it an attractive community home. All the labor and most of the materials have been supplied by the membership. The only formal organizations in the area are the Home Demonstration Club, the 4-H Club, and the Methodist Church. While these tend to overlap in membership, they do not include every member of the forty families composing the community. Any person or organization is free to make use of the building ". . . providing they do not destroy or do anything to hurt the reputation of the building."<sup>3</sup>

Comment: Conflict welded this community into an action group and gave impetus to the strengthening of the center organization. The annual picnics bring former members of the community back into the group, keeping active their attachments to their home community.

#### DUNDAS COMMUNITY CENTER - LUNENBERG COUNTY

The Dundas Community Center is located amidst a small

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<sup>3</sup> Mary Triplett, in a letter to the author dated 20 January, 1949.

cluster of houses in southside Virginia. The building is a two-story frame structure that served for many years as a country store. The depression years resulted in a loss of farm income in the immediate area and in 1934 the operator of this store was forced out of business. For several years the building lay idle but was finally offered for sale. The Ladies Auxillary of one of the local churches sparked a movement to acquire the building for use as a community center. At the sale they were able to purchase it for one hundred dollars.

Little was done to improve the building for several years following its purchase. Interest, however, grew steadily and despite the poor economic conditions of the area changes and improvements have been made. The first floor has been entirely re-finished with celotex paneling and new hardwood flooring. Chairs, space heaters, and a complete modern kitchen have been provided. The stage was equipped with curtains and scenery through the sale of advertising space on a front drop curtain.

Use of the center has grown along with its physical improvements. All community organizations have free access to the building and dances and other forms of entertainment are occasionally held there. An amateur dramatic group has come into existence to utilize the stage.

Long-term planning anticipates the remodeling of the second floor into a library, sewing room, and habby shop. The very small plot of ground on one side of the building is to be made into a playground for small children.

The center serves about thirty families in the immediate vicinity although many others in the surrounding area participate in many of the activities. Title to the property is held by a committee of representatives of the churches, and the center is governed by an informal community organization.

Comment: A small group of far seeing individuals in this community seized upon the opportunity to acquire a center despite the fact that the community was not ready to take such action as a whole. Rather than forcing rash community action the group slowly developed an understanding of the value of this center in enriching community life that resulted in a total community organization for the administration of the center and the growth of center activities.

#### GRAVEL RIDGE - CAMPBELL COUNTY

Consolidation closed the three-room school at Gravel Ridge in 1940. For several years prior to this date it had whittled away grades until only one class remained in session at that time. The extra rooms had been used frequently for community meetings. At the outset of the war they were used for home canning classes

and other defense-related activities. At the last session of one of these classes, notice was received of the contemplated sale of the building. The class soon became a community meeting and a delegation of the young people in attendance was selected to approach the school board with proposals for renting or buying the building.

This delegation was granted immediate rights to the building without charge by the school board. The community then selected a committee to control and operate the center. This committee was composed of both older and younger members of the population. It serves as a governing body without formal organization.

With money raised through varied activities the group has purchased a piano and other furnishings as well as the completion of some re-decorating. Long-term planning contemplates the purchase of the building from the school board and the development of recreational and parking areas on the surrounding land.

The only formal community organization is a Home Demonstration Club that makes frequent use of the building. The community consists of approximately thirty farm families scattered widely around the center. The center is not used extensively. Family parties are held every two weeks and meetings of other types at irregular intervals.

Comment: The most interesting feature of this center is the shift of responsibility for the acquisition and development of the center from the older community members to the younger ones with the full backing and support of the groups as a whole.

There are other community houses in Virginia that might be included among these sampled. There are many more centers that on first glance would seem to qualify for inclusion with these, yet upon closer investigation they have been found wanting in some of the aspects of the process. This has prevented their incorporation among the selected examples of good democratic centers. In such communities, the center has failed to function as a dynamic instrument for community growth. In most instances this can be attributed to the failure of the groups or its leaders to grasp the importance of the several aspects previously detailed in the criteria.

For purposes of contrast it might be useful to review several of these rejected centers.

#### A SOUTHERN COUNTY

In 1940 a citizen of this community decided that the town needed a community center. With great secrecy he arranged details with the town clerk and council and constructed a fine brick town hall. The citizens had no part in its planning, constructing, financing, or use. Several people in the community



expressed resentment at the manner in which the matter was handled. Under the control of the town council, the building is available for limited and restricted use. It has little meaning to the community beyond being the only available place in which to meet and then hardly accessible. Inquiries concerning a community center will rarely bring forth mention of this building.

#### A TIDEWATER COUNTY

The Home Demonstration Club built a house for their meetings. Money was raised in the community through fairs, dinners, and similar money raising activities. Construction was done largely through local effort. The Club maintains complete control over the facility and limits its use to those groups or activities which will not mar its floors or injure the furnishings. As a result of this policy, few organizations other than the Club make use of the facility. The members of the Club refer to it as the Cartersville Community Center, but this designation is not shared by some members of the community who resent the dominant control of the Club.

#### A SOUTH PIEDEMONT COUNTY

The Negroes of this community wanted a place to meet. After careful planning they began a money-raising campaign

to finance the simple structure they planned to erect. The Headmaster of a nearby finishing school saw in the project an opportunity for the school to participate as a community service gesture. He took over the project and erected a fine, large log center and maintained his control through influencing the selection of the community committee dominated by employees of his school. The citizens of the community resent their lack of voice in the policies governing the hall, yet fear open rebellion. The center has divided the group where in the beginnings it was uniting them. This interference by an outsider has deprived the group of achieving the fulfillment of their own idea.

#### A PIEDMONT COUNTY

Citizens of this community had been considering their need for a community center for a long time. After examining several means of achieving their project a group of citizens formed a non-profit corporation and sold shares of stock at \$100. per share. With the money raised from this source and with money borrowed from the local bank, they erected a fine Quonset type hut that serves for all community activities conducted by those organizations that can afford to pay the rental fee. The corporation charges \$10 for each non-profit organization using the center and 10 per cent of the gross intake for all money-raising ventures held in the center. Had

Had the corporation made its stock available to more people by reducing the cost the center might have spread its influence over a wider segment of the community. Failure to do this has prevented this center from performing its function as effectively as might be desired.

#### A MOUNTAIN COUNTY

The Episcopal Church decided that the people needed a place to meet. With Diocesan funds and with some money raised locally they built an adequate building and informed the people that this was their center. The citizens had no part in the development of the center and now exercise no control or direction in its use. The center is used very little by groups outside the Church. This pattern has been followed in other communities in which the Church has been active. In every instance they are considered by the people of the respective communities as Parish Houses rather than community centers, despite the insistence of the Church to the contrary.

## CHAPTER V

## ANALYSIS OF THE SAMPLE COMMUNITY HOUSES

The study of these selected centers brings to the forefront certain general characteristics which they tend to share in common. These involve the role which the centers play in community life, the factors contributing to their development, and the evolutionary steps in the process from idea to actuality. Each of them will be considered in turn.

## THE FUNCTIONS OF THE CENTER

Community centers can perform certain functions as justification for their existence as major forces in community life. In each of the centers studied these functions have been found to be common. In some centers, the role that one function may play will out-weigh that of another, but in each center there is some element of all of them.

Community Assembly: The people who compose these various communities have strongly felt the lack of a suitable place in which to meet. Having such a place helps develop a conscious understanding of 'community' as a unit in their society.

The importance of such a facility for getting together must not be minimized for, as Professor McAfee writes:

Getting together is recognized to be necessary to the solution of our numerous and serious community problems. Thus the question of a community house is one of first importance.<sup>1</sup>

The development of community consciousness is considered of paramount importance as a function of the center, by Arthur E. Morgan who says:

Because the American community has been disrupted by the self-centered organizations of churches, clubs, lodges, etc., as well as by the flux of modern life, the feeling of community is weak. As that feeling is strengthened and encouraged, it will be greatly helped by the development of a community house and meeting place.<sup>2</sup>

These selected centers have provided their communities with places to meet in which they can share a common existence. In some of the communities, such as Plymouth, Gravel Ridge, and Waterlick, the center has given corporate form to a widely scattered collection of families that had no common existence through the lack of any central community institution.

