

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTIONS TO TODAY'S PROBLEMS:
A PROPOSAL FOR PLANNED EXPANSION OF SMALL TOWNS
AS REGIONAL POPULATION MAGNETS

by

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CHRONOLOGICAL INFORMATION

1850-1900--Progressive Housing Movement

1899--Ebenezer Howard formed the Garden City Association

1903--First garden city, Letchworth, was begun.

1920--Ralph Borsodi homesteaded in Suffern, New York.

1923--Regional Planning Association of America established.

1932--Tugwell professor of economics at Columbia and part of Brain Trust.

1932--Borsodi's first homestead for others, at Dayton.

Jan., 1933--Roosevelt asked Wallace, Tugwell, and Wilson to draw plans to reorganize Department of Agriculture into an instrument of national planning. Tugwell became Undersecretary of Agriculture.

May 12, 1933--Emergency Relief Act, creating the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) providing relief funds to the states, which distributed them through state relief organizations.

Aug. 23, 1933--Division of Subsistence Homesteads was officially organized in the Department of the Interior.

Senator Bankhead's subsistence homesteads proposal, added on to the National Industrial Recovery Act, as Section 208 of Title II (\$25 million appropriated for this). Harold L. Ickes, as Secretary of the Interior, was designated to carry out Section 208. He already had other parts of Title II (the Public Works Program). Public Works Program was headed by Robert D. Kohn. Ickes named M. L. Wilson as head of Subsistence Homesteads Division.

Oct. 1933--First loan granted to Ralph Borsodi's homestead project in Dayton, Ohio. Also controversial community for stranded coal miners at Reedsville/Arthurdale, West Virginia (Clarence Pickett and Eleanor Roosevelt).

- Dec. 2, 1933--Formation of Federal Subsistence Homesteads Corporation, an action agency for the Division of Subsistence Homesteads. Subsidiary local corporations were formed for most of the projected homesteads, and this parent corporation held the local stock issued and thus had ultimate control over their policies. This corporation device met four needs: (1) acquire, hold and dispose of title to land, buildings, (2) to enter contracts with borrowers, purchasers and architects, (3) to assure local administration and support, (4) to remove aura of paternalism and differentiate subsistence homesteads from relief projects.
- Dec.-Jan. '33, '34--Three other stranded worker communities to Subsistence Homesteads Division: Cumberland Homesteads, Crossville, Tennessee, Tygart Valley Homesteads, Elkins, West Virginia, Westmoreland Homesteads, Greensburg, Pennsylvania (none of the four ever succeeded).
- Feb. 1934--Congress prohibited any expenditure for the manufacture of postal supplies outside of Washington, D.C., thus killing plans for a postal furniture factory at Arthurdale, on the grounds that it would eventually destroy private enterprise, or to government control of all industry. This decided that the government might build subsistence homesteads and hope for industry to come, but it could not provide industry.
- Feb. 1934--Harry Hopkins Administrator of the Federal Emergency Relief Act, created the Division of Rural Rehabilitation and Stranded Populations, for the purpose of returning stranded agricultural workers to farms and making special loans to make them self-sustaining. Laurence Westbrook was made head of the Division of Rural Rehabilitation (he had worked in Texas and organized the Texas Cotton Co-operative Association). This differed from Subsistence Homesteads in that in many states no communities were even planned--relief funds of the state corporations were lent to individual farmers. Also, all rural rehabilitation communities were planned for relief clients. They had a dual economic base--cooperative farms and cooperative village industries. The FERA initiated 26 communities of varying sizes--almost all were actually constructed by the R.A.

- Mar. 15, 1934--Comptroller General John R. McCarl ruled that the local Subsistence Homesteads corporations would have to deposit their borrowed funds with the U.S. Treasurer and use standard disbursing and accounting procedures. This nullified one of the primary purposes of the corporate device--decentralized administration, which was at the foundation of Wilson's program.
- Mar. 19, 1934--Wilson reluctantly outlined a new plan of administration, with complete control over the local projects by the Federal Subsistence Homesteads Corporation. The local corporations would act as an advisory board.
- May 12, 1934--(Ickes, who didn't favor decentralization, put pressure on Wilson and his staff.) On this date, Ickes abolished all control by local corporations and completely federalized the subsistence homestead program, leaving the projects more open to newspaper criticism (local papers had early favored them, because of leading citizens' sponsorship). (Borsodi brought suit against the government. Refused to be federalized and won.)
- May 1934--Ickes moved Charles E. Pyncheon from the Public Works Administration to the Division of Subsistence Homesteads to be business manager of the Federal Subsistence Homesteads Corporation. Upon resignation of Wilson in June, Pyncheon became the new Director.
- Under new organization, a Planning Section was established to take the lead in initiating new projects, rather than local groups. A Construction Section and an Operations Section which handled administrative problems and directed the project managers.
- June 30, 1934--End of Wilson's work in Division of Subsistence Homesteads.
- Nov. 1934--Ruling by the Solicitor of the Department of the Interior, saying Section 208 specifically provided aid for redistribution of population in industrial centers--not farmers. Also questioned legality of stranded workers' communities. This meant that the subsistence homesteads' program would have to be restricted to industrial communities.

