

Ohio  
Rural Life Survey  
“Northwestern Ohio”



DIRECTED BY

The Department of Church and Country Life  
BOARD OF HOME MISSIONS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
IN THE U. S. A.

Warren H. Wilson, *Director*  
Ralph A. Felton, *Field Director*  
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SEMINARY

# Ohio Rural Life Survey

## “Northwestern Ohio”



President W. O. Thompson  
Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio  
*Chairman*

Warren H. Wilson, *Director*  
Ralph A. Felton, *Field Director*

*Contributors*

Robert B. Wilson  
Clarence A. Neff

Arthur O. Stockbridge, *Historian*

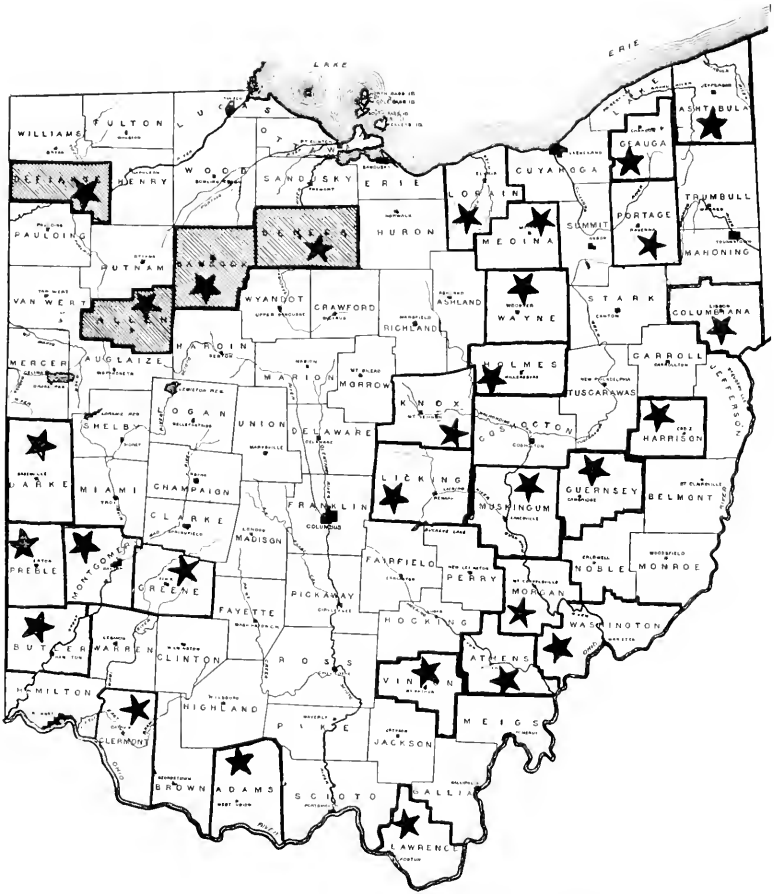
PRESBYTERIAN DEPARTMENT OF CHURCH AND  
COUNTRY LIFE

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MAP OF OHIO. THE COUNTIES SURVEYED ARE INDICATED BY A STAR.  
 SHADED SECTIONS INDICATE COUNTIES DISCUSSED IN  
 THE FOLLOWING PAGES

## CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION.

### 1. Origin of the Survey and Agencies Concerned.

Men and women prominent in promoting the welfare of the rural sections of the State of Ohio had for a long time desired to come to some common understanding as to the problems which each one had been feeling after separately and alone. This long-cherished wish came to fulfilment in January, 1912, when the leaders of rural Ohio met in Columbus and discussed the feasibility of making a state-wide investigation of conditions in the small villages and open country of the State. The concrete result of this meeting was the inauguration of the Ohio Rural Life Survey. An Advisory Council of forty members, representing twelve religious denominations and eighteen educational institutions at work within the State, was appointed to supervise the project. This Council secured the Presbyterian Department of Church and Country Life to undertake the actual task of making the desired study; and under the directorship of Warren H. Wilson, Ph. D., Superintendent of this Department, the work has been carried to a successful completion. A total of twenty-eight counties, scattered all over the State, were covered by the operations of the investigators, most of their work being done during the summers of 1912 and 1913. This pamphlet deals with the findings of the Survey in four of these counties—Seneca, Hancock, Allen and Defiance—all of which disclose conditions that are fairly representative of those prevailing throughout Northwestern Ohio. The agencies that co-operated with the Presbyterian Department of Church and Country Life in making possible the survey of this section were as follows: The Home Mission Department of the Presbyterian Synod of Ohio, Central Mennonite College, the Ministerial Association of Bluffton, Defiance College, the Ohio State Christian Association, and the Reformed Church of Tiffin.

### 2. Purpose of the Investigation.

The problem of rural development is a many-sided one, having its economic, social, moral, and educational phases. But, at bottom, the problem is a religious one. As religion is a force to stimulate every phase of life to its highest activity, so the country church, as the insti-

tutional embodiment of religion in the rural community, should give the impetus for every movement of rural advance. Are the churches in the villages and open country of Northwestern Ohio doing this effectively? This pamphlet seeks to give an answer. We will deal with such topics as the farmer's work, his recreation, his home, his school, and his church. A correct and careful treatment of all of these subjects is absolutely necessary for the carrying out of our dominant purpose, which is, to give the rural churches of Northwestern Ohio a vision of their task, and to help them in the doing of it.

### **3. Method of the Study.**

Before we proceed, just a word as to the method followed in the field investigations. The township was made the unit of study, and was called a "community." An investigator would spend two or three days in each township or community, asking specified questions of the leaders of its religious, educational, social, and political institutions. The written record of these interviews were made on uniform blanks, and, together with the investigator's personal observations, formed the basis for his report upon the conditions existing in the community. The investigators were carefully selected, being either young men of college training or adults of seasoned judgment.



## CHAPTER II.

### THE REGION SURVEYED.

#### 1. Area, Omitted Communities.

Northwestern Ohio, must, of course, remain an indefinite quantity. But, for our purpose, it may be said to include at least fourteen counties covering an area of approximately 6,000 square miles. The four counties surveyed comprise 1896 square miles, or a little less than one-third of the total area of the district. All of the communities within the four counties were studied with the exception of the following towns and cities whose respective populations exceed 2,500: Tiffin, Fostoria, Findlay, Lima, Delphos, Defiance, and Hicksville. These places are large enough to show characteristics different from those of the rural districts. In drawing our conclusions as to the latter, however, we have taken into consideration the effect that these centers of population have upon the surrounding country. The total number of townships in the four counties is 58. The omission of the places named above necessitates the withdrawal from our reckoning of four of these townships or communities, leaving a total of 54 as the basis for our present study.

#### 2. Physical Features.

Throughout Northwestern Ohio the surface is predominantly level or rolling with a gentle slope towards the Lake Erie basin on the northeast. The district is watered by the Maumee and Sandusky Rivers with their tributaries. Formerly, a portion of the region was swampy, and was called the "Great Black Swamp." The draining of this low and wet ground is one of the notable events in the agricultural history of the section.

## CHAPTER III. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS.

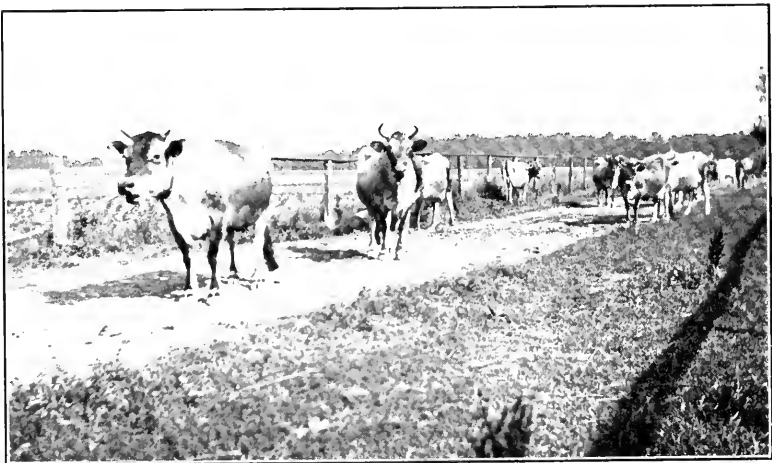
### 1. Natural Resources, Position of Agriculture.

Oil is the only mineral resource of the section that has greatly affected the welfare of its people. It is found over large areas in Allen and Hancock Counties, and to some extent in Seneca County; and although its rate of flow has decreased considerably of late years, it still remains a very important source of income. In these counties, building stone and sand are found in sufficient quantities for local needs. Most of the stone is crushed, and used for railroad ballast and the building of roads. Defiance County has no mineral resource of great importance. It is an agricultural county almost exclusively.

And, indeed, in all of the counties surveyed agriculture is and will continue to be the most important industry. Both the contour of the land and the character of the soil point to this. The extraction of oil from the rocks beneath the surface does not, in the places where it is pursued, materially interfere with the continued cultivation of the top soil. General farming is followed, with little specialization except in the matter of raising and fattening live stock. Recently, the growing of sugar beets has been introduced very extensively throughout the district, and has proved quite profitable.

### 2. Size of Farms.

The average size of a farm throughout the section was, in 1910, 93.2 acres; and in 1900, 92.7 acres. The comparison here would seem to



EVENING ON THE FARM

indicate a slight tendency towards larger sized farms. This tendency has registered itself in an increase in the number of farms of medium acreage (50 to 174A), and a proportionate decrease in the number that are either under 50 acres or over 174 acres. This fact can be ascertained by a glance at the next table, which compares the number of farms for 1900, classified in groups according to size, with the same for 1910, and shows the percentages of proportion and of increase or decrease in each case. The table has been compiled from the United States Census returns, and covers all the countries within the purview of this report.

	In 1900	% of total No.	In 1910	% of total No.	% of In- crease	% of De- crease
Total number of farms.....	12,234	....	12,246	.....	0.09	.....
Average size of farm (acres)....	92.7	....	93.2	.....	0.5	.....
No. under - 3 acres.....	115	0.9	17	0.13	....	85.2
No. 3- 9 acres.....	431	3.5	578	4.71	34.1	.....
No. 10- 19 acres.....	459	3.8	473	3.9	3.0	.....
No. 20- 49 acres.....	2,136	17.5	1,850	15.1	....	13.3
No. 50- 99 acres.....	4,501	36.8	4,573	37.34	1.5	.....
No. 100-174 acres.....	3,465	28.3	3,712	30.31	7.1	.....
No. 175-259 acres.....	848	6.9	836	6.8	....	1.4
No. 260-499 acres.....	262	2.2	192	1.6	....	36.4
No. 500-999 acres.....	17	0.1	13	0.1	....	30.7
No. 1,000 acres or over.....	0	0.0	2	0.01	....	.....

The drift towards medium-sized farms is more clearly shown in the following condensed tabulation:

	1900	1910
Percentage of farms, 0- 49 acres.....	25.7	23.84
Percentage of farms, 50-174 acres.....	65.1	67.65
Percentage of farms, 175 acres or over.....	9.2	8.51

The group of farms ranging from 50 to 174 acres is the only one of the three that has increased during the decade; both of the other two groups show a decrease. This growth in the number of what we have called medium-sized farms is an encouraging economic fact about the northwestern section of the State. Under-sized farms, as a rule, do not yield sufficient income to enable the farmer to have a surplus above living expenses for the support of the church and community improvements, while over-sized farms, on the other hand, are too extensive, in view of the present scarcity of farm labor, to be worked with profit. In most cases, the economic advantage lies with the farmer who has a medium-sized farm. Moreover, the country church usually finds in him its most steady and most liberal supporter.

The increase of his kind in the counties surveyed should be a source of encouragement to the churches within their bounds.

### 3. Increase in Improved Farm Lands.

Another marked characteristic of Northwestern Ohio is the increase during the last decade in the acreage of improved farm lands. In the four counties surveyed, according to the returns of the United States Census, the amount of improved farm lands increased 6.3% during the period from 1900 to 1910, a gain of one acre in every fifteen of their arable lands, or of an area of improved land equal to more than one-sixth that of the largest of the four counties. This increase has been a fact in all of the counties covered by this report. The figures for each county are here given in the accompanying table:

	Allen	Defiance	Hancock	Seneca	All four counties
Approx. land area acres	259,840	259,200	342,400	352,000	1,213,440
Imp. land in farms, 1900 "	196,465	176,546	258,375	254,534	885,920
Imp. land in farms, 1910 "	203,222	190,187	268,581	280,502	942,492
Per cent. of increase.	3.4	7.7	3.9	10.2	6.3

It is interesting to note that the largest percentages of increase are in Defiance and Seneca Counties, where the extraction of oil is either non-existent or competes with agriculture to a far less degree, than in Allen and Hancock Counties.

### 4. Rise of the Price of Land.

This bringing of more arable land into profitable use indicates a rising demand which should register itself in an increase in the price of land throughout the section. That such is the case to a marked degree is proved by the fact that in the four counties considered together the price of land has advanced 86.8% during the decade from 1900 to 1910. The following table, compiled from the United States Census, compares for the counties, taken both severally and collectively, the average price of land in 1900 with the same in 1910, and shows in each case the per cent. of increase.

Counties	Avg. Price of Land Per Acre 1900	Avg. Price of Land Per Acre 1910	Per Cent. of Increase
Allen .....	\$38.39	\$76.28	98.6
Defiance .....	32.78	65.40	99.5
Hancock .....	40.72	78.98	93.9
Seneca .....	42.45	67.79	59.6
All four counties.	\$38.59	\$72.11	86.8

# Land Becoming a Luxury

In 1900	\$ 38.59 per acre
In 1910	\$ 72.11 per acre

86.8% increase

Four counties in  
Northwestern Ohio

Ohio Rural Life Survey

What are the causes of this phenomenal rise in the price of land? Doubtless, they are many. Intelligent farming and a wise care to conserve and increase the fertility of the soil has something to do with it. Speaking generally, the farms throughout the section are well cared for. The presence in the population of large numbers of "Pennsylvania Dutch" and Mennonites, with their fine enthusiasm for country life and their enviable agricultural traditions, argues for such a condition. The methods employed in tilling the soil are as a rule up to date. Underdraining with tile is recognized as a necessity for the best results in such a level country, and is almost universally practiced. Rotation of crops is followed everywhere. The specialization in animal husbandry, particularly in Allen, Hancock and Seneca Counties, furnishes an abundance of natural manure for the enrichment of the soil. Commercial fertilizer is used with good judgment. All of these factors, and many more, which tend to increase the productivity of the land, tend also to raise its selling price. But do they afford an adequate explanation?

Better prices for farm products must surely be considered as a factor in the problem. In the case of live-stock, the four counties have enjoyed an 87.8% increase in the value of stock sold in 1909 as over against the value of that sold in 1899. Larger returns from the land certainly raises the demand for it, and thus advances its price.

## 5. Land Speculation and Tenantry.

But no satisfactory reason can be given for the great increase in the price of land throughout the section without including the factor of

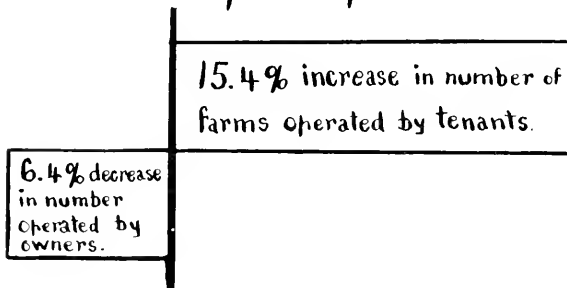
speculation. The tendency to speculate in land has been furthered by the better prices for farm products, but especially by the exploitation of the oil fields. The signs of growing speculation in land are, on the one hand, an increasing number of retired farmers, and on the other hand, an increasing number of farms operated by tenants. Both of these signs reveal themselves in Northwestern Ohio.