Sociability. The center provides the community with space in which social functions might take place. It enables people to get together for the exchange of ideas and to become acquainted

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<sup>1</sup> McAfee, op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Morgan, op. cit., p. 244.

on an equal and informal basis. The Scottish Education Department points out that the community center is intended:

. . . to provide a common meeting place where members of the community of all creeds, opinions, and interests can foregather for social and recreative purposes and enjoy the emotional satisfaction of 'neighbourliness'.<sup>3</sup>

Each of the sample centers is used for recreational purposes. Maximum use is restricted by the lack of adequately-trained full-time leadership. Activities most commonly found are parties, plays, dinners, dances, and similar types of entertainment. The most effective use of the center for sociability may be found in the Plymouth Community House where the building was readily available for private parties in addition to group activities. Kent Store found it necessary to limit attendance at its weekly square dances because of the lack of space to accommodate the crowds that sought admittance. The existence of the facility may result in paid leadership as in Lackey, but this tends to be an exception because the other activities of the center provide the funds to support this leadership.

Education. The center is a place for the growth of continuing education and such education can be formal or informal in character. Social activities may often be educational. The

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<sup>3</sup> Scottish Education Department, op. cit., p. 2

existence of a center enhances the education opportunities and effective use of the facility for this purpose is limited only by the quality of the available leadership.

Numerous community centers offer competent educational programs. The Old Mill at Watertown is an outstanding example of community growth through center activities. Here a varied craft program has reflected its influence in an increased appreciation of the cultural and architectural heritage of the village. Major restorations and an annual craft fair attract thousands of visitors. Programs conducted in the center, largely under volunteer leadership, have given local people a means of supplementing otherwise meager incomes through craft programs.

Among centers other than those specifically included as samples may be varied types of educational activities. Bacon Hollow offers classes in weaving to its members, Bruton Heights Community School has an extensive educational program. In the main, however, educational programs conducted in the small centers are based upon the activities of Home Demonstration Clubs and similar community organizations. The educational process involved in the development of the building itself is not to be overlooked as a contribution made by the center in this area. The process of learning to work together as a community toward some selected end in which tangible results can be seen does

much to strengthen individual understand of common problems. In Plymouth, for example, the voluntary tax assessment to help finance the center undoubtedly gave a broader understanding of the fact that governmental taxation is compulsory cooperative action directed toward the solution of problems that could not be solved individually. Again in Orange County, at Mine Run, cooperative community action in acquiring the center carried beyond the building itself to an attack upon another community problem, fire protection, which resulted in a voluntary fire department. Not all examples of the educational functions of the center are as specific as these.

Community Organization: The promulgation of general community organization is one outstanding contribution of the center to rural life. The cooperative action in the erection of the building is in many instances the forerunner of a chain of cooperative acts for community betterment whereby people learn that they can help themselves through concerted planning and action.

In their book Rural Community Organization, Sanderson and Polson say:

It is important to recognize that they [community houses] have in many cases been the chief means of bringing about community organization. A community which has a building maintained as a center is to that extent organized, and it has a physical basis for the development of solidarity. These buildings are erected and maintained for the common



good of all and not for the use of any one organization or group of organizations. The gatherings there stimulate community esprit de corps<sup>4</sup>

That there is need for community organization in rural areas there can be little doubt. T. Lynn Smith in his Sociology of Rural Life emphasizes this need: ". . . rural America has suffered keenly from the lack of a strong, well integrated, and clearly defined rural community."<sup>5</sup>

Citizens of the small rural community are showing an increasing realization of the values achieved through organization. They are not only becoming aware of their problems but also striving to find solutions through planning and working together. The community house performs a major function in abetting this citizen action.

Stimulated by the rapid social and economic changes taking place people of rural communities have felt more and more the need for coming together to discuss common problems and ways and means of carrying out programs of a community-wide nature. Often, however, the lack of a suitable place in which to meet has proved a serious deterrent to such programs.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Dwight Sanderson and Robert A. Polson, Rural Community Organization. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1939. p. 172.

<sup>5</sup> T. Lynn Smith, The Sociology of Rural Life. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947. p. 341.

<sup>6</sup> Lindstrom, op. cit., p. 3

It is not to be construed that community centers are the only means of achieving community organization. Some communities have, through their organization, achieved solutions to pressing community needs without a center. Still other places possess adequate facilities for meetings and have not achieved community organization or solidarity.

Among these sample centers community organization has resulted in such places as Waterlick, Redlands, Plymouth, and Mine Run among others. While in Waterford, McGaheysville, and Mt. Williams the center grew out of previously organized community activity. Where the center has resulted from the previous organization in the community it has served to localize that community and give to it a common 'home'. In those cases where community organization has resulted from the center the development of that center served as the stimulus for cooperative community action which has carried over beyond the acquisition of the center. Some communities, not considered here, were found to have achieved sufficient organization to develop their center but were unable to maintain this organization either to continue the operation of the center or to carry over into other phases of community life.

#### FACTORS COMMON TO THE SAMPLE COMMUNITY CENTERS

While there exists wide divergence between communities in

specific aspects of the growth of their centers and in the physical results achieved, there are certain factors found in common. These factors embrace leadership, methods of financing the construction, and certain specified evidences of social well-being resulting from the presence of that center in its community.

Leadership. Primary among the factors common to each of these centers is that of leadership. The quality and character of this leadership is instrumental in determining the success or failure of the program in most instances. In each of the samples presented, this leadership was purely local in origin. These leaders were, in most instances, acknowledged as community leaders through their social standing, economic ability, or official position. In other instances, these leaders developed as such with the development of the idea of the center. In Mt. Williams, for example, the leadership revolves among a few leading families whose position of prominence is widely accepted. The Plymouth community found its leadership in the most economically successful member of the community. On the other hand, Gravel Ridge and McGaheysville communities found their leadership developing with the evolution of the center.

Not infrequently these leaders sought stimulation or active assistance outside their immediate community group. Such

assistance in planning was secured from published materials, from state institutions of higher learning, and from other communities. In each of the selected communities, this leadership has been creative and democratic resulting in the strengthening of democratic community organization. Conversely, unwise leadership has, perhaps, succeeded in acquiring a physical plant limited in its effectiveness by the failure of the community to also grasp the process of democratic action. W. S. Bittner emphasizes the importance of the calibre of this leadership by saying:

Democracy functions well or ill according to the spirit, knowledge, and resources of the people given to them by the strength of effort of their community leaders . . .<sup>7</sup>

Financing: Local effort and support in the development of the center is another important factor. Successful centers, certainly among the selected samples, exhibit a broad and intense interest and participation by all the community. Financing the structure always looms most forbiddingly in the minds of the people yet in these centers this was achieved locally through a number of ways.

A few centers, such as Lackey and Lovington, sold shares of stock in a cooperative foundation as a means of assuring con-

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<sup>7</sup> Bittner, op. cit., p. 20.

struction of their centers. The receipts issued members of the Plymouth community for contributions of money, labor, and materials, were tantamount to shares of stock though not so designated. In general, the sale of stock tends to exclude less able members of the community from actual financial participation.

Voluntary contributions of money, materials, and labor were accepted in every community center studied. These provided the greatest participation of all people within the limits of their own ability. The Plymouth community is again cited for the contribution of money controlled through a self-imposed voluntary tax levy that gave each contributor the feeling of having shared equally in the center.

Various types of money-raising activities were found in every center. In the main, they varied but slightly from community to community. The more common means involved fairs, parties, dances, dinners, and similar forms of entertainment. Such events attracted many people from outside the immediate community and broadened the financial support of the center.

Only in rare instances has any community depended upon one method of financial support alone. Most of the sample centers utilized several of the methods. The two most common forms and universally successful methods have been found to be voluntary contributions and money-raising activities. These seem to be somewhat of a paucity of inventiveness in devising

these financial measures. Certainly in the sample centers they have assured the widespread participation of large numbers of community people.

Other communities have achieved financial support through appropriations from tax funds or by large gifts, but these tend to exclude personal participation by community members and are less desirable from the point of view of community self-help.

Social Well-being: There is little doubt of the value of the contribution which these centers have made to live in those communities in which they exist. Miss Katherine R. Brent, Home Demonstration Agent in Powhatan County writes:

The establishment and use of these community houses has meant much in the educational, social, and economic development of the county as a whole. Their contribution has certainly enriched family and community living; it helped raise the standards of living in this fine old rural county of Powhatan.<sup>8</sup>

Not all the centers that have come into existence in Virginia have made such contributions to community life. Those which have been selected as examples of the higher calibre of community center organization have made noticeable impressions upon their respective communities. While it is exceedingly difficult to attribute any over-all community growth to the

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<sup>8</sup> Katherine R. Brent, in a letter to the author dated 17 January, 1949.

center specifically, there are, however, certain evidences of social well-being that might be attributed to the presence of the center in its community.

Social growth has been achieved in these communities through the mere existence of a place to meet. In Plymouth, Redlands, Friendly Grove and Gravel Ridge, the center affords the only place where all elements of the community may share a common existence. The act of planning and working together to achieve the center does much to build a spirit of neighborliness and mutual help.