Nov. 1934--Ickes tried to make a deal with the Department of Agriculture, by which he would turn over to Wallace his reclamation, erosion control, and subsistence homesteads programs for the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Roads, Forestry and Biological Survey. Hoped to be rid of subsistence homesteads and have all the conservation activities. He then hoped to lure Tugwell from the Department of Agriculture and create for him the office of Undersecretary of the Interior, so he could direct a co-ordinated conservation program. Wallace declined the exchange of agencies.

By 1935, the sense of emergency and despair was ebbing--the honeymoon of the New Deal was almost over.

Feb. 1935--Comptroller General challenged the legality of nearly all the expenditures of the local corporations (1 year earlier), ruling there was no authority for their existence and that they hadn't complied with Section 208 and government procedures.

Apr. 30, 1935--Roosevelt by executive order and under very broad authority granted in the Emergency Relief Act of 1935, established the Resettlement Administration under Tugwell, who also retained his position as Undersecretary of Agriculture. Functions of the R.A.: (1) resettlement of destitute or low income families from rural and urban areas, including establishment of communities in rural and suburban areas; (2) continue the whole, confused submarginal land program, emphasizing reforestation, erosion control, flood control, and recreational development. Later amended, authority for land development included "any other useful projects" giving Tugwell almost unlimited authority in selecting projects; and, (3) rural rehabilitation program--power to purchase land, use eminent domain, improve and develop land, and sell or lease with or without the privilege of purchasing any land so held.

Apr. 30, 1935--Roosevelt transferred the land program of the FERA to the RA.

May 7, 1935--McCarl ruled that Division of Subsistence Homesteads, not having been extended by new legislation, would automatically go out of existence June 16, 1935.

May 15, 1935--Roosevelt, by Executive Order 7041, transferred all property and assets of Division of Subsistence Homesteads to the newly created R.A. Its surplus funds were transferred to the R.A.

June 1, 1935--Roosevelt moved the Land Policy Section of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration to the R.A.

June 30, 1935--The Rural Rehabilitation Division of the FERA was given to Tugwell.

Although Tugwell wanted to continue the state corporations as an administrative device, the Comptroller General ruled the R.A. funds could not be granted to local corporations. Agreement between R.A. and states led to 37 states turning their funds over to the R.A. in 1935, with provision they be spent in the states that relinquished them. Eight states refused, but cut off from federal support they had to agree or become defunct.

Despite the accomplishments of the Division of Subsistence Homesteads and the FERA in community building over a 2-year period, the R.A. inherited the task of more than one half the construction work, selecting the majority of the settlers, almost all the important managerial work within the completed communities, and of selling or otherwise disposing of each community.

In line with the previous work of the FERA, Tugwell set up completely decentralized organization for most of the R.A. program, dividing the country into 11 regions. Offices also in each state and most counties--necessary to rehabilitation program with loans and supervision. Suburban resettlement was controlled from Washington. His administrative organization was criticized--instead of four main divisions for four main tasks: (1) rural relief, (2) land utilization, (3) rural resettlement, and (4) suburban resettlement, Tugwell created 12 divisions. Personnel of R.A. soon numbered over 13,000.

The R.A. and W.P.A. were both relief agencies and were tied to the same funds from the Emergency Relief appropriation of 1935. Further, the R.A. was committed by law to use relief labor under WPA regulations. Land utilization projects were approved only when WPA laborers were available.

The largest number of R.A. communities were agricultural. The Rural Resettlement Division initiated over 100 rural projects, 32 of which were communities--some resettled or individually scattered farms, others on contiguous tracts of land, etc. Lake Dick, Arkansas and Terrebonne Parish, La. were two large cooperative farming efforts.

Oct. 1935--Construction began on the greenbelt towns.

Dec. 1935--Eighteen industrial homesteads, inherited from Subsistence Homesteads Division were complete.