The farmers receive a royalty of one-sixth the current market value of the crude petroleum which is pumped from wells drilled upon their land. The wealth thus acquired is making it possible for many farmers, whose property chances to be within the districts where oil is found, to retire and to rent their farms to tenants. Some of these retired farmers continue to live upon the land which they once tilled, but for the most part they move\*to town where the educational advantages are greater and the social attractions more alluring. The towns and cities of the section, especially Lima and Findlay, have a large number of this class in their populations. These retired farmers no longer regard their farms as places for a home but as mere means for bringing them a money income. They have become speculators in land.

The obverse side of a larger number of retired farmers is a greater number of farms operated by tenants. In the four counties surveyed, there were in 1910, according to the United States Census, a total of 12,246 farms. Of these, 8,016 or 65.6% were tilled by their owners, 4,121 or 33.6% by tenants, and a negligible number, representing 0.8%, by managers. One farm in every three was being worked by a man who did not own the soil. What was the condition in 1900? In that

## Tenantry Growing

1900 - 1910



Four counties in  
Northwestern Ohio

Ohio Rural Life Survey

year, out of the total number of 12,234 farms, 8,565 or 70% were operated by their owners, 3,571 or 29.4% by tenants, and 0.6% by managers. The proportion of farms operated by tenants has increased during the ten-year period by 4.2%. During the same decade, the total number of farms worked by tenants has increased 15.4%, whereas the number of farms tilled by their owners has decreased 6.4%. Evidently, tenantry is growing throughout the four counties. The percentages, showing the ratio between ownership and tenantry in the separate counties for both 1900 and 1910, are given in the following table:

Counties	% of farms operated by owners in 1900	% of farms operated by owners in 1910	% of farms operated by tenants in 1900	% of farms operated by tenants in 1910
Allen .....	73.1	69.6	25.5	29.6
Defiance .....	74.7	71.9	24.6	27.6
Hancock .....	67.7	61.1	31.5	37.4
Seneca .....	65.7	60.9	33.8	38.3
All four Counties ..	70.0	65.6	29.4	33.6

Tenantry need not be a curse to agriculture and to country life, but under the system of land tenure prevalent throughout most of the United States it usually is. In the section covered by this report, the average length of time that a tenant stays upon the same farm is two and one-half years. This means, not only frequent removals, but also the constant effort on the part of the tenants to take from the soil as much as possible while giving back to it as little as possible. Such a process, if continued, must result in soil impoverishment and human deterioration.

Very few of the renters succeed in acquiring farms of their own. For the most part, they remain a floating, discontented element in the population. They are the marginal members of the community, and their increasing number in Northwestern Ohio constitutes, not only a serious agricultural question, but a more serious social and religious problem.

## 6. Farm Labor.

Another marginal member of the community is the employed farm-hand. He is rather scarce throughout Northwestern Ohio. His usual wage is about \$25 a month with board and lodging. Reckoning the latter at \$5 a week, his total income amounts to nearly \$50 a month. The oil pumpers and roustabouts get an average salary of \$65 per month. Those employed in other nearby industries receive on the average more than \$50 per month. The remuneration for farm labor

is not high enough to hold the men of ambitious spirit. If the country churches can give to the farm-hand more than a money interest in the open country, they may succeed in holding him to the farm and in helping him to better his status among his neighbors.

## 7. Marketing.

The farmers throughout the section have easy and ready access to good markets for their stock and grain. Good roads and abundant transportation facilities, both steam and electric, make the shipment of farm products an easy matter.

But as yet the farmers of Northwestern Ohio have not learned to make use of their advantages in this respect in the most economic way. In the matter of buying and selling, each farmer acts for himself. The idea of co-operation in the farming business has not as yet conquered over the various prejudices that in this section still hold men apart. The principle, that a good price gained for all through co-operation is in the long run the best price for each, has not as yet won many converts. Our investigators found but one lone prophet of the better day, a co-operative grain elevator in Defiance County. Let us hope that this enterprise is the beginning of a movement that in course of time will substitute collective for individual bargaining throughout the section.

## 8. Summary.

Our picture of the economic situation in the rural districts of Northwestern Ohio has been, on the whole, an optimistic one. A fertile soil, divided for the most part into medium sized farms, and worked by intelligent men who are using scientific methods in their care of the land—surely, these are the lines of a pleasing background. But in the foreground, there are some blotches. In the first place, the rising price of land, due in some measure to speculation, is giving rise to two related abuses. On the one hand, it makes it very hard for any one to become the owner of a farm except through inheritance or by the aid of outside capital at high rates of interest. On the other hand, it makes it comparatively easy for one to become the renter of a farm, and thus assist the growth of tenantry, which is increasing throughout the section, and threatening the maintenance of soil fertility. In the second place, the presence of mutual distrust keeps the farmers from coming together into co-operative associations for buying and selling. To suggest the antidotes for these shortcomings is easy; to remove them is harder. But the task will be lighter if the country churches of the section see it as a religious task, willed of God, and hence sure of accomplishment.



CHAPTER IV.  
SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

1. Population.

(a) *Its distribution and status.* The four counties, according to the United States Census for 1910, contain 161,359 people. Of these, 84,619, or 52.6%, are classified as rural, that is, as living on farms or in villages of less than 2,500 people. In 1900, the population of the four counties was 157,519, of which 89,596, or 56.9%, were rural. In 1890, the number of people in the same four counties was 149,845, of which 87,415, or 58.4%, were put in the rural column. These figures show that, whereas the total population of the area surveyed has increased (7.6%) during the two decades from 1890 to 1910, the proportion of people living in the country has, during the same period, steadily decreased. Considering the four counties together, it is evident from the foregoing analysis that the general drift of the population is toward the cities. The district as a whole is less rural now than formerly. The farms have not been able to stand the competition of the factories and the stores bidding for the wage-earning class.

Our study, however, becomes more instructive and more true to existing conditions, if we examine the proportion of the population living in rural communities by counties, as well as in the aggregate. This is done summarily in the following table, the figures for which have been taken from the United States Census:

County	1890			1900			1910		
	Total Pop.	Rural	% of Total	Total Pop.	Rural	% of Total	Total Pop.	Rural	% of Total
Allen .....	40,644	22,232	55.0	47,976	23,964	49.9	56,580	23,516	41.6
Defiance .....	25,769	18,075	70.2	26,387	18,808	61.7	24,498	17,171	70.1
Hancock .....	42,563	22,825	53.7	41,993	23,040	54.9	37,860	21,457	56.7
Seneca .....	40,869	24,183	59.2	41,163	23,784	57.8	42,421	22,475	53.0
All Four Counties ...	149,845	87,415	58.4	157,519	89,596	56.9	161,359	84,619	52.6

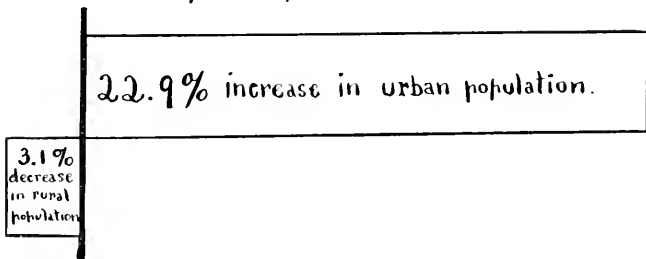
A glance at the table shows that the counties differ quite markedly from one another in the conditions they severally present. Allen County has suffered the greatest decline in the proportion of its people who live in the country, passing from 55.0% in 1890 to 41.6% in 1910. This decline has been due to the phenomenal growth of Lima, the principal city of the county, which has increased its population by

90.9% in the twenty years from 1890 to 1910. Seneca County likewise shows the effect of an increase (20.2%) in the population of its urban centers (Tiffin and Fostoria) by registering a steady decline in the proportion of its rural population, falling in this respect from 59.2% in 1890 to 53% in 1910. Defiance County reveals a fluctuating condition, the proportion of its rural population falling from 70.2% to 61.7% during the years from 1890 to 1900, and then rising from the latter percentage to 70.1% in 1910. Hancock County, however, is becoming more rural. The tendency in this direction has been constant. In 1890, the proportion of its rural population was 53.7%; in 1900, 54.9%; in 1910, 56.7%. This proportionate increase is due to the fact that a 16.8% decrease for the twenty-year period from 1890 to 1910 in the population of the urban centers of the county outbalances a 5.9% decrease in the total population of its rural districts for the same period.

The percentages of increase or decrease in both the urban and the rural population of the four counties, considered both severally and together, for both the twenty-year period from 1890 to 1910 and the decade from 1900 to 1910, are given in the accompanying table:

County	Per Cent. of Increase 1890-1910			Per Cent. of Increase 1900-1910		
	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural
Allen .....	39.2	80.5	5.3	17.9	37.7	-1.9
Defiance .....	-4.9	-4.7	-5.0	-7.2	-3.3	-8.7
Hancock .....	-11.0	-16.8	-5.9	-9.8	-13.5	-6.9
Seneca .....	3.7	19.5	-7.0	3.1	14.8	-5.5
All four counties..	7.6	22.9	-3.1	2.4	11.6	-5.5

## The Town-ward Drift 1890-1910



Four counties in  
Northwestern Ohio

Ohio Rural Life Survey

The schedule shows that the number of people in the rural districts of Northwestern Ohio is decreasing. Every one of the four counties surveyed registers a loss in its rural population for the decade from 1900 to 1910, and every one with the exception of Allen County reveals the same for the two decades from 1890 to 1910. Considering the four counties together, the decline in the number of people living in the country during the last decade amounts to 5.5%, ranging from 1.9% in Allen County to 8.7% in Defiance County. For the twenty-year period from 1890 to 1900, the decrease amounts to 3.1%. In Defiance and Hancock Counties the rural decline is a part of a general decline in the total population; but in Allen and Seneca Counties it is accompanied by an increase in the total population, due to the growth of the cities within their borders.

(b) *Its origin and composition.* The origin of the population in these counties is widely distributed. The early settlers came principally from Eastern Ohio and the older communities east of the mountains. Pennsylvania sent the largest proportion. The section shared very richly in the German migration of the thirties. A large number of Welsh have settled in Allen County. According to the United States Census, the present population of the section is almost exclusively of native birth. This fact is shown by the table below, the figures for which have been taken from the Census for 1910:

County	Native born White	% to total Pop.	Foreign born White	% to total Pop.	Negro	% to total Pop.
Allen .....	53,149	94.0	2,395	4.2	1,030	1.8
Defiance .....	23,066	94.1	1,409	5.8	23	0.1
Hancock .....	36,457	96.3	1,152	3.0	249	0.7
Seneca .....	39,867	94.0	2,394	5.6	157	0.4
All four counties....	152,539	94.5	7,350	4.6	1,459	0.9

The large proportion (94.5%) of native born inhabitants indicates a people thoroughly American in its ideals and sentiments.

## 2. Health and Vitality of the People.

A primary condition of the social welfare of any population is its physical soundness. The death rates for various diseases proving fatal in any one year may be taken as rough indices of the healthfulness of a people's place of residence. We enumerate in the next table the principal causes of death in the four counties covered by this report, with the number of deaths due to each cause during the year 1911, classified according to their occurrence in cities or in rural districts, together with the death rates per 1,000 in both city and country. The

table has been compiled from the 1911 report of the State Bureau of Vital Statistics.

	All Causes	Apo-plexy	Bright's Disease	Cancer	Heart Disease	Old Age	Pneu-monia	Tuber- culosis	Typhoid Fever	Violence
Total number of deaths .....	1,943	164	80	132	234	23	128	233	35	158
Total number in cities* .....	1,007	81	36	71	131	8	53	125	19	87
Total number in country .....	936	83	44	61	103	15	75	108	16	71
Per cent. of deaths in country to grand total ....	48.1	50.6	55.0	46.2	44.0	65.2	58.5	46.3	45.7	44.9
Death rates per 1,000 in country .....	11.0	0.98	0.5	0.72	1.21	0.17	0.88	1.27	0.18	0.83
Death rates per 1,000 in cities*..	13.1	1.05	0.46	0.92	1.70	0.10	0.69	1.62	0.24	1.13

\* The cities included are Lima, Defiance, Findlay, Fostoria and Tiffin.

Tuberculosis, with a death rate in the rural districts of 1.27, and heart disease, with a rate in the same sections of 1.21, appear to be the most prevalent causes of death. Apoplexy, pneumonia, violence, cancer, and Bright's Disease come next throughout the country districts in the order of their fatal results. The death rate from typhoid fever is not high. The people are awake to the ravages of tuberculosis. Five neighboring counties co-operate in supporting at Lima, Allen County, a thoroughly modern sanitarium for the treatment of tuberculosis patients.

The death rate of 13.1 for the cities is slightly higher, and the rate of 11.0 for the rural districts is lower than the rate for the entire State, which in the same year was 13.09. These facts argue for the prevalence of a higher standard of vitality in the latter. Pneumonia and Bright's Disease are the only ailments of those mentioned in the preceding table that show a higher death rate for the country than for the cities of the section. Old age, to be sure, registers a higher rate for the former than for the latter. This fact, however, increases the evidence for a higher vitality in the country districts, as it shows that in the country more people live to an old age than in the cities.

In general, our conclusion as to the health conditions in the section under review is that they disclose nothing very phenomenal, but are about the same as the average for the entire State.

### 3. Housing Conditions.

One of the prime conditions of robust health is good housing. That

this condition is met in most of the rural homes of Northwestern Ohio, we can assert with a fair degree of confidence. No very intensive study of housing conditions was made, but the general observations of our investigators would seem to allow us to venture the above statement. Several cases of poor sanitation and inadequate protection against the inclemencies of the weather were indeed found, and the greater prevalence of pneumonia in the rural districts would seem to indicate that there is room for improvement. But, as a rule, the provident farmers of the section take good care for the housing of their families. While the majority have had little or no plumbing done, yet the number of those who are installing the modern improvements and conveniences (i. e. bath rooms, pressure tanks, furnaces, gasoline and acetylene lights, dynamos, gasoline engines for running churns, washing machines, cream separator, etc.) is increasing. A majority of the houses are well painted. A care is had in most cases for the beautifying of the home surroundings. The visitor sees a goodly number of well-kept lawns and beautiful beds of flowers. In general, the aspect of the country shows the effect of contact with the outside world and of a growing freedom from isolation.

#### **4. Means of Communication.**

The freedom from isolation, just mentioned as a characteristic of country life in Northwestern Ohio, has been brought about by the multiplication of means of communication. The level topography of the region is especially favorable for good road construction. Most of the main roads are piked with gravel or crushed stone, and the work of improving the roads is being completed in several of the townships by piking a given number of miles every year.

Fifteen trunk lines of steam railroads traverse Northwestern Ohio. In addition, the section is well supplied with interurban electric lines. Telephones are found in the majority of the farm houses. They are not, however, an unmixed blessing. While, on the one hand, they afford many conveniences and facilitate business, they have, on the other hand, practically done away with household visiting, which formerly was such a fine expression of the social unity of a neighborhood.

