

THE RURAL COMMUNITY



SANDERSON

THE RURAL COMMUNITY

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF A SOCIOLOGICAL GROUP.

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GINN AND COMPANY

BOSTON • NEW YORK • CHICAGO • LONDON
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432-1

The Athenæum Press

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TO
CHARLES JOSIAH GALPIN
DEAN OF RURAL SOCIOLOGISTS
PIONEER IN DISCOVERING THE STRUCTURE
OF THE RURAL COMMUNITY

PREFACE

The interest of the author in the social problems of the rural community arose through his personal experience in attempting to deal with them in agricultural extension work. With the spread of the county-agricultural-agent movement and the passage of the Smith-Lever Act the land-grant colleges of the United States were compelled to turn their attention from problems of the technique of agricultural production to those of marketing and social organization. The history of this transition is written in the agricultural literature of the past two decades. In attempting to work out a satisfactory basis of local organization for the new extension work in a state of peculiarly diversified interests and of strong local types (West Virginia), the writer was brought face to face with the problem of rural organization. There was, however, little scientific knowledge of the rural community available to the ordinary agricultural worker, who had no knowledge of sociology. These circumstances created an interest which led later to the present investigation.

The object has been to secure a knowledge of the forces and principles which influence the formation, persistence, and decline of various types of rural locality groups. Seemingly diverse and unrelated communities of different times and regions are compared and classed in a single type according to their common form of structure and function. Not unmindful of the dangers of such a comparative method,¹ the writer has endeavored to give due weight to the history, culture, and environment of the peoples whose communities are under consideration.

¹ Cf. Thomas's criticism of Spencer's abuse of the comparative method, which was evolutionary and did not take account of the local factors. (See "Source Book for Social Origins," pp. 281, 734-735, and passim.)

In the presentation of the material it has been impossible to give more than a few examples to illustrate the points under discussion. Volumes might be written on the rural communities of any one of the older countries or cultural regions. The social situation in any region, with regard to the form of rural-community organization, is the product of the previous culture and history of its people, of their environment, — physical and psychical, — and of their purposes and ideals (see page 651). Obviously, in the study of such a complex mass of phenomena, all sorts of sources must be used and evaluated, and the result is but an analysis and interpretation of the available information; for no man could himself investigate and be able to speak authoritatively on all the human cultures involved in the problem. It is for this reason that such extensive quotations have been made from original sources. The quotations have been used because they state the points under consideration much better than the writer could and with the authority of the special investigator. If information is to be of scientific value the reader must be able to evaluate its probability and to check it with other sources by means of comparative observations.

One of the difficulties in such an investigation as this is the paucity of materials upon the evolution of the culture of many peoples. One of the greatest needs for the understanding of social phenomena is a larger body of data concerning social origins. Unfortunately, our historians have been chiefly concerned with political, military, and legal history. One searches in vain in the best standard texts of medieval history for adequate information on such important topics as the education and health of the masses of the people. When will the history of the common man, and particularly the history of the man on the land, — he who supports the whole superstructure of civilization, — be written so that we may understand the road he has traveled? The available sources have very often placed undue emphasis on political structures

and documentary evidence. On the other hand, students of mythology and folklore not infrequently go to the other extreme in their valuation of cultural survivals. Between the two the investigator of social origins is often left in a quandary and feels the need of the assistance of the expert historian who will restudy the problems of social origins from a sociological standpoint.

The term "rural community" is used in both a special and a general sense. As a general term it applies to all types of rural locality groups and is so used to consider them generically. In the special sense it applies to the modern rural locality group with dispersed homesteads and a village center which is typical in the United States. The writer realizes that this dual usage of the term is unfortunate; but at present we have no better terms which convey the meaning, and he has hesitated to coin a new term for the modern rural community. Dr. Galpin's term "rurban" ¹ expresses the idea, but is unfortunate etymologically. It is to be hoped that some term may be invented for the modern rural community which will be as distinctive as the term "village community."