In any community where a common facility has been evolved through cooperative citizen action, there is organization. This organization may be purely social or it may proceed beyond that to a wider area of common concern. The Redlands center has served to unite three adjacent communities enabling them to develop a common organization. In the areas of religious life there has been some unity achieved. The Plymouth community through its center achieved unity in this area by providing space for regular church services. The congregational character of the sects represented among the people undoubtedly facilitated this unification. The Mt. Williams center supplements neighborhood churches for regular services and through a union bible school.

The process of building the center is itself educational in character, for through it participants learn to work together.

All of the centers studied housed varied educational activities. Waterford with its craft classes is an outstanding example of this. Generally farm and home programs are the major educational activities. Economic improvements resulting from the center are difficult to assess. The crafts fair in the Waterford Center is one evidence of the economic contribution of the center. The cooperative store at Lackey was made possible by the availability of space in the center building.

The creation of the community house has preceded the increase of other community services in nearly every community studied. Mine Run has developed a fire department; Lackey has medical services and directed recreation; Dundas has a library and hobby shop; and Waterlick has improved school conditions in the community. All of these things have come about in these communities through the center building. Nearly every community had evidences of planning for the future that would broaden and increase the scope of services available to members both in and resulting from the shared life in the center.



## CHAPTER VI

## CONCLUSIONS

In many small rural communities in Virginia there is evidence of a growing awareness of the part that a community house can play in enriching community life. Seventy-three places in Virginia have community centers that have developed as an outgrowth of a specific community need through an awareness on the part of local people that they can achieve such a center for themselves.

EVALUATION OF THE DEGREE OF DEMOCRATIC ACTION ENCOUNTERED  
IN THE CENTERS

The community centers that have been described herein were selected for study because of the high degree of democratic community action reflected in the story of their development. Not all of these centers were successful in each of the criteria selected as necessary for the complete operation of the process. Yet, to a greater or lesser degree, each of these centers presented some indication of a sound appreciation of the several criteria. The presence of each of these criteria to some degree in every one of the selected centers indicated a wider acceptance of the processes of democratic community action. Each of these steps will be considered in turn.

Planning. Every one of the selected samples resulted

from the pooled thinking and planning of representative members of its specific community. Some centers, such as Plymouth and Gravel Ridge, involved every citizen in the planning process. In other centers (Waterlick, Dundas, and Mt. Williams) the planning was accomplished through a committee selected from the community with the general membership having the final voice in the acceptance of the committee plan. Other centers, as in Waterford and Lackey, depended upon a formal governing body to effect major planning activities.

There appears to be a close relationship between the size of the community and the degree of participation in the planning and with the degree of formal organization existent. In Waterford, for example, the board of directors of the Waterford Foundation completed the formal planning for the Old Mill. This foundation is a formal chartered non-profit corporation governed by its elected board of directors. This is in contrast with Waterlick where the large population made it more expedient for a committee to handle the planning details, or again with Plymouth where the group was sufficiently small and informal for everyone to share in the planning process. This same degree of participation is to be found in Lackey, Dundas, and Mine Run respectively.

There were centers other than those included that qualified for inclusion in every other respect, yet had too little

general participation in this planning process. Representative participation in planning through selected committee or board members is in keeping with the democratic idea, yet dictatorial control over the planning by the leaders as exhibited in these centers not included is not. This factor of participation in planning is, in most respects, the most crucial aspect of the democratic process.

Needs. In each of the selected centers the community house evolved from an accepted need for a place to get together. In only one instance did a community house develop despite the existence of an adequate facility. This was at McGaheysville where the Youth Center was developed as a supplement to the existing center and met a definite need in the community for a place for youth activities. Some of the centers excluded from this report were in communities having adequate structures that were not made available for general community use. In such instances the community as a whole failed to resolve the existing conflict that prevented the general use of these facilities.

Resources. Each of the communities that developed a center showed evidence of a wise use of local resources. In few instances did a community find it necessary to secure outside help in planning or building.

Material resources of the communities were wisely used.

None of the sample communities erected new buildings when existing structures could be satisfactorily adapted to community use. Lackey, Mine Run, Waterlick, and McGaheysville are a few examples of this. In those instances in which new buildings were necessary (due to the non-availability of existing structures as in Mt. Williams and Plymouth) both materials and labor of local origin were utilized. School buildings provided a wise use of existing resources for these structures enabled a community to retain for their use a facility that had long been the generally accepted center of community activities. Mine Run, Redlands, Gravel Ridge, and Centerville were formerly school houses.

Financing. None of the selected centers depended for financial aid upon sources outside their immediate community. In every instance the community developed some type of financial program in keeping with its own ability. The Plymouth community borrowed money over the signatures of every member of the community and levied a volunteer tax to finance the center. Mt. Williams, Redlands, and Dundas, among others, financed their programs through local money-raising activities. The Lackey community sold shares of stock for cooperative ownership in their building. All of these centers had very widespread financial support from all members of the community. In some of the excluded centers, as in Brookneal, the major financial

effort was made by gift from a wealthy member of the community or as in Madison where tax funds bore the burden of the costs of the structure. These methods did not give average members of the community a financial share in the project.

Use. The use which the community makes of its center is the ultimate test of the success of that center. This also reflects the successful character of the process through which the center was achieved and is the final step in that process. These sample centers show considerable variation in the uses to which they are put by their communities.

In some instances the center has been in existence in the community such a short time that the older custom of non-association has been slow in giving way to newer habits of group activity. Thus in communities such as Gravel Ridge, Redlands, Mine Run, and others, the community fails to utilize to its full potential the facilities of the community house.

The degree of social organization in the community has considerable bearing upon the use of the structure. Those communities without many varied organized interest groups make little use of their buildings. On the other hand, the existence of the center enables new interest groups to arise as has been shown in Mt. Williams and again in Centerville.

The most nearly ideal use made of a center is shown by the Lackey community. Through its cooperative store, soda

fountain, and medical services, the people of the area make more general and widespread use of their building than in any other community. The availability of a director for recreational activities has broadened the leisure time use of the center beyond mere formal organizational meetings. It can hardly be expected that all centers will develop such full time activity and service programs yet many others look toward the incorporation of such a director at some future time.

There appears to be a relationship between participation in the planning for the development of the center and the free community use of the structure. None other of the centers show quite the personal individualized use that is demonstrated by the Plymouth community where the center has become a supplemental 'home' for the families. This may be due to the intense personal participation on the part of all members of the community in the planning and construction of their center. Contrasted with Madison where permission must be secured for the use of the town hall, or even with Waterford where control rests with selected directors, this factor becomes more apparent.

Growth. Continued community growth is evident in each of the selected samples. Long range planning contemplates extended development of the center facilities; however, it

is not confined to that alone. Other community projects are considered. Mine Run developed a fire department; Waterford an annual craft fair, and Dundas a hobby shop. The center has served as the common point around which further community action can begin.

#### COMMON STEPS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CENTER

The stages of growth in the unfolding process of group action expressed in the evolution of the community center appear to be generally common to the sample centers studied. In no way is this a logical progression of group action fixed and inflexible in every community. Rather do these steps appear to be innate, evolved individually and independently by each action group. They are not necessarily confined to the development of a community house and may occur in any activity which is the result of the democratic group process. The sequence of these steps varies and additions or deletions occur in keeping with the particular nature of a given community. They are, however, phases of development that may be present, obviously or subtly, at one time or another.

1. The community will feel the need for a common meeting place readily available to everyone.

Some member or group within the community will feel the need existing in the community for a meeting place. This

need may arise from the desire for sociability as expressed in the Plymouth community resulting from the small crowded homes. It may come through the opportune sale of the newly abandoned school building as in the Mine Run community. The idea may come from reading a news account of a center in some distant area or it may come from a visit to a neighboring community house. Professional workers in the community may bring the idea as happened in Frederick County where three centers developed under the guidance of the same Home Demonstration Agent.

2. Groups and individuals within the community will accept this need and express it in common terms.

From the introduction of the idea there will follow a period of discussion that will gradually spread the idea among many people in the community. The idea will gain support and opposition. At this point it will flower into numerous proposals offered to meet the need. If direction is given to these they may lead into a course of action. If not, the idea may die.

3. A group will begin to emerge with a plan of action and an organization may develop to give direction to meeting the solution of the idea.

The first course of action proposed will almost invariably be a meeting to voice the idea and the proposals to the



community at large. In the Plymouth community this meeting was held in a members home; at Centerville it occurred at a Parent-Teachers meeting. It is at this point that leadership will begin to emerge and talk begins to be translated into action. Wise leadership will assist the formation of an informal organization and delegate responsibilities immediately by appointing fact finding committees to investigate various aspects of the problem. This will make the meeting a stage in the total process rather than an end in itself.