#### **5. Community Leadership.**

In forty out of the fifty-four communities studied, there could not be found any man or institution standing out conspicuously as a directing force. The church rebukes most cases of individual wrongdoing, but

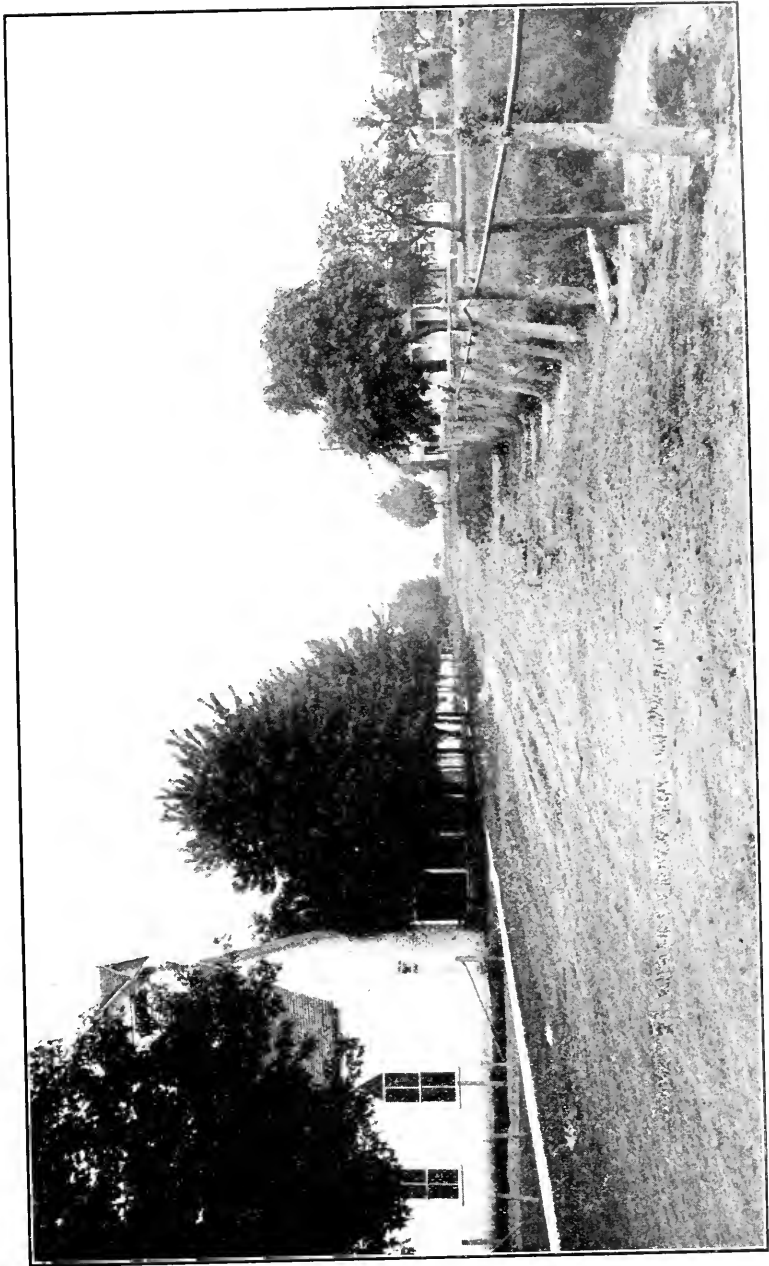
because of its very common lack of a resident ministry is seldom effective in leading in the improvement of the community. The rural school, likewise, because of the constant changes in its teaching force, is prevented from assisting as largely as it otherwise might in promoting the social welfare of the people. Our investigators, in their search for individual men and women who stood out as leaders of public opinion in their respective communities were in most cases met with such replies as: "Couldn't single any out," or "About all alike." Such a democracy, while it is both very American and very commendable, is sure to become deadening in its influence unless it is given direction by competent leaders. The reason why this sort of leadership is so rare in the section studied is that the ablest of the farmers do not fully realize that they need to work together under the guidance of trusted leaders. There is an absence of a common purpose. Each farmer is for himself. This individualistic democracy, which is the very praiseworthy product of the early pioneer days in which the farmer had to struggle alone against the obstacles of nature, must however, under the new conditions of the present day, give place to a co-operative democracy in which all the farmers will work together under approved and tested leaders for ends and ideals held in common by all.

## **6. The Informal Meetings of the People.**

The prevailing mutual distrust and narrow individualism, which hinders the progress of this co-operative democracy, could be more easily overcome if there could be more intermingling among the people at friendly gatherings. But, as yet, no institution in all the district studied has provided suitable places for the informal meetings of the rural people. Neither the school nor the church of any village in the four counties studied has as yet set apart and furnished a rest room for the farmer and his wife, or a suitable social place for the farmer's boys and girls. And yet these churches have been observing for generations that a majority of the farmers come to town on Saturday, and oftentimes bring their families with them. The saloons, poolrooms, and questionable picture shows have watched the same thing, but only to do something for their own advantage. Should the village churches be any less wide-awake in their service for the advantage of others?

## **7. Community Gatherings.**

Another way in which the churches and schools might serve more adequately the social needs of the rural population of Northwestern Ohio is by providing a larger number of gatherings where all the



A NORTHWESTERN OHIO VILLAGE STREET

neighborhood can meet to develop a community, co-operative spirit. In this connection, we desire to commend what is already being done by various agencies, especially by the rural churches through their Sunday Schools. In a gratifying number of instances, the annual Sunday School picnic has been broadened in its scope until it has become an affair for the whole community. Our investigators noted at least ten cases in the four counties where it is the custom for all the Sunday Schools in a township to unite in an annual picnic for the entire township. This is very encouraging. The Farmers' Institutes, which are of frequent occurrence throughout the four counties, do a good social service in bringing the farmers of a community into a closer acquaintance with one another. Both Defiance and Seneca Counties have an annual Chautauqua within their bounds. Other community gatherings met with more or less occasionally in the counties surveyed are county fairs, pioneer picnics, old settlers' reunions, school commencements, and business men's picnics. All of these assemblies of the rural people lead them to know each other better. Mutual knowledge of each other is an absolute necessity for co-operation. These community gatherings give the farmers a chance to become acquainted with one another, and thus give impetus to the spirit of unity and co-operative action.

#### **8. Family Reunions.**

A description of general social conditions in Northwestern Ohio would be incomplete without a reference to the many family reunions which constitute a marked feature of almost every community in the section. These reunions are annual all-day social picnics, and draw not only from the home township but also from neighboring townships or other counties. While they perhaps tend to focus social interest about the household group rather than about the community group, yet these two groups are not in opposition to one another. Indeed, the neglect of the former would mean the utter downfall of the latter. Perhaps we can regard the family reunion as a means of preparing the way for the reunion of country people on the basis of the entire community.

#### **9. Community Organizations.**

As a community develops, much of its social life becomes organized, and is entrusted to the fostering care of societies of various kinds. Many of these societies may not be distinctly social in their aim, but all of them have a social side to their activities. In any list of these organizations in Northwestern Ohio, the church would stand first in



most communities, while the school in a large number of them would stand near the top. But of these two institutions and their activities, we will speak later. In this place, we desire to allude to the part played in community life by the secret orders and by various open fraternal societies or clubs. In the rural sections of the four counties covered by this report, there are 131 separate lodges of various secret orders, having a total membership of 8,039, which is 32% of the adult male population in the same districts. This percentage, however, stands only for an approximate truth, as some of the lodges are either for women exclusively or admit female members. But even with this modification, the fact that from one-fourth to one-third of the farmers are members of lodges might seem to suggest that these organizations play a large part in the social life of the country communities. But as a matter of fact, the figures thus far given are rather misleading on this point. The relation between their enrollment and the average attendance at their regular meetings is a surer index of the social significance of the lodges. And in this matter, the rural lodges of the counties surveyed show a general inability to interest their own members in their meetings. The percentage of their total average attendance to their total enrollment is only 27.5%. Most of the lodges have the custom of holding at least one banquet or entertainment a year, usually for their own members. This exclusiveness of the lodges is perhaps the chief criticism that can be made upon them. Their principle of secrecy is not in harmony with the operations of a free democracy. They are too narrow to become the basis for uniting a whole community in the bonds of brotherly love and mutual helpfulness. But do not misinterpret our words. We are not of those who say that the lodges are in opposition to the churches. But while, on the one hand, we rejoice in all that the lodges have done in promoting the spirit of fraternity, we feel ourselves compelled, on the other hand, to express our hope that the churches in their worship and activities may embody more fully the fraternal spirit, the neglect of which on their part has, we believe, been the chief factor in promoting the growth of the lodges.

In proportion to their number, a greater contribution is made to the social life of some of the communities by the various open societies and clubs than by the lodges. There are about 52 of these clubs in the four counties. They enroll a total membership of about 1,900, and show a total average attendance at their regular meetings of 66% of their total enrollment. These societies are for various purposes. The village of McComb in Hancock County has a community organization

of its men called the "McComb Boosters." A similar organization exists in Bettsville, Seneca County. In Madison Township of Hancock County there is a social organization with 75 male members, called the "Peace and Plenty Club." In one of the townships of Defiance County the young men are organized into an athletic and social club, called the "Modern Knights of St. Paul."

But throughout the section surveyed there seems to be a dearth of organizations that are devoted strictly to the special interests of the farmers. Granges are very few in number. Here is an open door before the country churches of the district. Let them bring together their mature members, especially the men, into some kind of an organization—call it a brotherhood, or a farmers' club, or what not—that will give them the opportunity to discuss under wholesome religious auspices the economic problems that confront them as followers of the same occupation and as members of the same community.



SOLVING THE RECREATION PROBLEM—BOYS' CLUB OF ONE OF THE CHURCHES

## 10. Recreation.

In each of the counties studied there is a city large enough to dominate the social and recreational situation. Partially, as a consequence of this, organized recreation in the open country is conspicu-

ous chiefly by its absence. The rural churches, through their picnics and socials, are perhaps doing the most that is being done to furnish opportunities for recreation. Of the nature and worth of the service of the churches in this matter, we will have occasion to speak later when we come to deal in detail with their social life. Many of the rural schools have too small an attendance for much organized play. Base-ball is the most popular game, yet few regular baseball teams are maintained. Outside the cities, there is very little investment in public play grounds or in play apparatus of any kind. As a result the country boys and girls seek their recreation in the towns. The quick and frequent transportation furnished by the interurban electric lines makes this comparatively easy. In the towns, the pool and billiard parlors, the moving picture shows, and the dance halls are the most popular forms of amusement. These may not be condemnatory in themselves, but when maintained for the purpose of making money, they are very apt to show signs of moral degeneracy.

The problem of providing recreation in the open country is an urgent one in Northwestern Ohio, if the rural communities are to withstand the lure of the adjacent cities. It is also a difficult problem. Cheap and ready transportation to the towns does not make it any easier. The farming community must be made complete in itself. Those who have to work or go to school within its bounds should not be obliged to go outside for their play. The rural churches of Northwestern Ohio must furnish the religious enthusiasm for the solving of this problem. There is enough spiritual dynamic in them to do it, if they will view the task as one having great religious value. It is in the free and untrammelled expressions of ourselves, which we call recreation or play, that our moral character and the practical efficiency of our religion are most clearly revealed, and are most powerfully effected in their development. The church that does not see the religious significance of wisely directing the recreations of its members, especially those of its young people, is spiritually blind.

## 11. Moral Conditions.

The healthfulness of the social life in any community records itself in the moral conditions prevalent among its people. But it is practically impossible to state these in figures or in any statistical form. One index of conditions is the number of illegitimate births in a district. According to the 1909 report of the State Bureau of Vital Statistics, the rates of illegitimacy for the State and for the four counties under review are as follows:

Division	Rates per 100,000
State .....	47.7
Allen County .....	71.4
Defiance County .....	14.9
Hancock County .....	19.1
Seneca County .....	16.9
Lima City .....	91.1
Defiance City .....	23.8
Findlay City .....	22.7
Tiffin City .....	18.0
Fostoria City .....	24.1

These figures acquire significance for the rural communities when we notice that in each county the rate for the city or cities within its borders is higher than for the county as a whole. This argues for a comparatively low rate in the rural districts. Defiance County, the most rural of the four, has the lowest rate. As compared with the average rate for the entire state (47.7), all four counties make a very favorable showing with the exception of Allen County, in which the rate of illegitimacy exceeds the state-wide rate by 23.7. This deplorable situation in Allen County is due to the distressing conditions in Lima, which is the fourth city of the state in the proportion of its population who are of illegitimate birth.

But in most of the rural communities throughout the district the moral tone is good. Our investigators reported it as improving in 84% of the townships studied. Perhaps no better way can be used to present graphically the moral tendencies at work in the district than to quote some of the remarks of our field agents as to conditions in several of the townships. Here are some reports of a favorable character: "Temperance movement increasing", "Better discipline in school", "Dry township", "No saloons", "Decline of venereal diseases", "Churches improving", "Less drunkenness and rowdiness", "Bootlegging scarcely known", "Fewer dances." Here are other reports of a less favorable character: "Too many trips to Toledo", "More saloons", "Beer is given to the children like water", "Pool room well attended, church attendance not good", "Too many 'Joy Rides' of the boys and girls", "A group of young men go outside the corporation almost every Sunday, take some beer along, and play cards", "Boys gather at stores on Sundays", "Immoral language on walls of school out-houses."

Hancock County is the only one of the four that is entirely without saloons. In the other counties, however, most of the dram-shops are located in the cities. The sentiment against the saloon is gaining headway in most of the country communities.

## CHAPTER V. RURAL SCHOOLS.

### 1. Reason for the Study.

The ultimate purpose of the country school and the country church in their work for the young is one and the same. They are both seeking to equip the boys and girls for efficient and useful living in a rural society. But in their common task, there is a differentiation in function. The country schools seeks to supply the youth with the intellectual tools for successful social intercourse, whereas the country church aims to give the growing boys and girls that religious dynamic which will impel them to use these tools for the glory of God, that is, for the highest welfare of the rural community. These two functions are closely related to one another. Neither institution can afford to be indifferent to the welfare of the other. This fact is the justification for the inclusion of a study of the rural schools of Northwestern Ohio in this report. The country churches of the district have a right to know whether or not the country schools are adequately performing their part of the common task. This part of our pamphlet seeks to supply them with an answer to this inquiry.

### 2. Scope of the Study.

Unless otherwise indicated, whatever is here said about educational conditions in Northwestern Ohio is based upon an investigation made during the summer of 1912 of 231 rural schools, distributed as follows: Allen County, 124; Defiance, 23; and Hancock, 84. The schools of Seneca County were not included in this investigation.

### 3. Material Equipment.

Owing to the lack of timber in Northwestern Ohio, most of its school buildings are constructed of brick. Of the 231 school houses investigated, 165 (71.4%) are of this material, 65 (28.1%) of frame, and 1 (0.5%) of concrete. The vast majority (197 or 85.3%) of these buildings consist of only one room. Those having two rooms number 10 (4.3%); three rooms, 4 (1.8%); four rooms, 10 (4.3%); and five or more rooms, 10 (4.3%). As to the advisability of having so many one-room school buildings in a country so level and so accessible, part with part, as Northwestern Ohio, we will have occasion

to ask later on in the course of our discussion. Right here, we will confine ourselves to a description of the buildings as they stand at present. Of course, no one has any complaint against one-room school buildings in those places where the conditions would seem to demand their construction; but what every patron of the schools has a right to demand is that the school building, of whatever size, shall be so constructed and so equipped as to minister most largely to the physical health of the scholars. But this is not the case with most of the rural school buildings throughout Northwestern Ohio.