March 11, 1936--Senator Warren Barbour of New Jersey introduced a resolution which called for an investigation of the R.A.'s expenditures and its projects past and future, selection of tenants and purchasers, etc. Tabled, but then asked for R.A. to provide the Senate with a full account of its work.

May 12, 1936--Tugwell submitted report.

June 20, 1936--Bankhead corrective bill became law, permitting the R.A. to make payments to local governments in lieu of taxes, also establishing the state's political, civil, and criminal jurisdiction over R.A. projects. This bill followed the Bound Brook suit because of no taxes.

Sept. 1936--R.A. announced curtailment of its community program to projects already planned. (Meant little, as there were lots of those.)

Dec. 31, 1936--Tugwell resigned from R.A. and Department of Agriculture, and the R.A. by executive order became part of the Department of Agriculture. Tugwell wanted this to insure its future.

End of 1936--Tugwell resigned from R.A., succeeded by Dr. Will W. Alexander, chosen by Tugwell earlier as Deputy Administrator. Alexander headed both the R.A. and Farm Security Administration until 1940. Calvin Benham Baldwin, one of Tugwell's assistant administrators, headed the F.S.A. from 1940 to 1943, continuing Tugwell's policies.

Sept. 1, 1937--Henry Wallace established the Farm Security Administration to carry out the tenant-purchase program, and the F.S.A. absorbed the R.A. with the personnel unchanged.

Tugwell's short lived Planning Division, whose personnel was nonrural, (1) advised against part time farming as a means of raising living standards, (2) stressed the small economic importance of handicrafts and the greater possibilities of cooperative enterprises, and recommended some completely cooperative farms as social experiments. Most of all, the Planning Division questioned the whole policy of loans as a means to rehabilitation, instead asking for grants and frank subsidy to an already overburdened group. Loans were a "dubious insistence on pioneer virtues."

The R.A. never had wide public support for its programs. Tugwell believed in wide delegated executive powers to give leeway to planners and experts. He disdained Congress. Congress finally had its day.

Oct. 1935--Construction began on greenbelt towns
Sept. 1937--First units occupied at Greenbelt
May 1938--First units occupied at Greenhills
June 1938--First units occupied at Greendale

U.S. Housing Act of 1937--provided for the clearance of slums and the construction of public housing for families of low income who were unable to get adequate private housing at an affordable rent.

June 30, 1938--USHA bulletin issued, Relocation of Site Occupants,
U.S.H.A. Bulletin No. 10, June 30, 1938, Revised
April 3, 1941.

CHAPTER I

THE REGIONAL PLANNING ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

There is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things.

--Machiavelli

The Regional Planning Association of America (RPAA), formed in 1923, offered an alternative to the then-emerging metropolitan form. This alternative had validity in the 20's, and some feel that with the racial, urban and environmental crises we have experienced in the intervening years, it still offers a viable solution in social reconstruction.

World War I caused a housing shortage, especially in armament and ship-building centers, forcing the government to build or supervise the building of several thousand dwellings for war workers' families. A housing crisis following the war and the collapse of the private building industry, produced a turning point in American housing policy. Unlike European countries, who had for many years developed supplemented housing programs, the United States government was ill-equipped to take on this responsibility.

Progressive era housing reformers had fought for restrictive legislation in order to raise standards of housing built for low-income groups, claiming that commercial builders produced poor quality products

for these people. However, after the war, the restrictive legislation, which could only raise costs further, failed to pertain any longer, as new housing simply couldn't be produced under it. The postwar housing crisis, directly following the federal housing experiment, focused attention upon the role of government in housing in this country and brought a host of proposals for direct government assistance.

Maintaining that the physical and social characters of cities were influenced by the regional distribution of population, resources, and institutions, the RPAA considered city planning inseparable from regional planning, and saw both in relation to definite community objectives.

Regional planning came to the United States before the end of the nineteenth century, and was practiced in the form of metropolitan commissions, in Boston. These were set up to supply water, sewage, and park facilities for the many small cities and towns in the metropolitan area, so this form of regional planning was truly metropolitan planning, the antithesis of the RPAA's concept.