4. Total community needs and resources will be studied in terms of the problem.

No infrequently, the idea that served to bring the group together to discuss common problems may become lost as the community begins to study its needs and resources. This loss of the original idea is not to be deplored for it represents the democratic process in action. Often this study of needs and resources will result in parallel courses of action by different groups planning for the joint solution of several problems and needs. A careful study of the community will prevent the wasting of community resources through duplication. It will enable the group to survey all of the needs of their community in their relationship to each other and to existing resources. Action can be directed toward

meeting these problems that are most pressing. Few communities can afford to support parallel social institutions and this careful study of needs and resources may serve to direct community energy toward strengthening existing activities and facilities. Such a study will, furthermore, increase the community awareness of its resources and potentialities.

5. The community as a whole will be drawn into group action and planning in order to devise a course of action to effect a solution.

If the course of action is to continue democratically, it must be designed to include as many of the citizens as possible. Each person must be afforded an opportunity to express himself in the planning and this must include all elements within the community through representation, that all may share in the responsibility for the project. This planning can be done through committees as in Waterlick, or by the community as a whole as in Plymouth or Friendly Grove.

The culmination of the planning is the development of a definite plan of action and the mapping of strategy. This will include the plans for the building, ways of financing its construction, and lists of materials required. Since this program of action is the result of group thinking it will be practical and within the ability of the community to achieve.

6. All of the community, whether actively participating or not will be kept informed of the need and of the stages in the

development of the action.

Where planning and group action is divided among many committees it may become so involved in details that one group loses contact with another and is out of touch with the general program. This may tend to cause individuals or groups to feel excluded from the project. General meetings at periodic intervals are one way of keeping in touch with the progress of divergent groups. Newspaper publicity is an effective medium. Flyers and regular printed reports are also effective. Whatever the medium, everyone within the community must be kept in touch with the progress. Suggestions and ideas must be courted. The McGaheysville community did an effective job of keeping the people informed through their inexpensive monthly mimeographed newsletter.

7. Leadership will be local and fluid, changing as situations change and the program evolves.

The leadership that originated the idea or began the action may not necessarily be the best to continue the direction. Wise leadership will constantly seek out and train new younger leaders to take over responsibility and will relinquish its position to these newly developing leaders as the project develops. New leaders bringing fresh ideas will keep the community constantly alert to the potentialities of the center.

8. The program will receive its support from citizens interested in the common welfare rather than from individuals

primarily interested in their personal gain.

The real phase of the project materializes as the center becomes a fact. Everyone should have a part in developing a common structure through concerted community action. This wholesale participation in making an idea and a dream into reality also makes the idea of community cooperation into a visible act.

9. Success in achieving the center through democratic group action will result in democratic operation and control.

Full and widespread use will be achieved through local control. Too often community interest will lag because the leadership places too many restrictions on the general community use of the facility. Freedom in the use of the center within the bounds of group determined regulations will result in the people turning automatically to the center for community activities. This will serve to keep alive the spirit of group action that achieved the center.

When the center has been achieved through group planning, financing, action, and when control continues in the hands of the general community group, the center will become a meaningful instrument for general community development. It will serve as a means of keeping together the democratic group that achieved it. When it has become a means for the further development and strengthening of community life then it may encourage the members of the community to build on that foundation for a better nation

and a better world achieved through cooperative planning and action. This process of community action may be summarized as follows:

The idea must come and spread, and grow into a meeting, with everyone planning together, exploring their needs and resources, while keeping the people informed and emerging with a program that the community can support, resulting in a center for all the people for the common good.

#### SUMMARY

Community houses can be important tools in the total betterment of community life. They have a definite role in helping scattered rural communities achieve a sense of organization and common purpose. The contributions that centers have made in the communities in which they exist to the social well-being of total community life, even though in some instances these contributions may appear to be meager, eminently justify their development in other areas.

Those centers that have been achieved through the process of democratic group action make a more substantial contribution to community life than those that have been achieved through other means. This group action goes beyond the development of the center itself and serves to help create a community habit of cooperative planning and action on community problems that stimulate continued growth.

The actual achievement of a community house lies within the reach of any community within this commonwealth. The only factor that seriously limits the development of such a center is the degree of community-wide cooperative action that exists. Successful centers have been found in all types of communities. The chief factor they have in common is their willingness and ability to work together. The community that has developed the ability to work through the process of group action is seldom limited to the creation of a community center building. Such communities generally continue into other areas of the common life, building a better and more stable social life for their members.

The technique or process through which communities acquired their centers is relatively simple. It is a state of cooperative enterprise that is achieved through the education to civic responsibilities of all members of the community family. This process is such that it lies within the reach of every community. The simple step by step procedure enables any group to work effectively toward its fulfillment.

It is not of paramount importance that this community action result in the physical center. The building does, however, provide the community a place in which it can express its common life. This physical center is the tool or means that encourages and furthers the general development of community life through the cooperative deliberations and planned actions of its members.

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## **APPENDIX I**

### **AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

## BOOKS

Bowers, Ethel, Recreation for Girls and Women.

New York: A. S. Barnes and Co., 1934.

This is a manual for recreation leaders working with girls and women. It gives a suggested community center evening program (pp. 218-219). Suggestions are based on municipal facilities but these may be of value in planning a rural program. The book is of no practical value, otherwise, for community center planning.

Butler, George D., Introduction to Community Recreation.

New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1940.

A textbook on community recreation written for municipal programs. There is a brief discussion of community centers as war memorials (p.68). The book gives the requirements for general recreation buildings and describes the facilities afforded in three urban community centers (p.187). There is a detailed discussion of the community house and the school center with descriptions of several in urban areas (p.297). The book is of no direct value to rural community planning.

Dahir, James, Community Centers as Living War Memorials.

New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1946.

This is a source book. It contains a selected bibliography with annotations and comments. Stress is placed upon war memorials but it contains an almost complete listing of material. There are included in this list many British publications not normally encountered. This is a valuable guide to published literature in the field.

Engelhart, W. L. and W. L. Engelhardt, Jr., Planning the Community School.

New York: The American Book Co., 1940.

This book contains excellent discussion material and suggestions concerning the design and construction of a school intended to serve for community use. In most instances, however, it concerns itself primarily with large consolidated schools in urban areas.

Jackson, Henry E., A Community Center.

New York: The MacMillan Co., 1918.

This book is a professional edition of a government document (Bureau of Education Bulletin No. 11, 1918) published following World War I when the community centre idea was widespread. It contains little of current value. It sets a pattern for the development of a community centre not readily adaptable to Virginia.



Lipovetz, Fred John, Recreation

Minneapolis, Minn.: The Burgess Publishing Co., 1940.

This is a general text on recreation. It gives the suggested rules and regulations governing the use of a community center (p. 282). Otherwise, this book has little application to local community problems.

Mitchell, Elmer D. and Bernard S. Mason, The Theory of Play.

New York: A. S. Barnes and Co., 1934.

The textbook on the philosophy and history of the recreation movement. A brief discussion of the activities in and administration of community centers is given (pp. 354-359). Discusses the use of the school as a recreation center in urban areas. The book is written for the municipal recreation program.

Nash, Jay B., The Organization and Administration of Playground and Recreation. New York: A. S. Barnes and Co., 1931.

A textbook for the training of recreation workers. There is a chapter on the community center (p. 411) from the point of view of facilities and full time leadership. There is also a brief bibliography on community centers in urban areas. The book is of little value for rural planning.

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This book is a study of the concept and functioning of the social center. One chapter (number XVIII) is devoted to the social center in the rural school. Beyond this reference there is little of practical value to local communities.

Williams, Marguerita P., Sources of Information on Play and Recreation. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1927.

A bibliography of material in the field of recreation. Has a section of material on recreation buildings and community centers. No references pertaining to rural communities.

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Barger, J. Wheeler, Rural Community Halls in Montana.

Bulletin No. 221. Bozeman: University of Montana Agricultural Experiment Station, January, 1929.

This is an old but interesting study of the development of community houses in Montana. It is concerned primarily with a statistical study of the buildings themselves rather than the social implications.

Bittner, Walton S., The Community Center. Extension Division Bulletin Vol. V, No. 8. Bloomington: The University of Indiana, April 1920.

An old but sound study of community houses. Gives a brief review of community house development.

Bowers, Ethel M., The Community Center as a Neighborhood Club House. New York: National Recreation Association, 1936.