For instance, practically all the one-room school buildings have windows on both sides, a most unhealthy arrangement, since the location of windows on two opposite sides of the school room causes "cross lights" to work their damage upon the eyes of the scholars and teacher. The school room should be lighted from the left side or rear, or both, but never from the two opposite sides. Again, 66.8% of the one-room buildings are heated by a single unjacketed stove, a heating apparatus that succeeds in roasting those who have to sit near-by and in freezing those who are obliged to sit far away.

A more satisfactory condition is shown in the matter of seating facilities. Only 4.3% of the schools are over-crowded. The old-fashioned and ill-adapted double desks are disappearing, 70.6% of the schools being furnished, in part at least, with the more modern single desks. But as yet only 4.8% of the school rooms are equipped with any of the hygienic adjustable desks. One-fourth of the school buildings have a cloak room separate from the class room.

The equipment for instruction is fairly adequate for the curriculum followed. Wall maps and charts were found in 84.4% of the schools; libraries of varying sizes in 64.5%. Over one-half of the school rooms are furnished with either an organ or a piano.

In the matter of providing for the education of the children's sense of beauty, there is considerable room for improvement. Nearly one-half of the school rooms have barren walls, unrelieved by pictures or decorative designs of any sort. The task of beautifying the school room is too often left to the initiative and industry of the teacher, who, as a rule, has little time and less money to devote to this object. Moreover, many of the teachers do not fully realize the very close connection in the training of the child between the appreciation of aesthetic values and the clear vision of moral values. This matter is so important that it should not be left to the desire and the ability of the individual teacher, but should be attended to by the governing body of the schools. Township school boards should arrange for the

placing of pictures of high artistic value upon the walls of every school under their care.

But from our examination of the interiors of the school buildings, let us turn to a consideration of their exteriors. The grounds about every rural school building ought to be the model for beauty, neatness, and carefulness to the entire neighborhood. They should be constantly and silently teaching these high ideals. Anything less means a lowering of the moral tone of the community. It becomes, therefore, a matter of vital concern to the rural people of Northwestern Ohio, when we remark on the basis of our study that the grounds about most of the rural schools in the section receive little attention. Of all the school properties investigated, only 21.6% had good walks, and most of these were straight and angular without any of the beauty that graceful curves afford. Flower beds were found in only 7.3% of the school yards, although trees lent their grace and their shade to the grounds of 63.6% of the schools. In a good many cases, the grounds are trodden out of all beauty by the children at their play. We would not stop the playing, but would urge the setting aside of a distinct place on the school property where the games would be played. The ground in close proximity to the school building could then be made beautiful without fear of molestation. The provision of such a playground in connection with the rural schools might in some cases necessitate the allotment of a larger amount of land to each school. One acre is the average amount assigned at present throughout the section surveyed.

Wells supply the water for the children in nearly all of the schools. The toilets are for the most part placed at a respectable distance from the school building, although only 26.6% of them can in any wise be called sanitary.

#### **4. Enrollment and Attendance.**

Every year an enumeration is made in each township of all persons of school age, that is, of all who are between the ages of 6 and 21 years. Those between the ages of 16 and 21 are not required to attend school, and of course many avail themselves of this liberty allowed by the law. On the other hand, some of the pupils enrolled in the schools are under 6 years. Not being able to make the proper allowance for these two groups, we cannot tell exactly what proportion of the children who should be in school are actually enrolled. The relation, however, between the total enrollment and the daily attendance affords a very satisfactory index of the efficiency of the

schools. For the rural schools of the three counties covered by this section of our report, this relation is given in the table that follows, compiled from the Ohio School Report for 1912. The figures have been calculated for the rural schools by subtracting from the totals of the respective counties the totals for Lima, Defiance City, Hicksville and Findlay.

County	Total Enrollment in the Rural Schools 1911-12	Daily Attendance in the Rural Schools 1911-12	Per cent. of Daily Attendance to Total Enrollment in the Rural Schools 1911-12
Allen .....	6,204	4,873	78.5
Defiance .....	3,321	2,459	74.0
Hancock .....	4,647	3,733	80.3
All 3 counties..	14,172	11,065	78.0

Considering the three counties together, the percentage of daily attendance to enrollment in their rural schools is 78.0. The schools of the cities above mentioned make a better showing, 82.7% of their total enrollment being in daily attendance. The figure for the entire State is 77.2%. Using this as a basis for comparison, the rural schools of Northwestern Ohio, judged as to their efficiency by the relation between their enrollment and their daily attendance, make a very creditable showing. We may say that their efficiency, as measured by this criterion, is one point above the average efficiency for the State.

### 5. School Session.

Will our commendation continue if we take a glimpse at what transpires during the session of the rural schools? Let us see.

In the first place, we notice that although the session is of proper length, being eight months in most cases, the average number of recitations per day is far too many for efficient teaching. The following table gives the number of recitations per day in 173 schools reporting:

No. Recitations	No. schools
1 to 9.....	3
10 to 14.....	6
15 to 19.....	14
20 to 24.....	23
25 to 29.....	38
30 or more.....	89

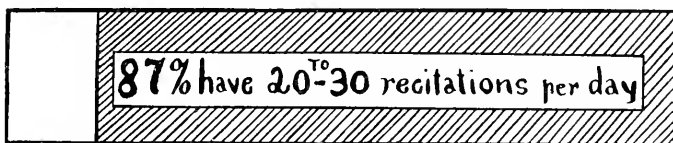
The table shows that the larger proportion of the schools have 25 or more recitations per day. This means that only about twelve minutes can be devoted to each recitation. This over-crowded condition results from the large number of grades that in the one-room schools are placed under the control of one teacher. The only remedy for this



condition lies in centralization, whereby the children in one, two, or three grades can be placed economically under the instruction of one teacher. The trouble lies, not in an over-crowded curriculum, but in the fact that the teacher in the average one-room school has to teach this curriculum to several grades. Thus, the necessity for the centralization of district schools is self-evident. As to its feasibility in Northwestern Ohio, we will have occasion to speak in another connection.

## CONSOLIDATION NEEDED

Of the rural schools



Four counties in  
Northwestern Ohio

Ohio Rural Life Survey

We observe, in the second place, that the time is occupied almost exclusively with the assigning and hearing of lessons. This gives to the school session an atmosphere of formality and bookishness, and removes it from any contact with the lives of the pupils. Moreover, it is a hindrance to the purpose for which the rural school is founded, which is, not to afford a place for the learning and saying of things out of books, but to give an opportunity for the training of the farmer's boys and girls for successful and contented living upon the farm. In the carrying out of this purpose books must be used, but their contents must be studied in and through the processes of farm life. No new subjects need be added to the curriculum. The three R's must be learned, but learned in connection with the things that are done upon the farm. To effect this connection, the daily routine of the rural school must consist, not simply in head-work only, but also in head-work joined with hand-work, now on the inside at the carpenter's bench, now on the outside in the experimental garden. But only 0.9% of the rural schools in Northwestern Ohio investigated by our field agents include manual training in their routine, and only

0.8% have field work in a vegetable garden. Domestic science is taught, likewise, in only 0.9% of the schools. A state law requires the teaching of agriculture in all the rural schools, but as yet the instruction in this subject is almost entirely from books. It is gratifying to note that nature study, as a preparation for agriculture, finds a place in one-third of the schools. We welcome this as a sign of the oncoming of the better day, when all the rural schools will have become real expressions of the life in the country community.

In the third place, we find that in the session of most of the rural schools there is very little recognition of the immense educational value of play. Only 6.5% of the schools studied have any play apparatus or recreation facilities. Games are played during recess. The teachers usually play with the pupils in some of these games, and thus a partial direction is given to this part of their activities.

## 6. The Teaching Force.

Long ago some one said, "As the teacher, so is the school." We believe it to be a true statement. The progress of the rural schools of Northwestern Ohio surely depends upon a growing standard of efficiency in their teaching force. We have no desire to speak in a condemnatory manner of the rural school teachers now at work in the section. Many of them are both capable and progressive. But looking at the situation as a whole, our investigation obliges us to say that there is considerable room for improvement. This improvement in the teaching force should show itself along the following three lines: (1) Better professional preparation; (2) Higher salaries; and (3) Longer tenure of office. Let us discuss these questions in turn, beginning with the better professional preparation.

Our investigators ascertained the training of 168 rural school teachers at work within the three counties covered by this section of our report. Of these teachers:

20 Have had only common school training.

6 Have had only common school training plus summer school work.

62 Have had only high school training.

25 Have had only normal school training.

33 Have had summer school training in addition either to high school or to high school and normal training.

22 Have attended college.

This tabulation shows that over one-half (52.3%) of the 168 teachers have received no regular academic training beyond the high school. Only 14.8% have received the benefit of a normal school course.

These facts at least suggest the need for better professional preparation on the part of the rural school teachers of the three counties.

As to the need for higher salaries, it will be made clear by the following table which shows the distribution of monthly wages among 214 teachers of rural schools in the three counties:

\$40—49	paid to 53 teachers.
50—59	paid to 102 teachers.
60—69	paid to 37 teachers.
70 or over	paid to 22 teachers.

A state law requires the payment of a minimum wage of \$40<sup>—</sup> per month. While it is commendable that in the counties surveyed a majority of the rural school teachers receive more than the minimum amount, yet it must still be said that most of them receive a far too meagre compensation. A good teacher in a country school ought to receive a salary for his services high enough to induce him to engage in the teaching of country schools as a life work. But we submit that an income of \$50 or even \$60 a month for only eight or perhaps nine months of the year, is not sufficient for this purpose. The consequence is that the teachers are constantly moving on to something more remunerative. Thus, this need of higher salaries connects itself very closely with the need for a longer tenure of office, to which we must now direct our attention.

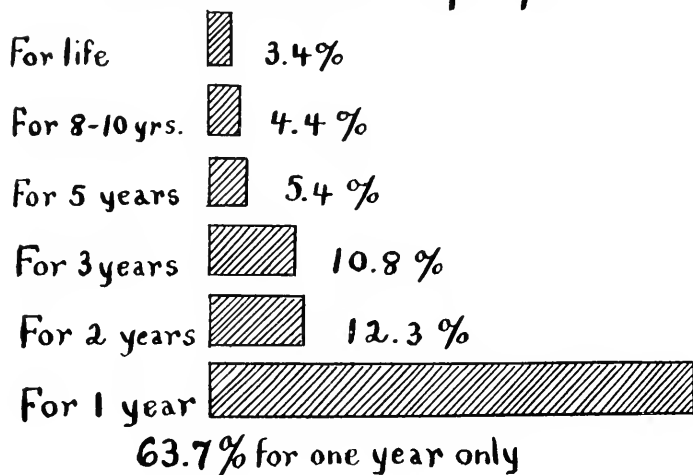
This latter need is very strikingly revealed by the fact that out of 204 rural school teachers, working in three counties at the time of the survey, 130, or 63.7%, held certificates for only one year. This points to the fact that nearly two-thirds of the teachers of the country schools are in the teaching profession only as a temporary occupation. That this condition weakens the efficiency of the rural schools is self-evident. Make-shift teachers, who stay in a rural community for only a year or two, cannot do the patient and long-maturing work that counts in the building-up of the farmer's boys and girls into efficient citizenship.

## 7. The School as a Community Center.

The school building, as the property of the entire community, can very properly be made the center of social joys and intellectual delights for all the families within its district. But in Northwestern Ohio this possibility has but very rarely been turned into actual fact. Occasional opportunities for social enjoyment are offered by the literary and musical entertainments which are given by 81.8% of the schools in the three counties studied. Some of these entertainments are simply literary exercises which are held once or twice a month as a

# The Make-shift School Teacher

## Certificates held by 204 rural school teachers in 1911-1912



Three counties in

Northwestern Ohio

Ohio Rural Life Survey

part of the regular program of the school. Others are of a more elaborate nature, being arranged for at irregular intervals for the purpose of raising money for some need of the school. The attendance of patrons and visitors at the latter kind is usually good, showing that the people are appreciative of such efforts.

### 8. Supervision.

All of the shortcomings of the rural schools in Northwestern Ohio—poorly planned buildings, recitation periods of insufficient length, a curriculum unadapted to country life, lack of provision for recreation, incomplete preparation of teachers, their short tenure of office—all of these call for a supervision over the schools of a closer and more scientific character. Twenty-three out of the forty-one rural townships in the three counties studied are still content with the incidental, non-professional, slipshod supervision given by an untrained township school board. That professionally trained superintendents are employed in the remaining eighteen townships shows that more

than a beginning has been made in providing adequate supervision. Of the three counties, Defiance leads in this respect, eight out of her twelve townships having each an educational expert in charge of the schools.

The township is considered by some to be too small a unit for economic supervision, and the proposition is made by them to combine two or more townships into a district for supervision purposes. As we write this report word reaches us that the Ohio School Survey Commission has recommended the establishment in each county of the State of a board of education which will district the county for supervision purposes and also elect a county superintendent who will nominate district superintendents for the various supervision districts, subject to confirmation by the local boards of education in these same districts. We also learn that a bill incorporating these recommendations of the Commission has been introduced into the State legislature. Without in the least attempting to pass judgment upon the details of this measure, we may be allowed to remark that in our opinion it represents a movement that is headed in the right direction.

## 9. Centralization.

But the panacea for all the ills of the rural schools of Northwestern Ohio is township centralization or consolidation, either partial or complete. It alone will most economically open the way for the rural schools to obtain professionally trained teachers; to hold them for a long tenure of office; to secure a real graded course with adequate instruction in each subject; to build their curriculum around the pursuits dominant in a rural community, such pursuits as household management, the manual arts, and agriculture; to provide laboratories and experimental gardens; and to furnish facilities for play and recreation.

But at the time of the Survey, the three counties contained only one consolidated school. This seems strange when we bear in mind the wealth of the region, the level nature of the country, and the yearly improvement in the roads, all of which favor the adoption of township consolidation. Our investigators were surprised to find so much opposition to the plan. Among the reasons put forth against the centralization of the rural schools were such as the following: (1) roads not sufficiently piked, (2) the day-long absence of the children from home, (3) depreciation of property in the outskirts of the township, and (4) an increase in the tax rate.

The first has some validity, but its force is diminishing every year. The second rests at bottom upon a narrow social outlook, ignorance,

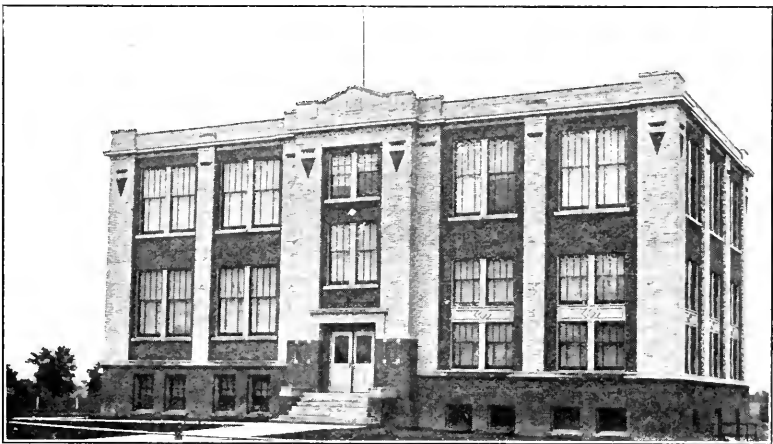
and superstitious fear. It will disappear with the growth of a wider neighborliness in the country. The third is puerile. In the first place, we doubt its economic truthfulness. We believe that the average township is a unit of sufficient smallness that every benefit to the township at its center will in the long run be felt to its remotest corners. But even if the economic accuracy of the objection be granted, who will care to champion it? It is a sordid selfishness that puts the welfare of one's property above the welfare of one's children. The fourth argument demands a fuller consideration.