Regional planning in the rest of the country followed in the 1920's, responding to the frantic pace of urban growth and its spillover into the suburbs, by providing such things as more road access, greater water supply, and other measures that assured continued growth. This sort of regional planning was sometimes carried out by a county and other times by a special district, often representing ad hoc cooperation between various local communities. Occasionally, as in New York, it was conducted by private groups. In any of its structural forms, however, it was still basically city planning applied to an extended area of the

suburban metropolis, supported by the power elite who wanted to protect urban property values. At any rate, whether intentionally or not, this form of regional planning both fostered continued growth and increased urban land values. As Joseph L. Arnold, an historian has commented,

No commission presented plans which aimed at diverting the growth of metropolitan cities because their sponsors never questioned the assumption that bigger was better. The regional commissions were supposed to facilitate growth.¹

The RPAA felt that metropolitan planning was not regional planning, and further, by aiding growth and congestion, metropolitan planning compounded the problems it supposedly solved. Mumford claimed that metropolitan planning lacked any conception of a norm, unless it was growth for its own sake.²

Because of its opposition to the detrimental effects of metropolitan areas on social structures, the RPAA has been falsely accused of anti-urbanism, and even of providing the intellectual rationale for suburban sprawl through its advocacy of decentralism.³ In actuality, the members of the group were concerned about what they believed to be the disintegration of urban values caused by this sprawl.

Far from possessing only spiritual and philosophical overtones, the RPAA never completely accepted the garden city as the only answer, and worked hard at forging new ideas which could answer some of the social problems, rather than relying on such pat solutions. The community planning efforts of the RPAA were an attempt to coordinate physical and social planning by finding and integrating into one program the variables affecting urban residential environment.

The regional city notion involved far more than the creation of garden cities or new towns--it implied the preservation of the integrity

of small towns and villages as well as the reconstruction and renewal of metropolitan areas. Therefore, the regional city, in the terms of the RPAA's idea, should not represent one single form or population density, but a flexible, regional balance of population, resources, and institutions.

The RPAA used Ebenezer Howard's garden city not as a model, but as a useful springboard to further their theories about a new urban structure--one in which unit development incorporated most necessary attributes of urban life as opposed to a more fragmented metropolitan structure. Optimum size would be ascertained by function and by social or community goals determined by each individual city.

The historic Lowell, Massachusetts experiment, sponsored by the Massachusetts Homestead Commission, which was Jeffersonian in approach, obviously played a large part in influencing the members of the RPAA. The Commission believed that both private, single-family detached houses as well as exposure to nature were sources of physical and moral well-being. Its members felt that each family should have a garden plot, and persuaded the legislature to set up city agriculture and horticulture schools for the education of the new residents. The Commission was convinced that with proper instruction, supervision, and "if need be, some compulsion," families living in state financed homes could appreciably increase their incomes through intensive garden cultivation.⁴

The Commission, as did each succeeding housing reform group, looked to Europe, New Zealand and Australia, for models on how governments should handle the problem of congested cities with poor living conditions, and sharply criticized the United States for being among

the minority of nations whose governments did not actively aid in increasing the supply of good, low-cost housing, either through tax exemption, government housing, or low-interest loans. The hope was, through the state funded experiment in Lowell, to prove that suitable dwellings could profitably be built within the means of low income workers, thereby encouraging private capital to participate.

The membership of the RPAA came from various professions. As a result, each member was able to contribute a unique viewpoint to the philosophy of the group. Some of the members follow.

Charles Whitaker

From 1913 until 1927, Charles Whitaker edited the Journal of The American Institute of Architects, and sought to lead architectural thought away from the city beautiful concept by encouraging a new breed of socially conscious writers with new planning ideas that emerged during World War I. It was through Whitaker and his magazine that the core members of the Regional Planning Association of America became acquainted and initially shared their ideas on planning.

The housing movement of the Progressive Era which had been important in social reform, was now in the position of a conservative, established professional organization. Whitaker rekindled the reform idealism dropped by the Progressive housing reformers and helped to start a new housing movement by encouraging a new generation of reformers which championed constructive housing legislation.

At the beginning, Whitaker and the members of the RPAA embraced the garden city idea, which was, briefly, Ebenezer Howard's 1898 scheme to build new towns rather than adding further population to the large

cities. Each garden city was to be surrounded by a wide greenbelt to inhibit population growth beyond a predetermined point and to reunite town and country. Like Edith Wood, Whitaker was particularly interested in the principles of the single tax movement that Howard included in his plan--with all the land in common ownership, the entire community would benefit from the land value appreciation that accompanies urbanization and which had theretofore profited speculators.

Whitaker sent Frederick Ackerman to England to study the large scale housing projects being built there and in publishing his reports, Whitaker began an organized campaign to influence the government by getting professional support for wartime housing. The objective grew through the series of articles, "What Is A House?," into the belief that the government should assume the responsibility for providing housing, military or not, when the private market fails to do so.