Describes activities in an urban community center.

Brown, J. Lee, Planning for Recreation Areas and Facilities in Small Towns and Cities.

Federal Security Agency, Office of Community War Services, Recreation Division. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1945.

Building on Old Foundations. New Dominion Series.

Extension Division Bulletin No. 82. Charlottesville: University of Virginia, October 1946.

A story of community cooperative action to revitalize community living by utilizing local resources and traditions.

Cameron, Donald, Community Centres in Alberta.

Edmonton: University of Alberta, Department of Extension, 1946.

Considers the importance of community centers as an instrument for social organization. Presents patterns of procedure and organization for both rural and urban areas. One of the few valuable publications in the field.

Carter, Deane C., Rural Community Building Plans.

Bulletin No. 322. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas, College of Agriculture, June 1935.

Presents several alternate plans for many varied types of community buildings. Cost estimates are out of date. Not particularly helpful.

Citizen Centres for Adult Education. London: Educational Settlements Association, 1943.

Emphasizes role of community center in adult education in England. Good study and review of the center movement from a British point of view.

Cooperation for Community Services. New Dominion Series, Extension Division Bulletin No. 98. Charlottesville: University of Virginia, May 1948.

The story of how a Negro community through cooperative organization achieved a community center and provided for other essential community needs.

Community Centre Planning. Regina, Saskatchewan: Department of Education, 1946.

A short term news letter series designed to stimulate communities to provide themselves with a community center. A good discussion of several aspects of community center building.

Community Builds A Home. New Dominion Series. Extension Division Bulletin No. 7. Charlottesville: University of Virginia, December 1941.

A description of how a Virginia open country community provided itself with a community house and its effect upon community living.

Community Buildings. New York: Playground and Recreation Association of America, 1921.

Gives several plans and specifications for model community buildings. Not readily adaptable to rural communities.

Found: A Home. New Dominion Series.

Extension Division Bulletin No. 82. Charlottesville:  
University of Virginia, November 1947.

An analysis and description of the process whereby a country neighborhood achieved a community house through its own efforts.

Gluck, Eleanor T., Extended Use of School Buildings.

Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education Bulletin No. 5.  
Washington: Government Printing Office, 1927.

A report of a study made by the Bureau of Education in urban areas to determine use of school buildings as community centers.

Halbert, Blanche, Community Buildings for Farm Families.

Department of Agriculture, Farmers' Bulletin No. 1804.  
Washington: Government Printing Office, 1938.

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Department of Cooperation and Co-operative Development.  
Bulletin No. 1-A. Regina: Province of Saskatchewan, 1945.

A simply written easily understood study of the need for an development of community houses. Gives step by step procedure for the development of a center within the community.

Institute for Training in Municipal Administration, Municipal Recreation Administration. Chicago: The International City Managers Association, 1945.

A general discussion of the problem of municipal recreation. Some consideration given to the community center. Of slight value to rural planners.

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Lindstrom, D. E., W. A. Foster, and Max G. Fuller, Rural Community Buildings. Circular 470.

Urbanna: University of Illinois College of Agriculture, March 1937.

This is the best and most helpful of the pamphlets on community houses published thus far. It considers the development of such buildings in Illinois and presents plans and photographs. The analysis of the Illinois community house is equally applicable to other states. This is the first publication to begin considering the social aspects of the process of development.

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New York, Playground and Recreation Association of America, 1920.

Presents plans for urban recreation centers.

McAfee, Joseph Ernest and Thomas L. Sorey, A Community House for the Oklahoma Town. Bulletin, New Series No. 255, Extension No. 75. Norman: The University of Oklahoma, February 1, 1923.

Good discussion of need for and use of a community house. Gives one suggested 'ideal' plan. While this bulletin is old, it contains many useful suggestions.

Nason, W. C., Plans for Rural Community Buildings.

Department of Agriculture Farmer's Bulletin No. 1173.

Washington: Government Printing Office, 1921.

Presents floor plans and photographs of all types of community buildings. Good reference material even though building plans are dated.

Nason, W. C., The Organization of Rural Community Buildings.

Department of Agriculture Farmers' Bulletin No. 1192.

Washington: Government Printing Office, 1921.

Discusses financing, upkeep, and control of community buildings. Advocates formal organization. A brief digest of state laws relative to community buildings is given. Of value as source material.

Nason, W. C., Uses of Rural Community Buildings.  
 Department of Agriculture Farmer's Bulletin No. 1274.  
 Washington: Government Printing Office, 1922.

A report of a national study of community houses. Somewhat out of date yet still interesting and sound in many of its principals. Illustrations tend toward expensive facilities beyond the normal reach of small communities.

Nason, W. C. Rural Planning -- The Social Aspect.  
 Department of Agriculture Farmer's Bulletin No. 1325  
 Washington: Government Printing Office, 1923.

Describes need for rural community planning and gives examples of planned rural communities. Considers the community house as an aspect of the total community plan.

Nason, W. C. Rural Planning -- The Social Aspects of Recreation Places. Department of Agriculture Farmer's Bulletin No. 1388. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1925.

Discusses need for recreation in the rural community with descriptions of several rural parks and other outdoor facilities resulting from community planning.

Nason, W. C. Rural Buildings for Business and Social Uses.  
 Department of Agriculture Farmer's Bulletin No. 1622.  
 Washington: Government Printing Office, 1930.

Discusses the trend toward multiple use of farm market buildings and other types of cooperative activities. Material is dated though there are interesting ideas on multiple use.

Scottish Education Department, Planning Community Centres.  
 Edinburgh: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1947.

A fairly complete study of the organization and operation of community centers in Great Britain.

"Still Sits the Schoolhouse." New Dominion Series,  
 Extension Division Bulletin No. 54.  
 Charlottesville: University of Virginia, August 1944.

The story of how one rural community revitalized its abandoned school building, making it the living center of all community activities.

## USEFUL TEACHING FILMS ON COMMUNITY HOUSES

After Six O'Clock, 22 min. sound, black and white.  
National Film Board of Canada

The Centre, 20 min. sound, black and white.  
National Film Board of Canada

Rural Community Centres, 20 min. sound, black and white.  
National Film Board of Canada

Fitness Is A Family Affair, 19 min., sound, black and white  
National Film Board of Canada

Where All the People Play, 26 min., sound, black and white.  
National Film Board of Canada

Make Way for Youth, 22 min., sound, black and white.  
Association Films

**APPENDIX II**

**TABLE OF COMMUNITY HOUSES IN VIRGINIA**



Community	Date	County	Population	New	Used	Prior State	Sponsoring Agency	Controlling Agency
Keswick	1946	Albemarle	20,009		x	Hunt Club	Community	Community
Scottsville	1930	Albemarle			x	Store	Firemen Assoc.	Firemen Assoc.
St. Johns	1935	Albemarle		x		-----	Church	Church
Blackwell's Hollow	1933	Albemarle		x		-----	Church	Church
Mission Home	1938	Albemarle		x		-----	Church	Community
Earlsville	1932	Albemarle		x		-----	Church	Church
White Hall	1937	Albemarle			x	Church	HDC*	HDC
Free Union	1928	Albemarle			x	Fraternal Hall	HDC	HDC
Mannoboro	1938	Anelia	8,032		x	School	HDC	HDC
Clay Hill	1939	Augusta	44,957		x	School	HDC	HDC
Hot Springs	1938	Bath	6,466	x		-----	Firemen Assoc.	Firemen Assoc.
Williamsville	1918	Bath		x		-----	Community	Community
Clifton	1938	Brunswick	18,378	x		-----	HDC	HDC
Gravel Ridge	1944	Campbell	25,150		x	School	Community	Community
Quaker	1946	Campbell		x		-----	Church	Church
Brookneal	1940	Campbell		x		-----	Gift	Town Council
Whites	1946	Campbell		x		-----	Church	Church
Bowling Green	1946	Caroline	12,224		x	USO	Town	Town Council

\* Home Demonstration Club

TABLE I (continued)

Community	Date	County	Population	New	New Used	Prior State	Sponsoring Agency	Controlling Agency
Boyce	1939	Clarke	6,848	x		---	Am. Legion	Legion
Cartersville	1938	Cumberland	7,162	x		---	HDC	HDC
Gerow	1937	Dinwiddie	17,236	x		---	Community	Community
Navy	1944	Fairfax	66,153	x		---	HDC	HDC
Vale	1940	Fairfax			x	School	Community	Community
Kent Store	1942	Fluvanna	6,383		x	School	Grange	Community
Friendly Grove	1939	Frederick	16,230		x	School	Community	Community
Mt. Williams	1937	Frederick		x		---	Debating Soc	Community
Redlands	1938	Frederick			x	School	Community	Community
Standardsville	1937	Greene	5,377	x		---	Church	Church
Fork Church	1938	Hanover	16,549	x		---	Church	Church
Independence	1939	Hanover			x	School	Church	Church
Studley	1938	Hanover		x		---	Church	Church
Lakeside		Henrico	44,187		x			
Richmond Heights		Henrico			x			
Sandston		Henrico		x				