Let us grant at once its contention, namely: that the consolidation of the rural schools will increase the tax rate. What of it? School Superintendent O. J. Kern of Winnebago County, Illinois, in speaking of the centralization of rural schools, says: "If the country people want better schools in the country for country children, they must spend more money for education and spend it in a better way. There is no other way." Our public school system rests upon the idea of equal educational privileges for all. But, at present, it belies its foundation. The farmer's boys and girls are being slighted. For instance, in the school year 1911-12, according to the Ohio School Report for the latter year, the cities of Lima, Defiance and Findlay, together with all the villages in the three counties maintaining their own schools, spent for education the sum of \$35.15 per pupil. In the same year, the open country districts of the three counties expended the sum of \$28.49 per pupil. The difference between these two amounts, \$6.66, is the measure of the discrimination against the farmer's boy or girl. This discrimination arises from a mal-adjustment in the distribution of school revenues between local taxes and state taxes. The larger amount comes from the former source. The cities and villages, having a higher per capita assessment than the open country districts, are thus enabled to raise more money per capita for school purposes. The following table shows the various sources of school money received in the three counties during the year 1911-12, and establishes the statement made above that most of it comes from local taxation. The figures are taken from the Ohio School Report for 1912:

	Allen	Defiance	Hancock
From State Common School Fund.....	\$ 32,505.00	\$14,100.00	\$ 19,921.00
From other State Funds.....	2,666.43	1,889.78	1,894.71
From Local Taxes.....	249,195.74	93,099.52	161,416.58
From Sale of Bonds.....	118,066.49	0.00	13,925.94
From all other sources.....	27,308.36	4,809.51	23,066.41

The receipts from local taxation amount to 65.9% of the total. We believe in local taxation for school support. It keeps alive in the community an interest in school affairs. But some scheme of state taxation should be devised which would enable the rural townships, by drawing more largely upon the State, to have an amount of money for school purposes equal per capita to that expended by the cities. A plan of this kind might make it possible for the rural townships to consolidate their schools without any material rise in the local tax-rate. In any case, consolidation must be brought about if the child of the farm is to be given the same school privileges as the child of the city. We confidently look forward to quite a rapid centralization of rural schools throughout this section of the State.

We have mentioned that at the time of the survey there was but one consolidated school in the three counties. This was in Union Township, Hancock County. We will close our study of the rural school situation in the section by giving a brief description of this school. It is a case of partial consolidation only, four out of eight district schools having been joined together. Besides the work of the elementary grades, this school provides a first grade high school course. Its two-storied brick building, erected in 1910 at a cost of nearly \$24,000, contains six class rooms of ample size besides a gal-leried auditorium seating 350. All of the class rooms have the light coming from the left side only, and are equipped with maps, single desks, reference libraries of at least forty volumes each, and adjoining coat rooms. Besides the books in each room, there is a separate library room containing 200 volumes. In the basement there is a



CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL, UNION TOWNSHIP, HANCOCK COUNTY



SCHOOL WAGON AND PUPILS, UNION TOWNSHIP CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL.

laboratory and a power plant. The building is lighted throughout by electricity, and is supplied with running water by a gasoline engine. There is a sanitary drinking fountain in the main hallway. The grounds comprise five acres. There is already an experimental garden, and abundant room for the making of a play-ground. Good walks and flower beds adorn the grounds in the immediate vicinity of the building. The children are conveyed to the school in wagons, the farthest coming from a distance of four miles.

This school is not ideal in every way, but it represents such a marked advance over any other school found in the three counties, that we cannot help but express our hope that something like it may soon be found in all of the rural townships throughout Northwestern Ohio.



## CHAPTER VI.

### RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS AND ACTIVITIES.

#### 1. Number and Distribution of the Churches.

(a) *As to location.* In this chapter we will undertake to set forth some of the important facts concerning those churches of the four counties which are located in the open country or in villages of less than 2,500 people. There are 304 of them; 184 (60.5%) belonging to the former category, and 120 (39.5%) to the latter. They are distributed among the counties as follows:

County	Number of Churches		Total
	Country	Village	
Allen .....	49	44	93
Defiance .....	40	16	56
Hancock .....	62	28	90
Seneca .....	33	32	65
Total .....	184	120	304

(b) *As to population.* Considering the rural sections of the four counties together, there is one church for every 278 inhabitants. In a level and well-populated region, such as Northwestern Ohio, one would judge that there need not be more than one church to every 500 inhabitants. On this basis there is an excess of over 100 churches in the four counties. But even this excess would not be such a serious problem, if the churches were more evenly distributed. In Big Lick Township, Hancock County, there are nine church buildings, or one to every 122 inhabitants. Cass Township, on the other hand, in this same County, has a population of 724 and only one church. Within a radius of four miles from a given point in the southern part of Hancock County there are 22 churches, serving a population of about 5,000. Mark and Delaware Townships, in Defiance County, lie side by side. The difference between their populations is about 300, the former having 1,433 people, the latter 1,735. But the number of churches in the latter is double that in the former. Still other instances of uneven distribution could be cited if we had the space to devote to them. A glance at the church maps of the four counties, printed on pages 61-63 of this pamphlet, will give the reader a graphic idea of the haphazard and uneven distribution of churches throughout the section. This condition is the result of sectarianism and the failure of the churches to co-operate with one another. We wait for the time when the several churches will study their common field of work together, and then equitably apportion the task among themselves in accordance with the results of their study.

## 2. Church Membership and Population.

Data as to present membership were secured for 302 out of the 304 rural churches in the four counties. The total number of members in these churches is approximately 26,238, which is 31% of the total rural population of the townships surveyed, or 38.3% of all persons within the same area who are ten years old and over. The following table shows these relations in the case of each one of the four counties:

County	1	2	3	4	5
	Total Rural Population 1910	Rural Population 10 yrs old and over 1910	Member-ship in Rural Churches 1912-13	Percentage of (3) to (1)	Percentage of (3) to (2)
Allen .....	23,516	18,792	9,078	38.6	48.3
Defiance .....	17,171	13,710	3,694	21.5	26.9
Hancock .....	21,457	17,396	7,639	35.6	43.9
Seneca .....	22,475	18,436	5,827	25.9	31.6
All 4 counties.	84,619	68,334	26,238	31.0	38.3

The figures in the first column are taken from the United States Census. Those in the second column are derived from the Census by using the percentage of the rural to the total population upon the total number of persons ten years old and over. The membership of the churches has been calculated, not from printed statistics, but from personal interviews with the proper authorities in each church. In Roman Catholic parishes, where in estimating the church membership the number of families is usually multiplied by five, we have multiplied by three in order to make it more just to combine the estimates with the figures for the Protestant churches, which do not enroll as members of the church all those of Protestant families. The above table shows that over one-half of the persons ten years old and over in the rural sections of these four counties are not directly connected with their rural churches. While this fact is by no means a measure of the total influence exerted by these churches, it at least suggests that they have a rather insecure grip upon a majority of the population.

## 3. Classification of the Church Membership.

Classifying the members of these churches according to sex, we find that 43.2% are males and 56.8%, females. In population, the four counties surveyed contain about as many males (50.2%) as females. The good proportion of males in the membership of the churches is probably due to the presence of a large number of Men-

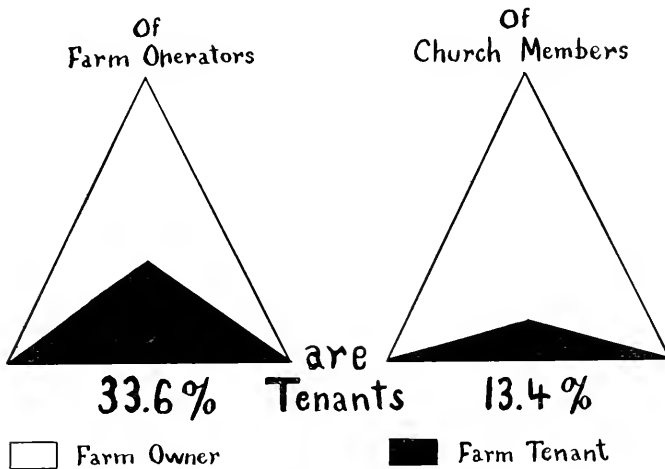
nonite, Brethren, and Lutheran churches, with their very commendable emphasis upon family and community religion. In these churches, considered by themselves, the proportion of male members is 46.6% ; whereas in the membership of all the other churches only 42.2% are males.

A classification of the church members according to their economic status shows very clearly that the country church is not winning the tenant farmer to the same extent that it is winning the owner. Of the farm operators in the four counties 33.6% are tenants and 65.6% are owners, while of the farmers on the church rolls only 13.4% are tenants and 86.6% are owners. These comparisons are made for each county in the following table:

County	Farmers		Church Members	
	Per cent. Owners	Per cent. Tenants	Per cent. Owners	Per cent. Tenants
Allen .....	70.1	29.9	85.5	14.5
Defiance .....	72.3	27.7	92.3	7.7
Hancock .....	62.0	38.0	86.1	13.9
Seneca .....	61.4	38.6	81.5	18.5
All 4 counties.....	65.6	33.6	86.6	13.4

In view of the fact that tenantry is growing throughout the four counties, this real, though perhaps unconscious, discrimination on the

## The Farmers' or the Farm Owners' Church



Four counties in  
Northwestern Ohio

Ohio Rural Life Survey

part of the rural churches against the tenant farmer is a matter of grave concern. It must stop, if the churches are to exemplify the Christian ideal of service to all men, especially to those who need it most. The tenant needs the help of the church more than the owner. Unless the rural churches of Northwestern Ohio make a well-directed effort to minister to all within their reach, especially the tenant farmers, they will become more and more the churches of that class which is better able to support them, in this case, the owning class.

#### 4. Status of the Churches.

Considering the churches of the four counties together, 38.1% show an increase in membership in the past ten years, 27.7% are standing still, and 34.2% are losing ground. Comparing the churches in the open country with those located in villages of more than 100 people, we find that of the former 28.2% are growing, 34.9% are just holding their own, and 36.9% are declining; while of the latter 53.0% are increasing, 17.0% are stationary, and 30.0% are decreasing. The following table compares the counties in these respects and shows how the country churches especially have lost:

County	Per cent. Growing			Per cent. Standing Still			Per cent. Losing Ground		
	Coun-try.	Vil-lage	Comb.	Coun-try.	Vil-lage	Comb.	Coun-try.	Vil-lage	Comb.
Allen .....	38.2	64.1	52.1	20.6	7.7	13.7	41.2	28.2	34.2
Defiance .....	30.8	30.7	30.8	38.4	23.1	34.6	30.8	46.2	34.6
Hancock .....	18.7	51.9	29.1	38.9	18.5	32.6	42.4	29.6	38.3
Seneca .....	35.3	47.6	42.1	41.2	28.6	34.2	23.5	23.8	23.7
All 4 counties....	28.2	53.0	38.1	34.9	17.0	27.7	36.9	30.0	34.2

The alarming fact that from two-thirds to three-fourths (71.8%) of the country churches in these four counties are either standing still or losing ground is one of sufficient magnitude to cause every Christian in Northwestern Ohio to stop and think. What are the causes of this arrest and decline?

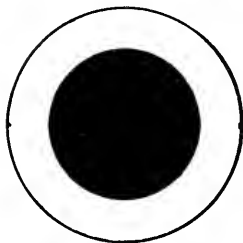
#### 5. Causes of Church Decline in the Open Country.

(a) *A decreasing rural population.* As noted before (Page 17), there has been a 5.5% decrease in the rural population of the four counties for the decade from 1900 to 1910. This drift of the people away from the farms has of course added to the burdens of the country churches, and hastened their decline. But there are other causes that must be included in any adequate explanation of the failure of such a large proportion of the rural churches to grow and prosper.

(b) *Inefficient leadership.* The success of any church very largely

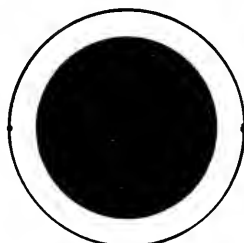
# Rural Church Decline in Northwestern Ohio

Of 100  
village  
churches



47%

Of 149  
open-country  
churches



72%

are not Growing

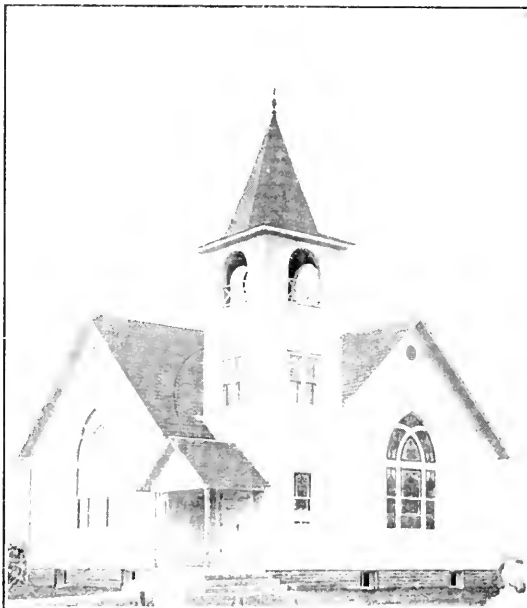
Four counties

Ohio Rural Life Survey

depends upon the ability and training of its pastor. The efficiency of their leaders, then, affords us a very satisfactory clue to the growth and decline of the country churches. One possible measure of the efficiency of church leaders is the degree of their scholastic preparation for their work. Other things being equal, a well educated minister is more uniformly successful with a church than a poorly educated minister. Our survey, at least, would seem to confirm such a statement. In the four counties covered by this report, 29.5% of those rural churches served by ministers who have had no scholastic training beyond the high school are increasing; while of those served by ministers who have had more than a high school education 46% are growing. The rural churches served by ministers of college or seminary training constitute 67.2% of the total number of rural churches in the four counties. This is a goodly proportion, and we would expect more than 46% of them to be in a growing and prospering con-

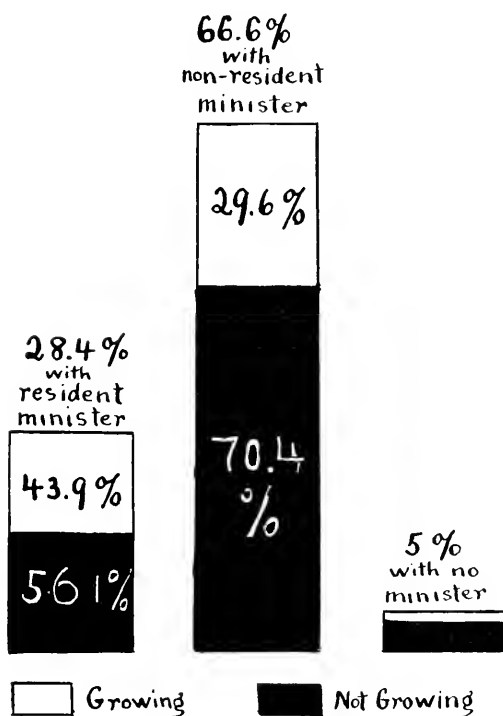
dition. That such is not the case is due, we believe, to the hindering action of another determining factor in the efficiency of church leaders. To an analysis of that factor, we will now turn.