Edith Elmer Wood

Long before World War I, Edith Elmer Wood, a housing economist, had fought against restrictive housing legislation, feeling that the government was the only solution to the problem of sufficient credit provided at a suitably low rate of interest for building houses. She prepared bills in 1913 and 1916 for Congress to authorize low-interest loans to limited-dividend building associations, but neither was enacted.

In the 1920's, Mrs. Wood worked for a government aid-to-housing program which included the establishment of a National Housing Commission enabled to loan funds to local communities and limited-dividend companies for housing projects approved by her proposed state housing and town planning commissions. She proposed using postal savings deposits for

housing loans to individuals and proposed amendment of the Farm Loan Act and the Federal Reserve Act to permit national banks to supply housing loans. Mrs. Wood wanted state housing and town planning commissions as well as local housing and town planning boards which would encourage limited-dividend and cooperative housing as well as the formulation of a municipal housing program possibly containing public housing.

The United States failed to show in its national census what proportion of its population was living in crowded or over-crowded conditions which was a source of frustration to her, when other countries were maintaining this practice.

In 1917, she wrote the sixth installment of the "What Is A House?" series for the Journal of the American Institute of Architects, for editor Charles Whitaker, and through this, framed the housing debate from the RPAA's point of view.⁵

Along with Henry Wright and Clarence Stein, she campaigned for a "constructive housing program" in which the government or publicly supported cooperatives and limited dividend organizations would construct quality housing on a massive scale for low income people. This was unlike restrictive legislation where public authorities prevent the building of bad houses through enforcement of minimum standards, in that it required public initiative to build adequate housing units. Wood also argued that private enterprise would not adequately house the unskilled worker.⁶

Edith Wood favored Henry George's Differential or Graded Tax, for controlling land values where either the whole real estate tax is put on

land, buildings being exempt, or the tax rate on land is higher than that on buildings. In either case, the practice of holding land idle for a rise in value is discouraged by making its retention too costly, and building is encouraged because it produces revenue without adding to the tax burden.

Wood pointed out that a number of Canadian cities had adopted the graded tax system, and a few in the United States, Seattle and Pittsburgh among them. However, she realized that the practice in Germany where the cities controlled land values by owning a large part of the land and leasing it for building purposes, thus preventing speculation, was unlikely to be adopted in the United States, requiring both a complete change in attitude and radical constitutional amendments. The English garden city idea, with land acquired at agricultural prices and the community-created increased values saved for the community instead of going to the developing company or individual speculators, was considered by Mrs. Wood with more enthusiasm. She realized that it would be far more difficult in the United States than in England, where such a plan is not contrary to custom, to build a town whose homes should be on leasehold land.

Mrs. Wood was very impressed with the writings of Raymond Unwin, which dealt with the underlying principles of town planning and decentralization,⁷ and became convinced of the validity and desirability of this approach.

Clarence Stein

Clarence Stein, born in Rochester, New York in 1882, studied first at Columbia School of Architecture and then in Paris at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts.

His affiliation with the Hudson Guild, a West Side social settlement, in 1919 was influential in directing his attention to social architecture and the problems of New York's poor. As chairman of the Hudson Guild Farm Committee, Stein spent many weekends at the Netcong, New Jersey farm, whose dining hall he designed. He also was secretary of the City Planning Committee of the City Club, a civic betterment organization. From 1923 to 1926 the RPAA held many weekend meetings at the farm, and used the City Club in New York for luncheons.

Stein had early on learned about the economic problems of providing decent housing, which cost more than most workers could afford, through his job as secretary of the Housing Committee of the Reconstruction Commission. This committee differed sharply with the policy of the Progressive era, in that they felt that minimum standards legislation to control commercial builders had no relevance to the existing situation. Stein's committee instead sought means by which to increase the supply and reduce the cost of housing, including establishment of a central state housing agency and local housing boards in communities of 10,000 or more people, a constitutional amendment permitting state housing credit, and an enabling act authorizing cities to acquire land for the purpose of engaging in housing operations.

The committee favored large scale building of houses as opposed to scattered small individual units, and sought to unite housing with transportation and industry, turning to the English garden city as a model. From this point of view, housing improvement was linked to industrial decentralization and limitations upon the size of cities. Through his participation on the Housing Committee of the Reconstruction Commission, Clarence Stein became familiar with economic and philosophical attitudes towards housing similar to the ideas of Edith Elmer Wood and Catherine Bauer.