For information on rural organization in the United States, many sources not herein mentioned have been utilized, including scores of local studies made by the author's students, mostly from New York State, but many from other states. Particular mention should be made of special investigations of the rural communities of certain countries made by graduate students, the use of whose work is acknowledged in the text. To Dr. Robert E. Park, under whose direction the investigation was begun and whose personal interest and suggestive insight were invaluable, the writer is especially indebted.

Since the manuscript of this book was first prepared in 1921, it has been used with several classes of graduate students and has been materially revised in many places. Meanwhile much

¹ C. J. Galpin, The Anatomy of an Agricultural Community, *Research Bulletin* No. 34, p. 32. Agricultural Experiment Station, University of Wisconsin.

has been published on many of the topics herein discussed. Full recognition has been given to the more important publications of the last few years, some of which supplement or supersede what had been written ; but in a few cases the author may be pardoned if he advances an idea as his own, essentially as he originally wrote it, although it may have been published more recently by another.

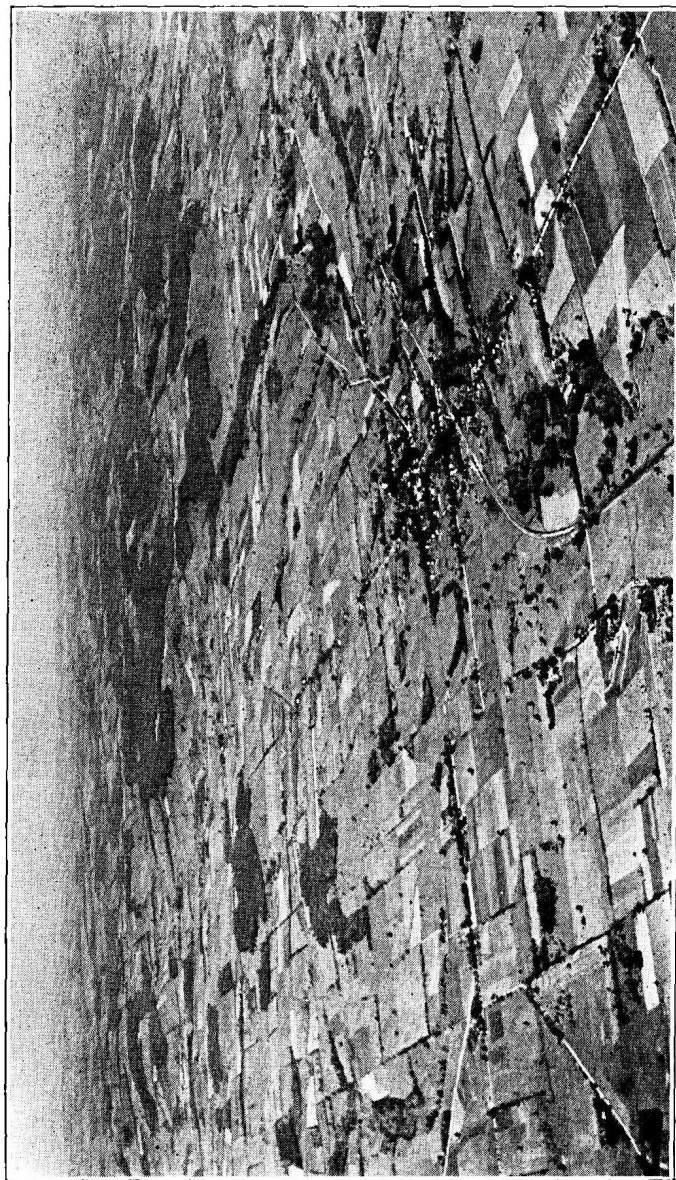
The inadequacy of the discussion of contemporary rural communities in Europe is readily seen. After a year spent in attempting to gain a better knowledge of the European rural community through travel and by studying the literature in European libraries, it became apparent that any adequate understanding of rural social organization in the diverse European countries must come through those who can gain an intimate knowledge of their life by thorough sociological study, and that no one man can encompass this field unless he can devote himself to it for many years.