(c) *A non-resident ministry.* We refer to the residence of ministers outside their parishes. Even an able and well trained minister, if he does not live within his parish, cannot give to his church adequate direction. Churches do not thrive on absent treatment. Therefore, when we say, on the basis of our investigation, that 66.6% of the churches in the villages and open country of the four counties surveyed have non-resident ministers, we have a sure clue to their decline. At the time the Survey was made, 5% of the churches were without a pastor, leaving only 28.4% that were being served by resident ministers. And yet of this 28.4% having a resident ministry, 43.9% were growing, while of the 66.6% having a non-resident ministry only 29.6% were growing. These results show that inadequate leadership, due to non-resident pastorates, is the cause of much of the decline in the rural churches. The good effect of a resident ministry upon the growth of the church is shown by the experience of the Riley Creek Baptist Church, in Orange Township, Hancock County. Its pastor writes as follows: "I am the first pastor who



RILEY BAPTIST CHURCH, ORANGE TOWNSHIP  
HANCOCK COUNTY

# The Absentee Minister and Church Efficiency 288 churches



Four counties in

Northwestern Ohio

Ohio Rural  
Life Survey

has lived on the field among my congregation in its forty-seven years' history. We have full-time preaching for the first time in its history. This will, I believe, explain the fact that this church is growing. Our membership has grown from 103 to 145 in two years."

(d) *The circuit system.* The non-resident pastorate, however, is but the necessary accompaniment of that method of church adminis-

tration known as the "circuit system." According to this system, the time and energies of one minister are divided between two or more congregations. This scheme is quite prevalent throughout Northwestern Ohio. It had its origin in the early days when the thinly settled nature of the country made it a means admirably adapted to reaching all the people with the Gospel; but with the immovableness of long-established custom it has persisted unto the present day in which different conditions have made it, not a help, but a hindrance to church growth. At least, the findings of our Survey point to that conclusion. In the table that follows, the relation between the circuit system and the prosperity of the rural churches in the four counties surveyed is graphically portrayed:

	No.	Per cent. Growing	Per cent. Standing Still	Per cent. Losing Ground
Churches with minister on full time .....	28	57.7	34.6	7.7
Churches with minister on half time .....	69	43.1	24.1	32.8
Churches with minister on third time .....	74	42.0	25.8	32.2
Churches with minister on fourth time or less.....	82	28.2	33.8	38.0
Churches with minister having other occupation .....	13	10.0	30.0	60.0
Churches with no minister.....	14	22.2	0.0	77.8

Of the churches that are not upon a ministerial circuit, considerably over one-half (57.7%) are growing; whereas in the case of those that are joined with others upon a ministerial circuit, the percentage of those growing runs from 43.1 in the circuits of only two churches to 28.2 in the circuits of four or more churches. This shows that the placing of two or more churches upon the shoulders of a single minister is not for the health of the churches. Ministerial vivisection, or the division of a minister's time and energies between two or more parishes, is not for the best progress of Christianity in those parishes. It is hard for a part of a man to do a whole man's work.

(c) *Small-sized churches.* But any abandonment of the circuit system would have to be accompanied in most communities by a local federation of the churches. Only thus could the ideal be carried out of having each church administered by a resident pastor. For the fulfillment of this ideal, the numerous small churches would have to be willing to federate, that is, join with one another and with the larger organizations for worship and for work in bettering their communities. They will be made more willing to do so if they realize

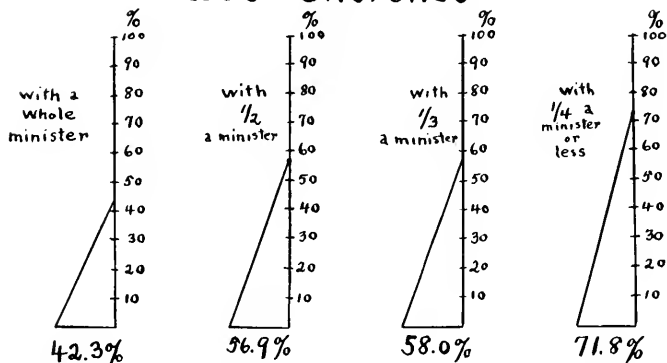


# The Circuit System

## An Obstacle to Church Growth

### in Northwestern Ohio

#### 253 Churches



## are not Growing

### Four counties Ohio Rural Life Survey

that in most cases a small church in communities as old as those of Northwestern Ohio is a dying church. We can prove this fact. The average size of a church in the communities studied is 87 members, ranging from 66 in Defiance County to 98 in Allen County. The following table shows that more than one-third (36.1%) of the rural churches of the four counties are small, that is, have a membership less than 50:

- Percent of churches having from 1—24 members, 11.6%.
- Percent of churches having from 25—49 members, 24.5%.
- Percent of churches having from 50—99 members, 32.6%.
- Percent of churches having from 100—149 members, 14.3%.
- Percent of churches having from 150— . . members, 17.0%.

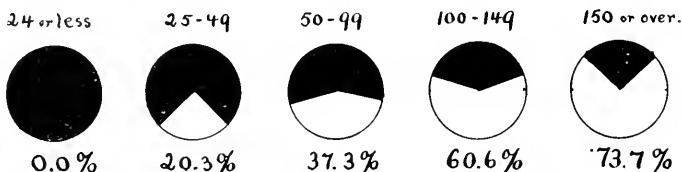
The bearing of these figures upon church growth and decline is shown in the following table:

Where the membership is	Per cent. of Churches Growing
From 1 to 24	0.0
“ 25 to 49	20.3
“ 50 to 99	37.3
“ 100 to 149	60.6
“ 150 up	73.7

# NEED FOR FEDERATION

## The Way of Salvation for Small Churches

Of churches with a membership of :-



are Growing

Four counties in  
Northwestern Ohio

Ohio Rural Life Survey

Over one-third of the churches have a membership of less than 50, and over three-fourths (79.7%) of these are losing ground. Surely this is a crying call for the adoption of some workable plan of federation. The large church is more efficient as a working force than the small church. The continuance of any large number of unfederated small churches in such a thickly settled region as Northwestern Ohio will mean the continuance of rural church decline throughout the section.

(f) *Over-churching.* In another place (Page 39), we have referred to the problem raised by the over-crowding of churches in the counties surveyed. We mention it here again, because of its bearing upon the question of rural church arrest and decline. The fact that there are too many churches in the territory surveyed must be taken account of in reckoning the causes that have led to their decreasing efficiency. In the township where there are from one to four churches, 27.8% of the churches are decreasing; where as in the townships having five or more churches, 36.2% of the churches are declining. Like the trees of a forest, churches must not be planted so thickly together that they interfere with one another's growth.

(g) *Sectarianism.* Over-churching, however, is but a symptom. Its root lies in sectarianism. This is very evident in Northwestern Ohio. In the rural section of the four counties surveyed, there are at least 27 denominations represented, listed as follows:

<i>Denominations.</i>	<i>No. of Churches.</i>
Apostolic Holiness.....	1
Baptist Bodies:	
Baptist (Northern Convention) .....	7
Free-Will Baptist .....	1
Missionary Baptist .....	1
Primitive Baptist .....	2
Brethren .....	12
Catholic (Roman) .....	16
Christian .....	11
Christian Union .....	4
Church of God.....	5
Congregational .....	2
Disciples of Christ .....	7
Evangelical Association .....	22
Lutheran .....	30
Mennonite Bodies:	
Defenseless Mennonite .....	1
Mennonite (General Conference).....	4
Old Mennonite .....	2
Reformed Mennonite .....	1
Methodist Bodies:	
Free Methodist .....	2
German Methodist Episcopal.....	2
Methodist Episcopal .....	74
Methodist Protestant .....	13
Presbyterian .....	12
Reformed .....	15
Union Churches .....	3
United Brethren .....	43
United Brethren (Radical).....	9
Universalist .....	2

Denominational prejudice exists in all of the communities studied, and in all of them is a very real hindrance to a more active co-operation among the churches. In 20% of the communities, this prejudice was discovered breaking out into more or less open strife. But in most places, it lies beneath the surface. Many influences are at work reducing its strength. The township Sunday School picnics (Page 22), the meetings of the county and township Sunday School Associations, occasional union services and evangelistic campaigns in the

villages, united action against the saloon—all these are encouraging evidences of a dawning sense of co-operation among the churches. We believe that these co-operative efforts are the signal that relief is coming to those places where the progress of God's Kingdom is now blocked by sectarianism. This relief will take the form of a federation among the local churches on the basis of a common service to the entire community. Then, the present decline in the efficiency of the country churches will be checked.

(h) *Failure to serve the entire community.* For most of the causes of the arrest and decline among the rural churches of Northwestern Ohio which we have thus far mentioned—non-resident ministers, the circuit system, overchurching, sectarianism—have their root in a failure on the part of the church to serve the entire community. Too many churches have been founded for the purpose not of advancing all the interests of the whole community, but of promoting what have been very narrowly called the "spiritual interests" of a few individuals. Built upon such a slim foundation, it is no wonder that many of them are falling down or toppling over. A broader and more Christian interpretation of the meaning of "spiritual interests" is needed. The churches must recognize that all the healthy interests of a people, the problems of their economic, social, and educational welfare, as well as those of the church organization itself, are spiritual and have a deep religious significance. Because of this fact, the rural churches should consider it as a regular part of their work to promote better farming, better social advantages, and better country schools. And they should do this for all the people of the community, the tenants and the farmhands as well as the owners (See Page 41). The rural churches of Northwestern Ohio should seek to enthrone with religious dynamic every movement of rural advance. There is room for them to show a more cordial sympathy toward every institution working for better farming conditions. The experience of the Congregational Church at Gomer, Allen County, may be cited as an illustration of our meaning. "Two years ago," says its pastor, "we opened our lecture room to the Farmers' Institute. At first there was a great deal of opposition to this. However, we realized that we were here for the community, to serve the community, so we threw open the doors and invited everybody. We did the same thing last year. We find it has helped many, and has not done the church any harm." This church is reaching out and showing an interest in the ordinary life of its neighborhood. Such efforts on the part of all the rural churches of Northwestern Ohio would soon federate them in every place where at present an over-

churched condition prevails. A common service for the welfare of their respective communities would soon bind the churches together in a federation of Christian love for worship and work. With this accomplished, the problem of rural church decline would be solved.

**6. Material Equipment of the Churches.**

Information as to the present value of their property was secured from 274 out of the 304 rural churches in the territory surveyed. The total value of the edifices and land owned by these churches is approximately \$982,400. Of the Protestant denominations, the twelve that have the largest investment in the four counties are as follows:

Methodist Episcopal .....	\$239,600
United Brethren .....	119,000
Evangelical Association .....	99,200
Lutheran .....	91,200
Reformed .....	88,100
Presbyterian .....	34,000
Methodist Protestant .....	31,000
Christian .....	30,100
Congregational .....	26,000
Brethren .....	23,800
General Conference Mennonites.....	23,000
Baptist .....	20,100

The usual type of building is that of a one-room structure. Out of 247 churches reporting,

- 169 have one room each,
- 42 " two rooms "
- 23 " three " "
- 5 " four " "
- 8 " five or more rooms each.

A one-room church building cannot be regarded as adequate to serve as a community center. As the consolidation of rural schools will result in more commodious school buildings, so the federation of churches will result in church edifices more worthy of their high purpose and better designed for community service. A few such buildings already exist. A flourishing country church in Bath Township, Allen County, has a ten-room building valued at \$10,000.

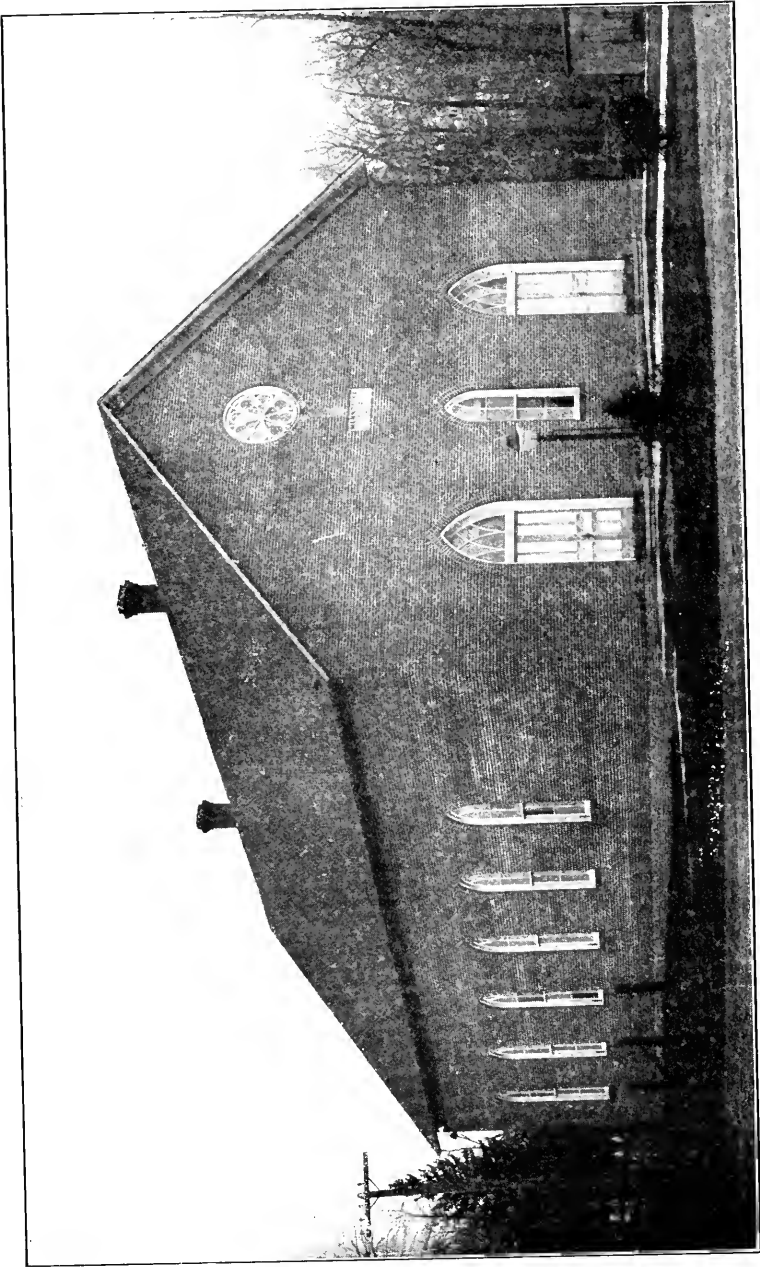
In the matter of heating, 60% of the churches have stoves, the remaining 40% being favored with furnaces. As to artificial lighting

39% use gasoline, 34% oil, 14% acetylene, 12% electricity, and 1% gas. It is commendable that 86% of the buildings are in good repair, and that 76% of the grounds surrounding the churches are in a well-kept condition. There is practically no attempt, however, to beautify the church lawns with flower-beds. The country church should by all means provide a shelter for the farmer's team. But in all four counties only 7% of the country churches have horse-sheds upon their grounds.

## 7. The Churches at Work.

(a) *Worship.* In their work, all the churches lay the greatest stress upon their services of public worship. This is very commendable, as the assembling of the people for the worship of God is surely fundamental to the welfare of organized religion. One-half (50.2%) of the rural churches in the four counties, however, have only two preaching services per month. About one-third (32.7%) have one service every Sunday. Only 8.2% have a larger number of services. The undue multiplication of preaching services, however, is not desirable. Their number must be governed by the needs of the community. In most open-country churches, one public service every week is perhaps all that is advisable, for the welfare of the church and for the religious nurture of the people.