In 1921, Stein assumed the chairmanship of the Committee on Community Planning of the American Institute of Architects (CCP-AIA), to which several charter members of the RPAA also belonged. Although more limited in scope, focusing on community planning programs without the explicit regional emphasis, the CCP-AIA paralleled the RPAA throughout the 1920's, publishing its views in the Journal of the AIA, edited by Charles Harris Whitaker.

Stein was a supreme organizer, and as the RPAA's president, sat indisputably at its center. He was a good judge of character and a skilled administrator, capable of getting the best from the people around him. Unlike almost everyone else in the RPAA, Stein knew how to operate politically, and his colleagues recognized the importance of his leadership to the group's success. He was an excellent appraiser of both people and ideas, and never permitted himself to lose sight of the broader social goals through over-emphasis on any single detail. He had a keen sense of public issues, and as the chairman of the Commission for Housing and Regional Planning, he established acceptance of the

widespread need for new housing for the lower income groups who were ill-served by private enterprise. He also showed the need of large scale enterprise, both private and public, to do the job effectively, and pointed out that money at low interest rates would be far more effective in reducing costs than any conceivable economy in construction.

Until his influence began to be felt, the housing movement in New York had confined itself almost exclusively to restrictive legislation. The notion of having the state supply the capital and even take the initiative in condemning land for housing purposes and subsidizing the lowest income groups, would never have been considered a possibility.

In his position on the Commission for Housing and Regional Planning, Clarence Stein also pointed to the need to build on open land, in order to eliminate wasteful street patterns, provide open spaces, reduce density, and drain off sufficient population from the central areas to lower the grossly inflated land value based on standards which were dehumanizing to the poor.

Without Stein's initiative, New York State's leadership in publicly aided state housing in the late 1920's would not have come about. Without his leadership, and the ideas developed by the RPAA, the Roosevelt administration probably would not have developed the comprehensive national housing policy that it attempted, nor would it have built the Greenbelt towns in 1934. Finally, the germ of a new town policy would not have been produced in Washington.

Clarence Stein's work as architect and planner, while largely of a private nature until the Greenbelt project, had as its ultimate aim the use of the power and wealth of the government to coordinate all the

component parts that create communities and to make them serve public, rather than private ends. Stein looked on these experiments in housing as Ebenezer Howard had with the garden city, as a proving ground for methods that would later be used, if successful, on a far wider scale.

Henry Wright

Frederick L. Ackerman and Henry Wright had both worked as architects on the United States Shipping Board's War Housing, under Robert D. Kohn, who later became first head of Public Works Administration housing under President Roosevelt in 1933. Sometime after the war, Mr. Kohn, already associated professionally with Stein, brought Wright and Stein together. That meeting began their close association--a partnership which lasted for a decade. Clarence Stein and Henry Wright each possessed special abilities which complemented those of the other. Henry Wright was trained as a landscape architect, and while he had many ideas, he was never rigidly committed to even his best ones, if a seemingly better suggestion was made. In contrast to Stein, Wright's was a middle class household, which made him sympathetic to and able to interpret the needs of his new clients in low income housing. (Stein, a bachelor, was accustomed to apartment life in Paris or New York.) Wright even lived with his family at Sunnyside during its early days, experiencing first hand its advantages and drawbacks. He recognized the necessity of lowering the cost of housing while doing a better job of building it, and felt that the type of control exerted over the overall pattern could contribute to both ends. Wright was an avid chess player, and compared the game to planning, claiming that chess developed one's abilities to be ready with alternative solutions, able

to think many moves ahead, coordinate many variables, and never, ultimately, exhaust all of the possibilities.

As in any close partnership which works well, it is difficult to assign credit to one or the other, or even separate their ideas. By training, however, Wright was the planner, with a very good eye for site planning and grouping, while Stein was predominantly the architect. When they dissolved their partnership, however, Stein turned his skills increasingly to planning. Stein and Wright's collaboration was so crucial to the organization that their eventual split, followed a few years later by Wright's death, contributed to the RPAA's gradual decline in the early thirties.