TABLE I (continued)

Community	Date	County	Population	New	Used	Prior State	Sponsoring Agency	Controlling Agency
Doe Hill	1915	Highland	4,166	x		----	Community	Community
Hiner	1945	Highland			x	School	HDC	HDC
Orbit	1938	Isle of Wight	13,929		x	School	HDC	HDC
Smithfield	1920	Isle of Wight			x	School	City Council	City Council
Rescue	1940	Isle of Wight			x	School	Community	Community
Uzells	1932	Isle of Wight			x	Sheffer	Church	Church
Centerville	1938	James City	5,672		x	School	Community	Community
Corrotoman	1942	Lancaster	7,684		x	House	Church	Church
White Stone	1940	Lancaster		x		----	Women's Club	Community
Firemen's Hall	1928	Louisa	12,857	x		----	Firemen's Asso	Community
Waterford	1946	Loudoun	19,060		x	Mill	Community	Community
Plymouth	1947	Lunenburg	13,485	x		----	Community	Community
Dundas	1933	Lunenburg			x	Store	Community	Community
Riner	1942	Montgomery	25,614	x			H. S. Class	Community

TABLE I (continued)

Community	Date	County	Population	New	Used	Prior State	Sponsoring Agency	Controlling Agency
Lovington	1947	Nelson	14,529	x			Private Corp.	same
Blackstone (N)	1946	Nottoway		x		USO	Community	Community
Blackstone	1946	Nottoway		x		USO	Community	Community
Mine Run	1945	Orange	12,394	x		School	Community	Community
Locust Grove	1941	Orange		x		---	Community	Community
Charity	1944	Patrick	16,177	x		---	HDC	HDC
Tanner's Ridge	1938	Page	14,293	x		---	Church	Church
Pine Grove	1936	Page			x	Church	Church	Church
Chatham	1938	Pittsylvania	59,536	x		Church	HDC	HDC
Michaux	1938	Powhatan	5,158	x		Church	Masons HDC	HDC
Powhatan	1928	Powhatan		x		School	Masons HDC	HDC
Ballsville	1923	Powhatan		x		Church	Community	Community
Subletts	1946	Powhatan		x		Church	Church	Church
Timberville	1908	Rockingham	31,250	x		---	Community	Community
McGaheysville	1910	Rockingham		x		Church	Community	Community

TABLE I (continued)

Community	Date	County	Population	New Used	Prior State	Sponsoring Agency	Controlling Agency
McCaheysville Youth	1947	Rockingham		x	Church	Community	Community
Lexington	1939	Rockbridge	20,512	x	Warehouse	HDC	HDC
Falmouth	1939	Stafford	10,465	x	---	Community	Community
Spring Grove	1932	Surrey	5,577	x	---	Farmer's Union	Community
Claremont	1939	Surrey		x	School	Community	Community
Tazewell	1947	Tazewell		x	School	Community	Community
Waterlick	1946	Warren	14,572	x	School	Community	Community
Literary Hall	1939	Warwick	38,749	x	---	Church	Community
Kinsale	1940	Westmoreland	9,760	x	---	Board of Sup.	Community
Lackey	1947	York	10,013	x	USO	Community	Community

### **APPENDIX III**

#### **PLANS, CONSTRUCTION, AND LOCATION OF TYPICAL COMMUNITY HOUSES**

**PLYMOUTH COMMUNITY HOUSE**

Lunenburg County

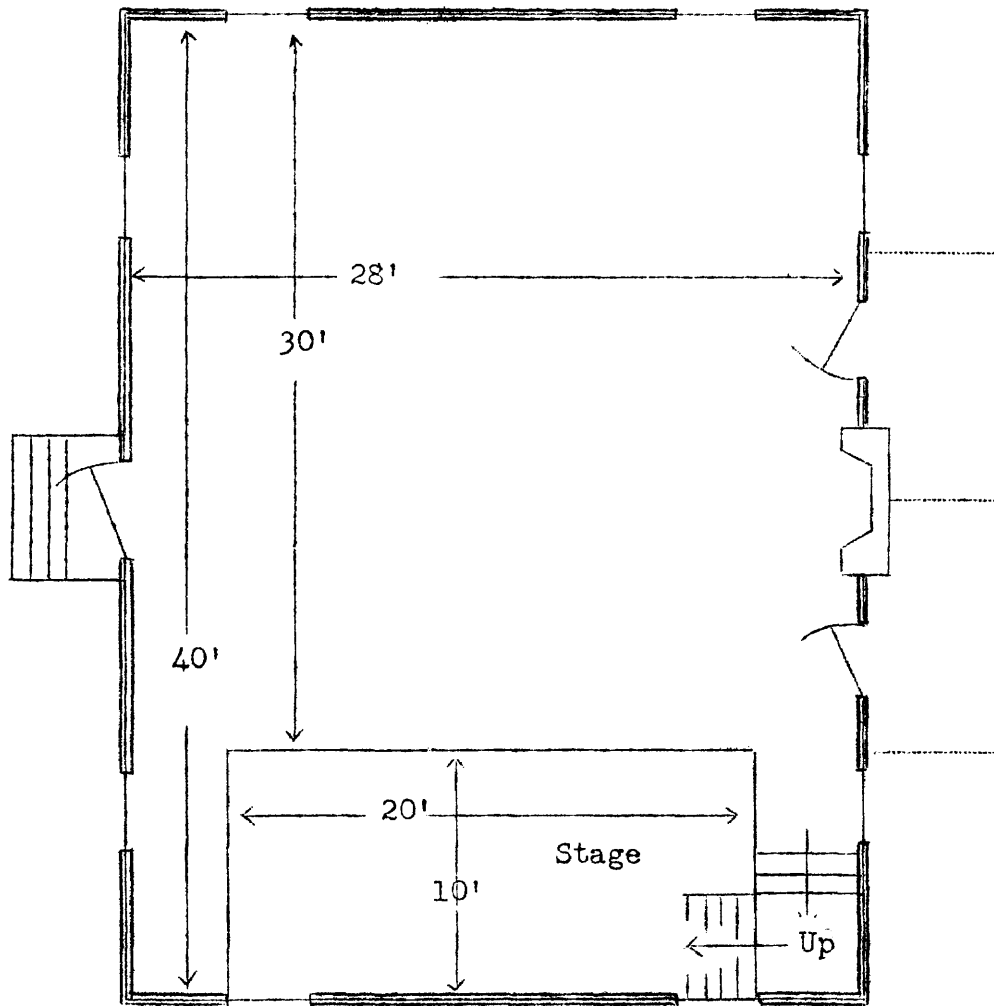
SIZE: 28' by 40'

MATERIAL: Cinder Block

FACILITIES: Stage, Kitchen, Outdoor picnic area

DESCRIPTION: The building is a story and a half in height, with a kitchen and dining-room on the second floor. A permanent stage has been erected and the curtains are made from feed sacks. The interior walls are plasterboard with pictures and charts depicting community activities. A piano and folding chairs are the only furnishings downstairs, with an electric range and refrigerator in the kitchen.

LOCATION: The building is situated on a slight rise of ground on a secondary all-weather road. The grounds are spacious though barren. Play and parking areas have been designated. A barbecue pit has been built and trees and shrubs are being planted.