A constant good attendance at its services of public worship is surely one of the signs of a prospering church; just as a falling-off of the same in a church located in a well-populated region is an unmistakable mark of its decline. It is almost impossible, however, to secure reliable statistics as to the attendance at church services. Very few country churches make any count or keep any record of the number attending. The estimates of ministers on this point are very apt to be unconsciously exaggerated. Such estimates, however, were secured by our investigators from the pastors of 278 rural churches in the four counties surveyed. It might be at least suggestive of a trend to compare the total of these estimates of attendance with the total seating capacity of the same churches. The estimates included have been those for the best attended service at each church in the course of a month. When the comparison is made, it appears that out of a total of approximately 60,000 seats, only 21,321 are occupied at any one service on an average Sunday. Stating the same fact differently, we may say that on an average Sunday at least 65% of the seats in the rural churches of Northwestern Ohio are vacant. Although the result is based on estimates which are open to error, yet we feel that it does



EBENEZER MENNONITE CHURCH. A THRIVING OPEN COUNTRY CHURCH

not do injustice to the situation as a whole. It is another sign of the loosening grip upon a majority of the people about which we had occasion to speak in dealing with the proportion of the population in the churches (Page 40). It is another call for co-operative, federated action on the part of the rural churches. Only as they are willing to present a united front can they hope successfully to win the unchurched about their very doors.

(b) *Sunday Schools.* The rural Sunday School plays a more important part in the life of the church than does the Sunday School of the city. This is especially true where preaching services come only once or twice a month. The Sunday School services held every week give continuity to church life. The rural Sunday School is an institution for old and young alike and generally includes all active church members.

### (1) Number and Distribution.

A total of 291 churches in Northwestern Ohio were examined with reference to the Sunday School. Of these, 25 were found that had no school, leaving the total of churches with Sunday Schools at 266. One school was found existing independently of any church organization. Adding this in, we have a total of 267 rural Sunday Schools as the basis for this report. Of these schools, 157 (58.8%) are in the open country, and 110 (41.2%) are in villages of less than 2,500 people. Their distribution by counties is as follows:

County	Country	Village	Total
Allen .....	43	41	84
Defiance .....	31	13	44
Hancock .....	61	27	88
Seneca .....	22	29	51
All four counties.....	157	110	267

### (2) Enrollment.

The total enrollment of 146 of the Sunday Schools in the open country is 10,761 or 73 members per school. In 108 of the village Sunday Schools there are enrolled 14,821 or an average of 136 per school. On this bases the total enrollment of all the rural Sunday Schools does not exceed 30,000 or 35.4% of the rural population.

### (3) Attendance.

The total average attendance for 245 Sunday Schools reporting is 15,963, being an average of 65 per school, or 64.9% of the average enrollment for each school. On this basis the number of pupils present



on an average Sunday in all the rural Sunday Schools throughout the four counties would be about 18,000. Where the attendance upon Sunday School is exceptionally well maintained, the cause is usually that of parental influence. This was assigned as the reason for an average attendance of 79.3% of its enrollment in the Sunday School of the Pleasant View Church of the Brethren, Bath Township, Allen County. The success of the Ebenezer Mennonite Sunday School in Richland Township of the same county likewise enforces the same fact. "Nearly everybody," writes the pastor of the church, "comes to Sunday School; the parents, who almost without exception have large families, bring their children regularly. This spirit of the whole family going to church and Sunday School and belonging to it is a great factor." Both of these Sunday Schools, it may be remarked, are so managed as to hold the sustained interest of their members. Both have organized classes, and a regular teachers' meeting. But unquestionably the progress of these schools, as of every Sunday School, rests upon a wholesome development of family religion.

#### (4) Equipment.

In the matter of material equipment the majority of the Sunday Schools of the section are awake to the need of bettering their condition. Most of them still have to face the impossible task of doing their work adequately in a one-room church building. But it is encouraging to note that one-fourth of the schools have already tried to remedy the



GRADUATES IN THE STANDARD COURSE OF TRAINING FOR TEACHERS,  
OLD FORT UNITED BRETHREN SUNDAY SCHOOL, SENECA COUNTY

situation by providing a few additional rooms, or by using curtains and screens to divide off portions of the church auditorium. The problem, however, of properly equipping the rural Sunday Schools for their work waits for its solution upon the federation of the rural churches. The federation of the Sunday Schools of a rural community, however, may very properly pave the way for the federation of its churches.

(5) Curriculum.

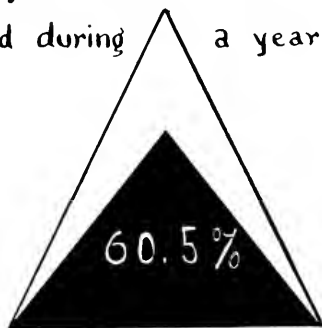
Most of the schools are ungraded. The course of study is generally the Uniform International Lessons. The Graded Lessons have been either partially or wholly adopted in 15% of the schools.

(6) Teachers.

The chief obstacle in the way of a more general use of the Graded Lessons is the lack of well-trained teachers. This difficulty, however, is gradually becoming less and less prominent through the growing extension of the teacher-training movement. Already, special classes for

# The Dark Cloud of Commercialism Of 598 church socials

held during a year



are money-making events

Should the church buy its support ?

Four counties in  
Northwestern Ohio

Ohio Rural Life Survey

the training of teachers have been organized in 27% of the schools. One of the schools that has been very successful in its teacher-training work is the Sunday School of the United Brethren Church at Old Fort, Seneca County. At the time the survey was made, this school had thirty-seven graduates in the standard course of training for teachers, and a class of eleven pursuing their third year of study in an advanced course.

Of all the teachers in the Sunday Schools studied, 43.7% are men and 56.3% are women. The minister teaches in 23.3% of the schools.

(c) *Social Activities.* Social events under the auspices of the church are usually provided by organizations of one kind or another. The Sunday School would stand first in any list of such organizations. Its annual picnic is for many country churches the principal social event of the year. During the year previous to the time of the Survey, 47% of the rural Sunday Schools in the four counties had picnics. Other social happenings, such as class socials, suppers, Christmas festivals, etc., were enjoyed by 51.5% of the schools. In only 19% of the Sunday Schools was the passing year uncheered by any social pleasures. A growing proportion of the social life of the Sunday Schools is being furnished by organized classes, which combine Bible study on Sunday with social and cultural meetings during the week. It is gratifying to note that nearly one-fourth (23.3%) of the rural churches in the section surveyed have classes of this type.

Besides the Sunday School, various other organizations within the church minister to the social needs of its people. The following table classifies all such societies in the four counties according to their number and their social activities:

Name	Number of Organizations	Per cent. giving Socials	Number of Socials reported	Per cent. of pay Socials† to total number of Socials	No. of Churches without Organizations of this kind
Young People's Societies . . . . .	106	53.7	176*	47.1*	178
Women's Societies	205	60.4	362*	69.8*	118
Men's Societies . . . .	12	58.3	14	0.0	277
Junior Organizations . . . . .	23	43.4	32	56.2	272
Other Societies . . . . .	4	50.0	8	100.0	...
Totals . . . . .	350	57.1	598	60.5	...

\*Seneca County omitted in this calculation.

†By "pay socials" we mean those given to raise money for the church.



AN OLD PARSONAGE TURNED INTO A PARISH  
HOUSE FOR SOCIAL ACTIVITIES, METHODIST  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH, BLUFFTON,  
ALLEN COUNTY

Ninety-six rural churches in the four counties have no societies or organizations of any kind, except possibly a Sunday School. The above table reveals the distressing fact that considerably over one-half (60.5%) of the social opportunities furnished by these various church societies are colored and cheapened by commercialism. If the churches are to win the respect of all within their reach, this disgraceful stooping to buy their support must cease.

The small number (12) of men's organizations listed in the above table is very noticeable, especially when contrasted with the large number (205) of women's societies. Here is an open door of opportunity before the rural churches of the four counties. Some of the churches have already entered this door through the organization of the male Bible classes of their Sunday Schools. The Methodist Episcopal Church of Bluffton, Allen County, with a membership of 340, has its men organized in a Methodist Brotherhood. In its work for boys, this church has two clubs, the "Brotherhood of David" and the "Knights of King Arthur," both of which, to quote the pastor of the church, "have accomplished almost miracles in character building." In view of

these efforts to reach the men and boys, it is not surprising to note that in three years the male membership of this church increased 8% over the female. This was in a village church. The churches of the open country, however, face equal opportunities in the way of work for men. The comparatively small number of distinctly farmers' organizations, already referred to on page 24 of this pamphlet, give to the open country churches of this section of the State a clear field of effort which they should not be slow in occupying.

## 8. Church Finances.

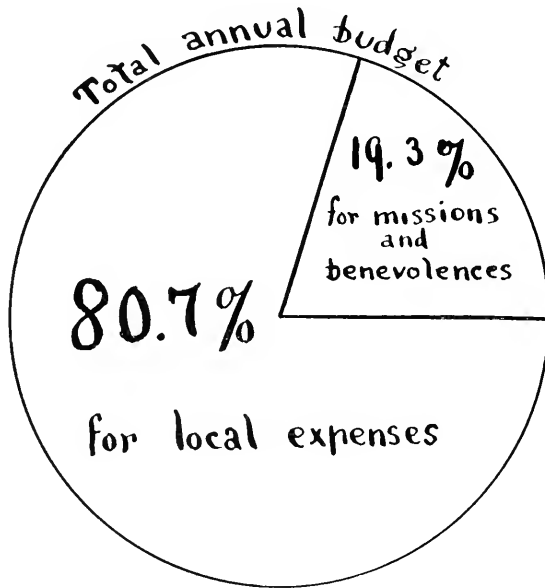
Statistics concerning finances were secured from 169 country churches and 112 village churches in the four counties. The following table shows the total annual budget in both groups, considered both severally and together, and its distribution among the various items of church expense:

	Country Churches	Village Churches	Both
Total Annual Budget.....	\$67,757	\$78,494	\$146,251
Per cent. for Ministers' Salaries	55.6	50.7	53.0
Per cent. for Current Expenses,	15.5	24.2	20.1
Per cent. for Sunday School Expenses .....	7.5	7.6	7.6
Per cent. for Missions and Benevolences .....	21.4	17.5	19.3

Combining the first three items in the above table—ministers' salaries, current expenses and Sunday School expenses—under the general designation of "local expenses," we may compare the amount of money spent by the churches for self-maintenance with the amount given away for missionary and charitable purposes, as follows:

	Country Churches	Village Churches	Both
For Local Expenses.....	\$53,237	\$64,784	\$118,021
Per cent. of Total Budget.....	78.6	82.5	80.7
For Missions and Benevolences.	\$14,475	\$13,755	\$28,230
Per cent. of Total Budget.....	21.4	17.5	19.3

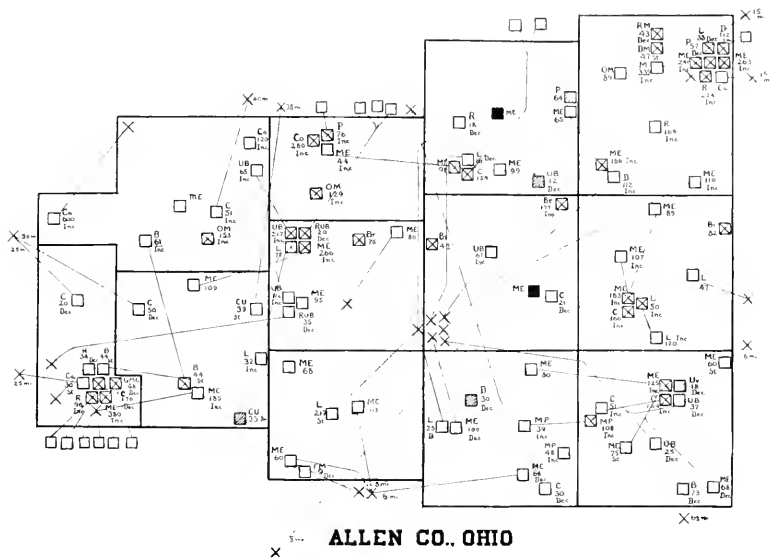
# How the rural churches in Northwestern Ohio spend their income.



Four counties

Ohio Rural Life Survey

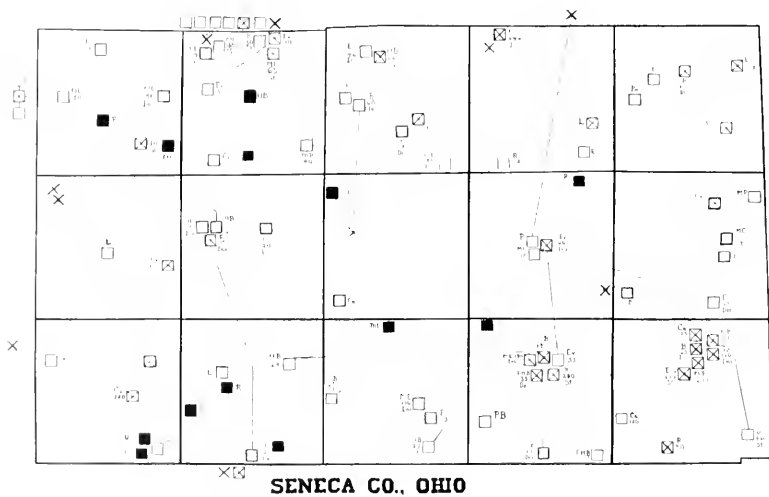
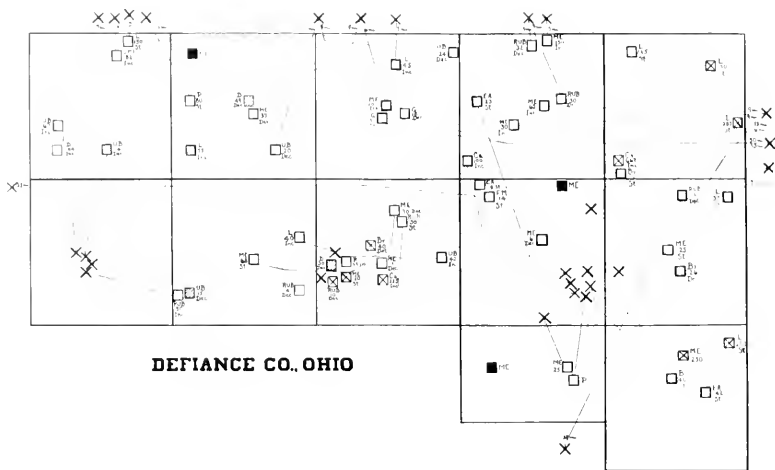
These tables show that the rural churches of the four counties give away about one-fifth (19.3%) of their total income. The churches of the open country do better in this respect than the churches in the villages, the former giving away 21.4% of their income, the latter 17.5%.