Frederick Ackerman

One of the first architects Whitaker drew into his circle was Frederick Ackerman, who was deeply under the influence of Thorstein Veblen, and felt the need for fundamental social change. Ackerman was a true skeptic, and played the devil's advocate for Stein and Wright. Mumford described him as something of a wet blanket, but never outside the group.⁸ Ackerman, using an austere Veblenian analysis for American social and economic institutions was doubtful of the prospects for community planning without a fundamental reconstruction of those institutions and their values. He thought neither the architectural technician nor any other specialist could use his skill for maximum social benefit as long as individuals were able to capitalize technological gain in terms of price. In his opinion, urban growth was a response to pecuniary imperatives, and efficient and socially productive land use had been subordinated to speculative gain. Therefore, the central issue for the

social architect and planner was to transfer urban development from the "sphere of the interplay of self-regarding actions into the province of social design and control."⁹

Ackerman's anti-speculative bias was extreme, and was very influential in the RPAA's program which sought to create a new institutional framework through which the social architect and planner formulated urban physical and social goals--an administered society, rather than one controlled by profit-seekers. The RPAA refused to equate community progress with physical growth and rising property values.

Lewis Mumford

In 1919, Lewis Mumford met Whitaker in Washington, D.C., and the latter introduced him to both Stein and Benton MacKaye. He was still in his twenties when Whitaker drew him into his growing circle of reform urbanists, but had already established correspondence with the Scottish biologist and town planner, Patrick Geddes. In an article for the Nation in 1919, Mumford suggested,

The housing problem, the industries problem, the transportation problem, and the land problem cannot be solved one at a time by isolated experts, thinking and acting in a civic vacuum. They are mutually interacting elements, and they can be effectively dealt with only by bearing constantly in mind the general situation from which they have been abstracted.

In addition to a youthful zeal, Mumford was interested in history, able at architectural and social criticism, and possessed a compelling literary style which the RPAA used to communicate its ideas.

Mumford served for years as the secretary of the RPAA. Although lacking the specialized education of the other members, he was nevertheless

a strong regionalist and the one who could synthesize the individual members' ideas into an organized philosophy. He was the RPAA's most eloquent spokesman, and through his prolific writing gained recognition and support for its innovative programs.

Benton MacKaye

An experienced forester, disciple of Thoreau, and an ardent naturalist, Benton MacKaye helped forge the regional ideal into practical, working programs. Born in Stamford, Conn. in 1879, MacKaye attended Harvard, and following his graduation in 1901, he became a forester and received his M.A. in 1905. He taught at Harvard for several years, and worked in the United States Forest Service both in Washington and in the field, during one of the high points of the conservation movement.

MacKaye helped to draft a bill introduced in the Congress to conserve, through public ownership and control, the essential resources of Alaska and he spent a year (1918-1919) as a specialist in colonization, in the U.S. Department of Labor on a plan to settle groups of returning soldiers on the land. (This plan was abandoned)

MacKaye envisioned a national program of community building offering preservation and efficient utilization of the national domain, full employment, and the complete reorganization of the farming, lumbering, and mining industries. The idea was unique for its unification of communitarianism with conservationist ecology and technicism.

Agriculture under this system is handled through the community unit as against the isolated farm unit. Not only is each farm prepared for use through initial cultivation of the soil and the erection of farm buildings, but the community itself is organized for cooperative action in marketing produce, purchasing supplies, obtaining credit, and in providing for social as well as economic needs. Hence a portion of land is usually reserved at the center of each community for the location of cooperative warehouses, stores, and banks, as well as for schools and churches. At or near this center a demonstration farm may be established on which pure-bred cattle and other stock are raised and sold at cost to settlers; and this farm may also be used as a training school for incoming settlers.¹⁰

In order to establish lumbering on a sound economic basis and do away with migratory labor, MacKaye emphasized long range planning and timber culture like the state owned forests in Europe. Each timber area would have to supply a continuous, predetermined annual yield, thereby permitting the establishment of permanent communities for the men and their families, as opposed to migrant camps. MacKaye felt that in the case of mining coal, communities could be established in connection with an agricultural unit, which would replace the typical mining camp.

To carry out the plans for the permanent reservation of government agricultural, forest, and mineral land and water rights, a national board was needed to cooperate with states, survey and classify lands for most efficient use, acquire private land through condemnation, build and supervise colonies, and organize the cooperative facilities within them. Nothing like MacKaye's plan for systematic community building, conservation, and resource development ever came about, but it foreshadowed a goodly amount of the New Deal's program. In effect, MacKaye was forging a link between the conservation movement and the community planners.

MacKaye quit the government and went into retreat to concentrate on how to best contribute to the improvement of the habitability of the country. In October of 1921, he contributed an article to the Journal of the American Institute of Architects, in which he outlined the project for an Appalachian footpath from Maine to Georgia. It was entitled "An Appalachian Trail: A Project in Regional Planning." This unusual sort of contribution to a professional architectural journal was possible due to the encouragement and editorial policy of Charles Whitaker. MacKaye conceived this new trail as the backbone of a whole system of wild reservations and parks linked together by feeder trails into a huge system to maintain the primeval and rural environment. In the development of this Appalachian preserve, MacKaye saw a means of designing a better urban pattern for the flow of population that was already making the whole coastal area from Boston to Washington into a "conurbation," as Patrick Geddes called it, more recently to be termed, by Jean Gottmann, "megapolis."