Plymouth Community House  
Victoria, Virginia



**DUNDAS COMMUNITY HOUSE**

**Lunenburg County**

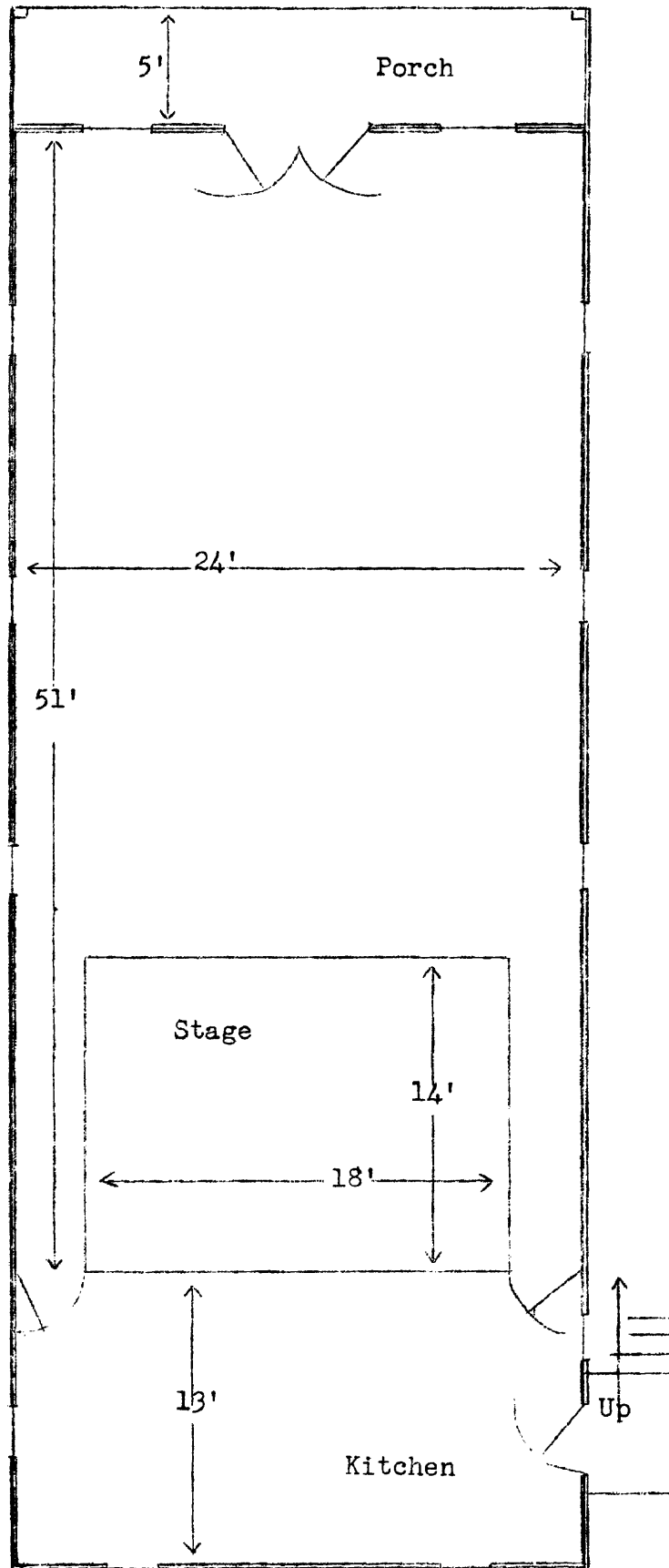
**SIZE: 67' by 24'**

**MATERIAL: Wood**

**FACILITIES: Kitchen, Stage, Storage, and Shop**

**DESCRIPTION:** The building has two floors, one of which has been finished. The main floor has a small well equipped stage. Curtains and supplies for the stage were secured from a professional supply house through the sale of advertising space on the front drop curtain. The windows have draperies and the walls have been papered and painted. Folding chairs and a space heater are the main furnishings. A fine polished wood floor provides good dancing surface.

**LOCATION:** The building is located in the heart of a small village with no surrounding grounds. One side of the building parallels a railroad track and the front faces the main road.



Dundas Community House  
Dundas, Virginia

## REDLANDS COMMUNITY HOUSE

Frederick, County

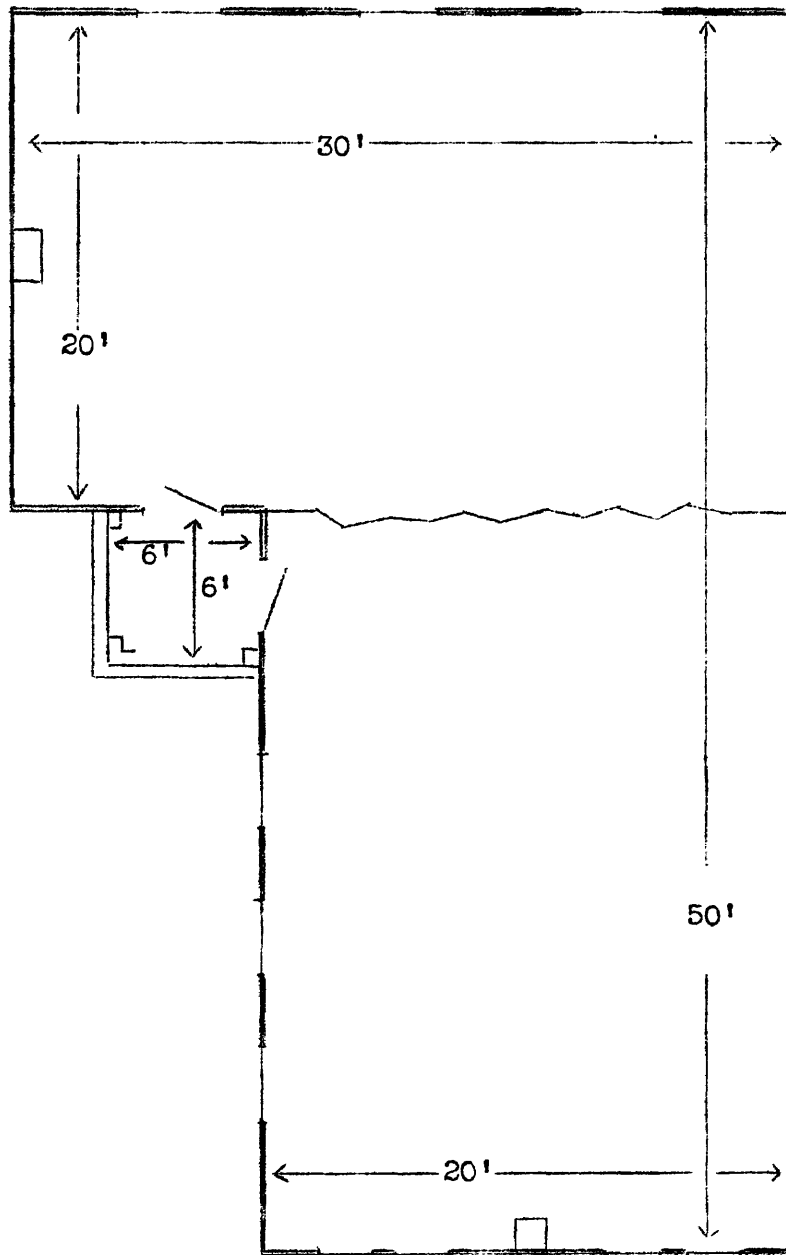
SIZE: 50' by 30'

MATERIAL: Wood

FACILITIES: Kitchen

DESCRIPTION: This former school building is of white clap boarding badly in need of paint. The interior has been refinished in wall boarding, curtains, and slip covers for the furniture. The two rooms 20' by 30' are divided by a removable wooden partition that can be opened into one large room. One end of this room has been partitioned to form a kitchen.

LOCATION: The building is located on a village green beside the local church. It is in a large grove of oaks with ample outdoor space for picnics and play area. The grounds are in a state of disrepair, although some planting has been done.

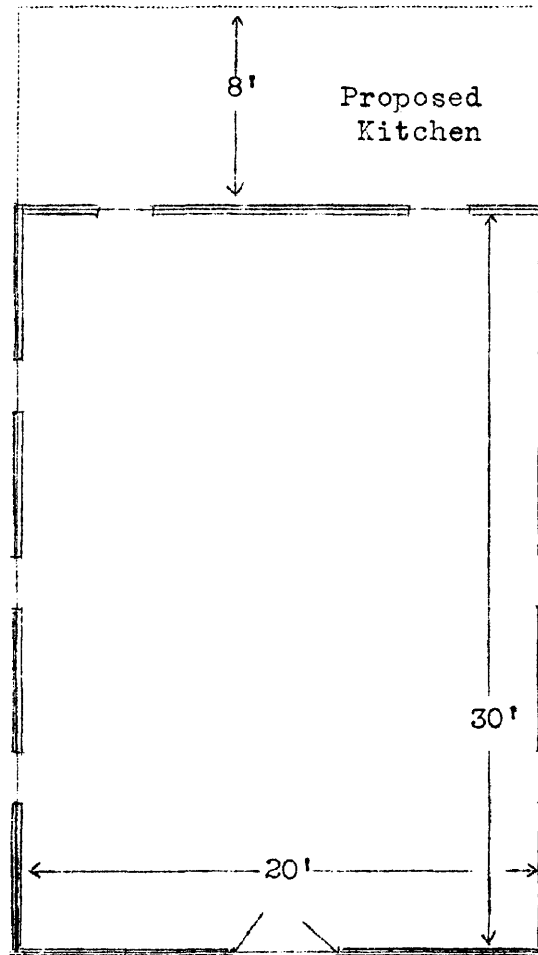


Redlands Community House  
Whitacre, Virginia

**MT. WILLIAMS COMMUNITY HOUSE****Frederick County****SIZE: 20' by 30'****MATERIAL: Wood****FACILITIES: Stage and Kitchen**

**DESCRIPTION:** This small white building was erected by the community. The interior is rough and unfinished. Benches and tables of native make are the only furniture. One corner of the main room serves as a kitchen at present, although a cinder block addition is being erected to the rear of the main building.