The sociology of the rural community needs a somewhat different historical perspective than it has yet received. This book is but an introduction to a large field of investigation, the tools for which we are just beginning to fashion. Its chief object is to give a new point of view with regard to the background of all modern civilization — the rural community. To amplify this view and to paint the picture in detail will be the task of many minds through many years of research.¹ If this attempt inspires such investigations by others, its purpose will have been accomplished.

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¹ An outline for the study of a certain type of rural community — that is, the type peculiar to any culture, country, or period — will be found in Appendix, p. 667.



Photograph by Robinson

FIG. 1. Aërial view of a village center and a portion of the tributary territory with dispersed farms of a modern rural community in central New York

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The Rural Community

CHAPTER I

The Rural Community as a Sociological Group

The community as a sociological group is a concept evolved during the past two decades.

The word "community" has been in common use since its origin in the Latin, but it has had several connotations. One usage is that of Small,¹ who uses the word to describe a quality of solidarity, or togetherness. In the middle of the last century a community implied a communistic society, such as a Shaker community, the Oneida Community, etc. The word has also been applied to a body of people in a given locality, as a village or a municipality. Thus Murray's *English Dictionary* says,

The Latin word was merely a noun of quality from *communis*, meaning "fellowship, community of relations or feelings"; but in Med. L. it was, like *universitas*, used correctly in the sense of "a body of fellows or fellow townsmen."

Recently these two usages have been combined; now the word is used in a generic sense so that it is applied to any group determined by locality. Thus Maciver² says:

By a community I mean any area of common life, village, or town, or district, or country, or even wider area. To deserve the name community, the area must be somehow distinguished from

¹ A. W. Small, *General Sociology*, p. 582.

² R. M. Maciver, *Community*, p. 22. Copyright, Macmillan & Co., Ltd. This and subsequent quotations reprinted by permission.

further areas, the common life may have some characteristics of its own such that the frontiers of the area have some meaning.

As developed by Maciver the term is practically equivalent to "a state of socialization." For the purposes of social philosophy this usage has distinct value, but as a term descriptive of a definite datum for the science of sociology it has the same limitations as the term "society," in that the local rural community and the state or nation have some common characteristics, but they are essentially different in structure and function. They are both communities, as an insect and a mammal are both animals, but it is essential that we distinguish their difference if we are to deal with them scientifically.

In general, standard works on sociology have given almost no recognition to the community as a social unit. C. H. Cooley¹ first called definite attention to its significance as a primary group, but he did not attempt its further analysis.

Giddings² uses the term in a generic sense descriptive of both tribes and localities, but his distinction of demotic societies as congregate associations gives us the basis for a classification of social units according to locality.

The composition of demotic societies requires but little description. As in ethnical societies, the unitary group is the family. Families are combined in neighborhoods, hamlets, or villages. In New England, villages and outlying homesteads compose the town; in the middle and western states, the township. In England they compose the parish; in France, the commune. Elsewhere in Europe they compose local divisions of various names, but like the commune or parish in organization.

His classification of demotic groups is, however, based essentially on political rather than cultural units.

Hayes³ recognizes stages of rural solitude, rural community, hamlet, and village. He says:

¹ Social Organization, p. 24.

² Principles of Sociology, pp. 157, 158, 167, 168.

³ E. C. Hayes, Introduction to Sociology, p. 51.

The line between rural solitude and what we call "rural community" is passed when it becomes possible to maintain a satisfactory standard of school, church and neighborhood life.

Here the word is used synonymously with "neighborhood," and with no precision of meaning.

Small and Vincent,¹ in their "Introduction to the Study of Society," gave an admirable account of the genesis of a rural group and the subsequent village in a typical Middle West situation, but they did not consider their significance as together forming a single community.

Park and Burgess² were the first to recognize clearly the sociological significance of the community as a social unit.