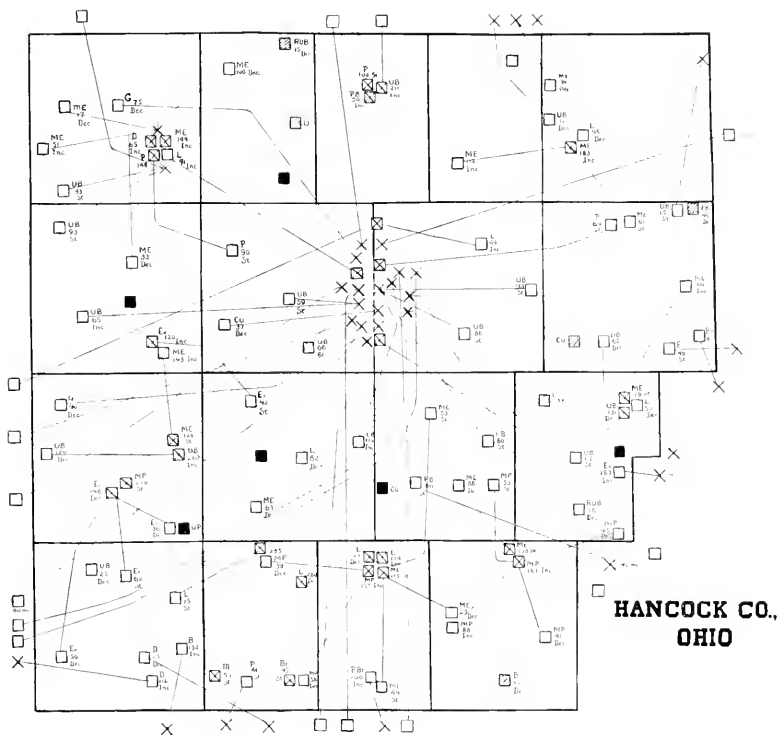
### Key to Maps

X Minister's residence    X Church with resident minister    □ Church without resident minister  
 ▨ Church without minister    ■ Abandoned church    Numerals indicate membership of church  
 Inc., increasing; Dec., decreasing; St., stationary

- |                                 |                         |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| B Baptist                       | HF Friends (Hicksite)   |
| Br Brethren (German Baptist)    | L Lutheran              |
| BSA Brothers Society of America | LDS Latter-Day Saints   |
| C Christian                     | M Mennonite             |
| Ca Catholic (Roman)             | MB Missionary Baptist   |
| Co Congregational               | ME Methodist Episcopal  |
| CP Cumberland Presbyterian      | MP Methodist Protestant |
| CS Christian Science            | N Nazarenes             |
| CU Christian Union              | OM Old Mennonite        |
| D Disciples                     | P Presbyterian          |
| DM Defenseless Mennonite        | PB Primitive Baptist    |
| DNP Disciples, Non-Progressive  | R Reformed              |
| E Episcopal                     | RM Reformed Mennonite   |
| EvA Evangelical Association     | RUB Radical U. B.       |
| EvL " Lutheran                  | S Saints                |
| F Friends (Orthodox)            | U Union                 |
| FM Free Methodist               | UB United Brethren      |
| FWB Free Will Baptist           | UP United Presbyterian  |
| G Church of God                 | Uv Universalist         |
| GME German M. E.                | USS Union Sunday School |
| H Apostolic Holiness            | WM Wesleyan Methodist   |







## 9. The Minister.

The total number of ministers preaching in the four counties is 163. Of these ministers:

- 25.7% serve one church.
- 34.2% serve two churches.
- 25.0% serve three churches.
- 15.1% serve four or more churches.

A little over one-third of the ministers with only one church have other occupations.

A minister can have his home in only one community. But since 74.3% of the ministers at work in the four counties preach in more than one place, it is evident that the vast majority of the ministers live at a distance from most of their parishes. The great waste of time, energy, and money involved in the travelling about of ministers, many of them going along the same road or crossing one another's path, may be realized by the reader if he will glance at the maps on the preceding pages or scan the following table:

- 34.6% of the churches have ministers living less than 2 mi. from Ch.
- 30.9% of the churches have ministers living 2-5 mi. from Ch.
- 25.3% of the churches have ministers living 6-10 mi. from Ch.
- 6.4% of the churches have ministers living 11-20 mi. from Ch.
- 1.6% of the churches have ministers living 21-30 mi. from Ch.
- 1.2% of the churches have ministers living 31 or more mi. from Ch.

The Lord's money is being squandered through our sectarian selfishness which makes the circuit system a necessity. Federation of churches in all over-churched communities would eliminate most of this waste.

In the matter of salary, four-fifths of the ministers receive less than \$1,000 per annum. The following table shows the distribution of salaries among 145 of the rural ministers at work in the four counties:

- 14 ( 9.5% ) receive no salary.
- 7 ( 4.7% ) receive less than \$300 annually.
- 6 ( 4.0% ) receive from \$300 to \$ 400 annually.
- 14 ( 9.5% ) receive from \$401 to \$ 500 annually.
- 17 (11.5% ) receive from \$501 to \$ 600 annually.
- 25 (16.9% ) receive from \$601 to \$ 700 annually.
- 24 (16.2% ) receive from \$701 to \$ 800 annually.
- 15 (10.1% ) receive from \$801 to \$ 900 annually.
- 17 (11.5% ) receive from \$901 to \$1,000 annually.
- 9 ( 6.1% ) receive \$1,001 or more annually.

The table shows that most of the ministers receive from five hundred to nine hundred dollars per year.

The scholastic preparation of 150 rural ministers in the four counties is shown in the following table:

- 29 (19.3% ) have had only a common school education.
- 20 (13.4% ) have had only a high school education.
- 101 (67.3% ) have had more than a high school education.

The table shows that nearly one-fifth (19.3%) of the ministers have had nothing more than an elementary education, and that nearly one-third (32.7%) have not gone in their schooling beyond the high school. That the man with more training commands a higher salary is shown by the following facts about the ministers whose training has been given in the preceding table:

- Average salary of ministers with only common school training...\$609
- Average salary of ministers with only high school training... 664
- Average salary of ministers with more than high school training.. 771

Considering all of the rural ministers of the four counties together, their average salary is about \$700. This is a rather low figure for a section of the State as prosperous as Northwestern Ohio. With the coming growth, however, of the principle and practice of federation among its churches, we can confidently expect that the rural ministers of the section will receive a more adequate compensation.

## CHAPTER VII.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

The first result of this investigation should be general prayer for a religious advance in Northwestern Ohio. Churches with only one-third of their sittings filled, ministers three-fourths of whom live where they do not preach and preach where they do not live, and only a minority of the population reached by the gospel: these exhibit the need of a new evangelism in Northwestern Ohio.

It cannot be said, however, that a gospel of independence, or of merely personal religion, is the need. The rural churches in Ohio which show distinction and success in the largest number are well organized churches. The task of the pastor and of the "parish priest" is the greatest evangelism in Ohio. These churches grow the most rapidly. They have the best hold upon their young people. They have the largest number of families in their membership. They show every sign of a strong gospel spirit and their contributions to the great enterprises of the church at home and abroad are the largest.

What Northwestern Ohio needs is a band of consecrated young men born of the soil, who with knowledge and sympathy will go into the country to live as pastors with country people. The Lord's flock needs not shouters, but shepherds. There has been too much emphasis upon personality and independence, and it has dissolved the population in a diluted individualism, which seeks after money, personal property and personal careers. What Northwestern Ohio needs is the organization of the Kingdom of God under the leadership of Christian pastors who will give their lives to the people and live not in the town, but in the country.

*Second.* Community churches are needed. These are the unit of measure in federation and union of Christian forces. They can be placed at selected points by the various denominations, each one selecting an important centre, where it has leadership. Every community church should deal with the needs of the whole people, not with the emotional satisfactions of "our own people."

For these churches adequate buildings must be erected and, of course, resident pastors must be secured. These buildings need to be something more than the one-room structure which prevails in these rural

counties. The example for such buildings is furnished in the churches mentioned in the text which have rebuilt and extended their church houses to meet the modern needs of country people. The building of houses of God large enough to make a home for the Master among his people in the country is the same process by which the farmer built his own home after pioneer days. The one-room church house in the country is as inappropriate to modern times as the sod house would be for the modern farmer's family. It is as ill suited to the needs of Northwestern Ohio today, when the farmers are prosperous and cultivated and ambitious, as is the sickle or scythe for reaping his crops, or the ox cart for transporting his family from the farm house to the church.

The community church in all parts of the country is the successful country church. It survives where one-room structures with occasional preaching perish. It embodies without help of federations the passionate idealism of our time for union and co-operation in religion. Without discrediting denominations or disowning its own communion, the community church ministers to all. For any one of the leading Protestant denominations can successfully minister in things of the spirit to all the people of the community, if it will minister to them in all their needs recreative, educational, social and humanitarian.

*Third.* It is astonishing that in Northwestern Ohio the condition of common schools in the country is so retarded. It is probable that this backward condition of schools in the country is due to the absence of the ministers, who live not in the country, but in the town, in so great a degree. The need of developing the schools is a religious need. The centralization and the consolidation of many schools and the setting up of a higher standard for all the country schools is necessary, if churches of a higher grade are to live in the country.

We must not forget that the Protestant church perishes among ignorant people. Where the people cannot maintain an educated ministry and where they do not read the Bible or other books with intelligence, there the Protestant church shortly disappears. In our day Protestantism does not live by persecution, but its maintenance is dependent upon intelligence. This intelligence must be possessed by the poorest and humblest. The only way to bring this about is to elevate the standards of the common schools. This investigation is an exhibit of the need of better schools throughout Ohio.

It is no less striking that Northwestern Ohio should be so far behind other counties of the State in which consolidation has gone far forward, than it is that at this very time the whole State of Ohio is con-

sidering legislation for a better school system in all counties. Ministers of religion and schoolmasters should fix the attention of all the people in these counties upon the great need of better schools in the country, for by the education of country people, or the lack of it, will be determined the question whether Northwestern Ohio shall remain American in the future.

*Fourth.* The greatest danger with which country people are confronted in Northwestern Ohio is expressed in the speculative price of land. This danger is really a peril of irreligion. It takes the form of greed for money, instead of land, among country people. There are two obvious sources of this speculation: One is the "easy money" secured by the farmer from the oil deposits; the other is the wave of speculative prices which has now come to Ohio on its way eastward from Illinois. The form of farm speculation is the same everywhere. It tempts the farmer by a high capitalization of his farm to sell and move out, when he comes to see the low income of the farm.

There is only one remedy and that is, to train the farmer by every possible means to secure a larger product from the land and a much larger profit. Unless the farmer's income can be maintained and increased as the land prices increase, he will inevitably sell, in average instances. This process it is that weakens the growth of country communities.

Moreover, the development of the churches and schools, which is necessary as years pass, will be paid for only out of money earned, never out of money borrowed, and as the higher price of land enables the farmer merely to borrow more money, while it lays upon him heavier overhead charges, it has the effect of depressing educational and religious institutions. No heavier tax can come to churches and schools in the country than the suddenly increased price of the land.

Co-operation among farmers will be the way, and there is no other way by which they shall maintain themselves in the country. The present independent economic and social life, by which each man works for himself, will be the death of the American stock as a farming population. We can only hope and pray and teach that farmers work together. As the wants of country people increase with growing intelligence they will come in contact with an ever higher wall of necessity, and two alternatives alone are left: Either to sell and leave the country, or to remain in the country and co-operate. Therefore, teachers and ministers of religion should advocate agricultural co-operation. It is fundamental to the maintaining of an American stock on the land.

The permanence of the American stock is the great problem. The

country churches in Ohio are American churches. That is, they are Protestant, independent, self-governing. They embody American ideals, the best ideals the world has ever conceived of. They are a part of Northwestern European civilization, the most precious inheritance of mankind. To maintain these people and these ideals in Northwestern Ohio, where they have begun to give way, calls for a definite religious movement which will bring our people to a new consecration, to a new valuing of the land and to a "marrying" the soil such as they have not hitherto undertaken.

*Fifth.* Co-operation will develop leadership, but it cannot maintain itself if it be merely economic. American country people will not stay in the country for dollars. They can get dollars in the town. They have wits enough to make other people work for them and therein is their danger. Therefore, we recommend a cultivation of social life. In all these country communities churches and schools should be centers of recreative and intellectual life. The open societies for the exercise of the instinct for enjoyment, for social intercourse and for play should be cultivated and more should be organized.

The holidays of the year should be celebrated by the people of these counties in common. Especially the great religious festivals, such as Christmas, Easter, Decoration Day, Labor Day and Thanksgiving should be occasions of the gathering of the whole community at the church and at the schoolhouse for common celebration of the deep-running stream of history, both of remembrance and of hope. The birthdays of the great heroes of our history should also be celebrated in common. There should be a cultivation of music also, and of dramatic expression, such as is confined to very few churches. Song has extraordinary social value, as a means of organizing the social instinct of the people, and there are possibilities in the dramatic art, through "home talent plays" and other means which country people have hardly begun to use. By every means the social life of the people should be organized in such manner as to make the country community a place of joy for the young, a place of contented labor for those who work on the farm, a satisfactory home for the women and a preferred residence for elderly people, for these four classes are essential to the perfection and the continuance of the country church.

*Sixth.* The country institutions in Northwestern Ohio, the home, the church and the school, should be used and developed in such way as to resist the influence of the cities and to cultivate an idealism of the country. The influence of urban life, if unmodified by a religious spirit, is a malignant power in the country. Around these large towns

and small cities, which care for nothing except city life, churches die, schools languish and homes are abandoned, renters take the place of owners on the farms and values of farm land are vitiated by irresistible philistine powers. There is need of the cultivation by country people of independent institutions, so that they may be self-sufficient in social, economic, educational and religious respects. Ministers must be called from these cities to live in the country, houses must be built for them, and schools consolidated, in order to retain the most ambitious and the most efficient of country people on the land. Teachers should be provided with homes beside the school, and co-operative institutions, both for social life and for getting a better income, need to be organized in the country, in order that the influence of the town may be resisted and in order that the country population may maintain themselves and may prosper in every way. Unless this is done the waning of the country church will continue and it will be merely the sign of the decadence of a splendid population; the best flower and fruit of European and Christian culture.

Will the towns of this region have no mercy on the country? Will they never realize that their place is one of leadership? Are there no leaders in Findlay, in Lima, in Defiance and other of the leading cities of this region, who will see that the greatness of these towns is in their leadership of the country, not in their pollution of country life? The churches of these towns ought to have farmers in their membership. The schools of these towns should teach agriculture. They should be centres of constructive influences, rather than destructive.

*Seventh.* As we began, so it is evident that the problem of Northwestern Ohio is a profoundly religious one. True, it is educational also, for religion and education in facing such great difficulties are a part of the same process. The country people must be converted, and he who shall convert them must give his life with them to the great cause of building a commonwealth. He must read his Old Testament and drink deep of the spirit of Moses and of Joshua, who led the people into the "promised land." He must understand the Book of Isaiah, which promised that "the land should be called 'Beulah,' for as a young man marrieth a maiden, so thy sons shall marry thee." And he must engage in his task with the spirit of the Master, Jesus Christ, who gave himself to the Hebrew people, whose life completed the years of inspired history that have made us call Palestine unto this day a "holy land."





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**Frederick C. Landsittel,**  
State Normal College, Ohio University

**Charles Marston,**  
Pastor, Presbyterian Church, Millersburg,  
Ohio

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Ohio Baptist Convention

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County Work Dept.

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District Supt., Methodist Episcopal  
Church

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District Supt., Methodist Episcopal  
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**Samuel Tyler,**  
Chairman, Social Service Commission  
Diocese of Southern Ohio  
Protestant Episcopal Church

**Selby H. Vance,**  
Lane Seminary

**Paul L. Vogt,**  
Professor of Sociology, Miami University

**Ralph J. White,**  
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Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church

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American Sunday School Union

**Warren H. Wilson,**  
Supt., Presbyterian Department of Church  
and Country Life