**LOCATION:** The building is on the crest of a hill too close to the county dirt road. There is a beautiful view of the mountains from the site although none of the features of the building take this into account. There are no trees nor shrubs around the grounds and too little space for future development as a play area. The building is located in the heart of the community and easily accessible to everyone.



Mt. Williams Community House  
Frederick County, Virginia

## FRIENDLY GROVE COMMUNITY HOUSE

Frederick County

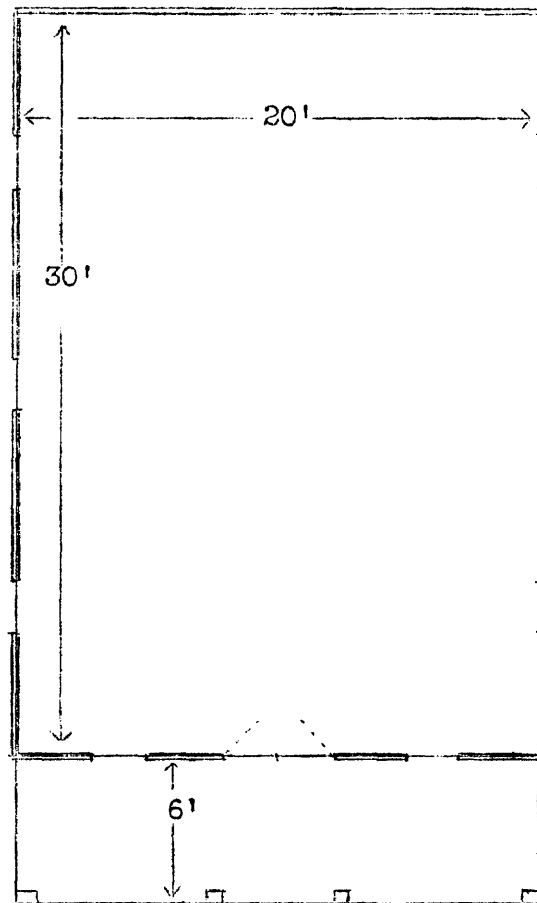
SIZE: 20' by 30'

MATERIAL: Wood

FACILITIES: none

DESCRIPTION: This building is a small one-room clapboard structure. It has solid wood shutters painted green in a decorative pattern against the white walls. The interior is finished in wallboarding. Benches and chairs and tables are the only furnishings. The building accommodates all of the local families and is only crowded on special days when visitors from surrounding communities augment local attendance.

LOCATION: The building is located in a clump of woods just beside a tertiary road. It has ample room for parking with surrounding grounds for picnics and play area. The grounds have been planted and are kept neat and trim.



Friendly Grove Community House  
Frederick County, Virginia



**GRAVEL RIDGE COMMUNITY HOUSE**

Campbell County

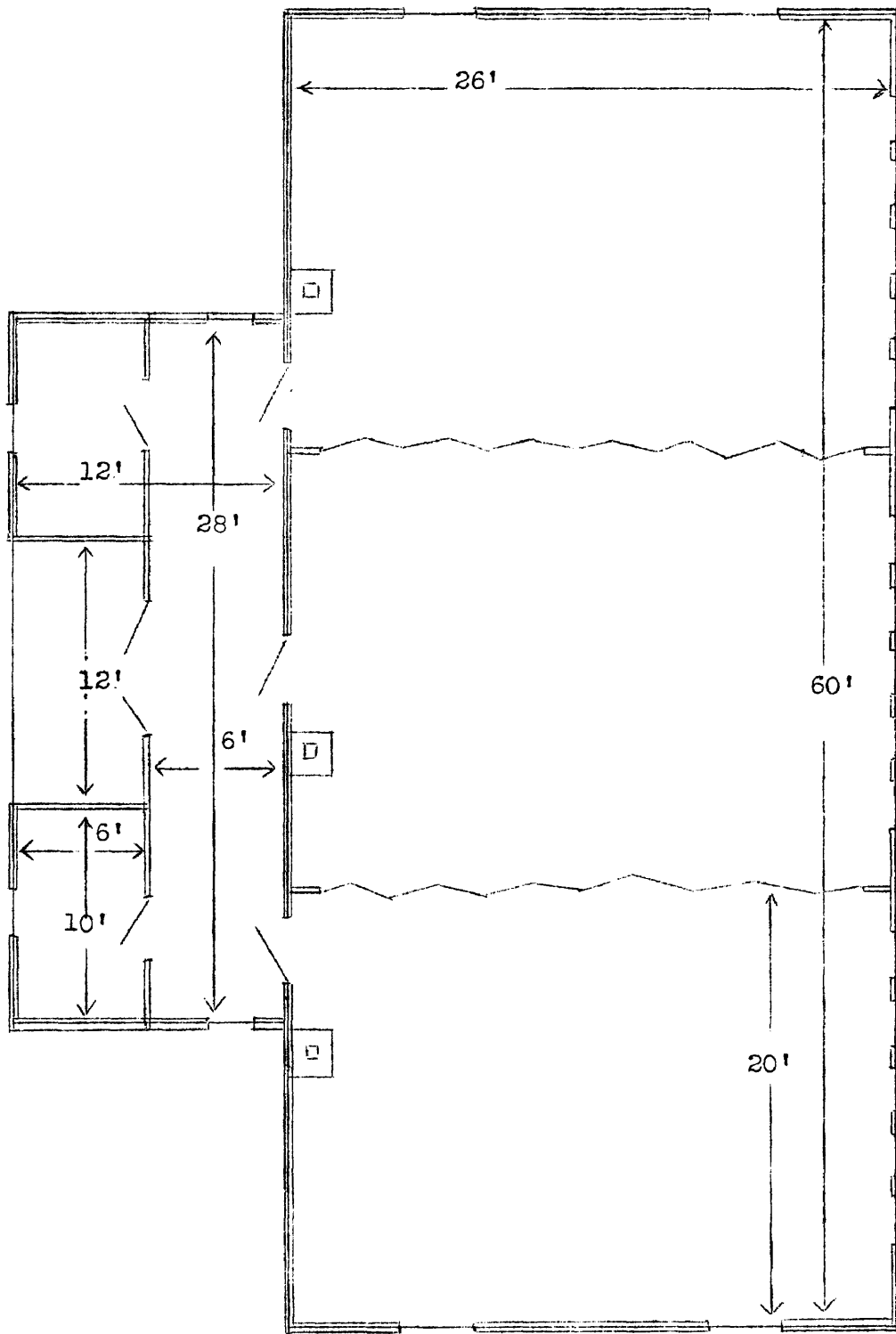
**SIZE:** 60' by 26'

**MATERIAL:** Wood

**FACILITIES:** Stage, kitchen and cloak rooms.

**DESCRIPTION:** The main room of the building can be divided into three rooms twenty by twenty-six by removable partitions. A stage has been erected at one end and a kitchen area has been provided at the other. Miscellaneous chairs and tables are the only furnishings and draperies and curtains have been provided.

**LOCATION:** The building is located in a sparse grove of oak trees at the side of a tertiary road. It is situated in the center of the community and has ample parking and play area. There has been no landscaping of the grounds although rough out-of-door picnic tables have been built.



Gravel Ridge Community House  
Campbell County, Virginia



## VITA

Born Portsmouth, Ohio, 25 April 1917.

Educated in public and private schools, graduating from high school at Sperryville, Virginia, 1934. Attended College of William and Mary, graduating with an A.B. degree in 1937.

Teacher in schools of Greene and Frederick Counties, Virginia, from 1937-1941. Social case worker, Norfolk, Virginia, 1941-1942.

Entered U.S. Army 1942. Commissioned a Second Lieutenant, Ordnance Department 1943. Served in both the European and Pacific Theatres as a Bomb Disposal Officer. Relieved from active duty for physical reasons due to wounds 1947.

Associate in Community Services, Extension Division, University of Virginia 1947 to date.

Author of numerous articles on history, education, and sociology and several separately printed pamphlets including: Recreation for Virginians, and A Further Checklist of Jefferson's Notes on Virginia.