The terms society, community, and social group are now used by students with a certain difference of emphasis but with very little difference of meaning. Society is the more abstract and inclusive term, and society is made up of social groups, each possessing its own specific type of organization but having at the same time all the general characteristics of society in the abstract. Community is the term which is applied to societies and social groups where they are considered from the point of view of the geographical distribution of the individuals and institutions of which they are composed. It follows that every community is a society, but not every society is a community. An individual may belong to many social groups but he will not ordinarily belong to more than one community, except in so far as a smaller community of which he is a member is included in a larger of which he is also a member. However, an individual is not, at least from a sociological point of view, a member of a community because he lives in it but rather because, and to the extent that, he participates in the common life of the community.

¹ A. W. Small and G. E. Vincent, *An Introduction to the Study of Society*, Book II, Chap. II, "The Rural Group"; Chap. III, "The Village." American Book Company, New York, 1894.

² Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess, *An Introduction to the Science of Sociology*, p. 161. (Copyright, University of Chicago Press. This and subsequent quotations reprinted by permission.) Since this publication Park and Burgess have been the leaders in developing a very distinct school of human ecology as a phase of sociology at the University of Chicago.

Contemporary anthropologists are coming to attach more importance to the local group as a fundamental social unit. Thus A. A. Goldenweiser, in an article on "The Social Organization of the Indians of North America," says of the "local group":

The significance of territorial units in primitive life has certainly been underestimated. We read a good deal about the life of the family and of the clan, and the blood bond that constitutes the real formation of primitive society. Relatively little, on the other hand, is heard about the bearing and functions of the local group; and the common inference is that its importance is negligible. . . .

Even a superficial survey discloses the fact that in tribes of the family-village type the local group shares with the family, itself a unit with marked local associations, the social, political, and ceremonial functions occurring in that area; but its significance is by no means restricted to tribes of that type. Among the Iroquois and Omaha, Winnebago, Haida, and Tlingit, — tribes dominated by complex and functionally all-important clan or gentile systems, — the local group remains a prominent factor in the life of the people. Among the Iroquois it never lost its significance as an economic unit, — a body for mutual assistance, in the work of the fields, in building houses, in the innumerable odds and ends of various households. On the northwest coast the solidarity of the local group is great, in their winter villages, as well as in their temporary habitations on the coast or in the valleys, or along the course of rivers, for summer fishing or for hunting of sea-mammals. . . . If we look a little further back, the local group appears as a unit of even greater significance, for converging evidence from many parts of the North American area points to the territorial unity as a basis for future clan and gentile systems. The mythology of the Iroquois, including the Deganawida epic, abounds in references to villages and village chiefs, no mention being made, except in the Deganawida epic, of clans or lords. With all the discounting due to such evidence as a source for historic reconstruction, the impression is irresistible that the local units were, if not the only, yet the all-important units in ancient Iroquois society of pre-league days. . . .

If we add to this the theoretical grounds referred to before and discussed elsewhere, for regarding the territorial unit as the most primitive form of social grouping, it is hardly too much to say that we must see in the local group by far the most ancient, most universal, and on the whole a most important, unit in primitive society.¹

Similarly Hobhouse, Wheeler, and Ginsberg, after an exhaustive study of the culture of primitive societies, say :

The simpler societies, particularly those of hunters and gatherers, and the lower agriculturists and pastoralists, for the most part live in small communities, varying in number from perhaps a score to two or three hundred. . . .

Little communities of this kind form the effective social unit in the lowest economic stages. They are in a measure self-dependent. They own a definite area of land. They join more or less effectively, as the case may be, in repulsing the assaults of any other group; and again, in varying degrees of energy and community of feeling, they will protect their members against others. They may have a chief or a council, formal or informal, of the older men. They may have little or no formal government. But in the main they are self-dependent, owing no allegiance to anyone beyond their limits. Yet they do stand in social relations to neighboring groups. A number of such groups probably speak the same dialect, and call one another by the same name, intermarry freely, perhaps meet at certain times for religious or ceremonial purposes, are generally on friendly terms, and perhaps are ready to coöperate for mutual defense. Such an aggregate of groups is generally known as a tribe, even if it possesses no common government or corporate individuality.²

The word "neighborhood" is often used as synonymous with "community," but in the sense in which these terms are now coming to be technically employed in this country the

¹ *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, Vol. XXVII (1914), p. 431. See also his "Early Civilization," pp. 235, 280, etc.

² L. T. Hobhouse, G. C. Wheeler, and M. Ginsberg, *The Material Culture and Social Institutions of the Simpler Peoples*, p. 46. Copyright, 1915, Chapman and Hall. Reprinted by permission.

neighborhood consists of but a group of houses fairly near each other, with possibly one or two institutions. Frequently a neighborhood grew around some one center, such as a school, store, church, or mill, which in the course of time may have been abandoned, but the houses remain clustered together. The school district of the one-room country school is commonly a neighborhood, but as there are no other interests which bind the people together it cannot be considered a community. This distinction has been very well put by Dr. K. L. Butterfield, who says :

I wish to emphasize one point very strongly. We must not confuse a "community" with a "neighborhood." A neighborhood is simply a group of families living conveniently near together. The neighborhood can do a great many things, but it is not a community. A true community is a social group that is more or less self-sufficing. It is big enough to have its own centers of interest — its trading center, its social center, its own church, its own school-house, its own grange, its own library, and to possess such other institutions as the people of the community need. It is something more than a mere aggregation of families. There may be several neighborhoods in a community. A community is the smallest social unit that will hold together. . . . A community is a sort of individualized group of people. It is both the smallest and the largest number of people that can constitute a real social unit. It is a sort of family of families.¹

Yet, in a way, there is considerable justification for this confusion of the two terms ; for, as we shall see, most villages first originate as hamlets or neighborhoods, and some villages are formed by the aggregation of hamlets, while in other cases it is difficult to determine whether a given locality group should be classified as neighborhood or community (see page 485).

The rural community should also be distinguished from the town or city. This resolves itself into a distinction between

¹ Mobilizing the Rural Community, Introduction, p. 9. *Extension Bulletin No. 23*, Massachusetts Agricultural College, 1918.

the rural village and the town or city, for there is but little distinction between the latter, in ancient or modern times, save for size and complexity of organization. The distinction between the town and the village has been well phrased by Sims, though he rather underestimates the complexity of modern village life :

The occupations of the rural village are predominantly those growing directly out of agriculture or the immediate needs of an agricultural population. . . . In contradistinction, the town is dominated by those vocations which are specialized, and more indirectly related to agriculture or wholly independent of it. . . . Again, a considerable class engaged in the vocations designated helps to give the town a psychosis different from that of the rural village.¹

Ordinarily the distinction is purely one of the number of the population (as by the United States census, which classifies as *rural* all places under 2500),² but to be of sociological value the distinction must be qualitative rather than quantitative. A mining or industrial village is more urban than rural.³

In ancient times village communities frequently aggregated into city groups and finally formed compact cities. This is the process of *synœcism* which produced the Greek cities, as so well described by Zimmern.⁴ The same process has taken place in Manipur in eastern India in fairly recent times.⁵ Maunier⁶ gives a very thorough account of this process of agglomeration of villages in city formation.

On the other hand, the fortified manufacturing and market cities of ancient and medieval times were not only sharply defined by their walls but were eternally in conflict with the

¹ N. L. Sims, *The Rural Community*, pp. 137-138. Copyright, Charles Scribner's Sons. This and subsequent quotations reprinted by permission.

² A. F. Weber, *The Growth of Cities in the Nineteenth Century*. p. 16.

³ C. J. Galpin, *Proceedings of the Second National Country Life Conference*.

⁴ *The Greek Commonwealth*, p. 76. "The Greek city as we find it in the sixth or fifth century . . . is in essence not a marketing or manufacturing centre, but an overgrown agricultural village" (p. 82).

⁵ Hodson, *The Meitheis*, p. 26.

⁶ René Maunier, *L'Origine et la fonction économique des villes*, pp. 65-95.