Through the AIA article and his friendship with Whitaker, MacKaye became a part of the circle which soon was the RPAA. Later in his career, MacKaye became a regional planner for the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) (1934-1936), and the Rural Electrification Administration (1942-1945).

One of MacKaye's most important contributions to the RPAA was to provide ideas which modified the majority of the members' city-minded approach, causing a better balance to be struck in their regional concepts. His regional planning studies for the New York State Housing and Regional Planning Commission contrasted the planning of small-scale communities on the older, self-sufficient pattern, and the planning of modern communities, where autonomy and balance must be achieved within a network of much

wider cooperation. His ideas culminated in an outline of the "Regional Planning" number of the Survey Graphic magazine, (May 1925).

Stuart Chase

Stuart Chase, who spent years studying social waste, promoted conservation of energy and resources and his specialty, economic planning. At the time other members of the RPAA were in Washington, Chase was involved in the government's temporary economic planning apparatus. He began to meet with the RPAA to share in all of their new ideas. Chase predicted that little would come of his idea of economic planning, during the depression, but it would surface again during subsequent economic crises. He believed that regional planners would have to use economic planning in order to establish a new settlement pattern. Besides the obvious function of guiding investment to specific locales, economic planning could help set national or regional policies to insure that citizens received a greater share of the wealth they helped to create. As a member of the technical staff of the first American trade union delegation to the Soviet Union, he studied the Gosplan, their first five-year plan. His positive assessment of that plan appeared in Soviet Russia in the Second Decade, a book he edited with Rexford Guy Tugwell and Robert Dunn in 1928.

Catherine Bauer Wurster

Catherine Bauer (who married William Wurster in 1940) was for several years the executive secretary of the RPAA, though she did not join it until 1931 and never fully accepted the concept of regionalism.

Bauer's Modern Housing, was a widely read work in the field both in the U.S. and abroad. She was vice president of the National Housing Conference and a member of the advisory committee of the Division of Slum Clearance and Urban Redevelopment. She taught at Harvard and the University of California.

A study of shopping centers, undertaken by Catherine Bauer and Clarence Stein, with Radburn, New Jersey in mind, was finished too late to be of use there, but served later as the basis of Greenbelt's successful commercial center.¹¹

On another Stein project, Valley Stream, Catherine Bauer carried out a detailed study of social, economic, and governmental conditions in communities near the selected site. This project, which was never built, was thought by Stein to be an important step toward the development of the Greenbelt towns, and ultimately toward new towns in America.¹²

When Mrs. Bauer joined the ranks of the New Deal in the United States Housing Authority, some members of the RPAA were very disappointed, feeling that she had sacrificed her belief in the naturally interdisciplinary quality of their program by focusing on only one aspect of it.

John Irwin Bright

A Philadelphia architect, John Irwin Bright (1869-1940) was the first chairman of the CCP-AIA, and duplicating the cycle of others who would later form the RPAA, he entered the group through the pages of the JAIA. He had previously chaired the Special Committee on Housing and Transportation for the Philadelphia chapter of the AIA, which Whitaker felt had broken new ground in their reports acknowledging the

interdependence of environmental elements. When Bright's successor, Stein, began publishing reports in 1924, the CCP's unofficial secretary, Lewis Mumford, was asked to draft them.

Alexander Bing

Alexander M. Bing, a shrewd and experienced real estate developer, accustomed to handling large enterprises, was sympathetic to Stein's ideas. At the height of his business success, Bing, having genuine public concern, put his abilities at the service of housing improvement. The ultimate purpose of Bing's support was to build a garden city as a demonstration of all he and Stein believed. Without his practical cooperation, Stein would probably never have gone so far in community design.

Bing headed a limited dividend company, the City Housing Corporation (CHC), which built both Sunnyside Gardens and Radburn. Although somewhat different in background and temperament from the rest of the RPAA members, Bing, with his business experience and enthusiastic support, was important to the group. Before World War I, he and his brother had amassed a fortune by building luxury apartment houses in New York City, and by buying up properties abutting the railroad rights-of-way, anticipating their increase in value when the trains switched from steam to electricity. During the war, Bing worked for the Housing Department of the U.S. Shipping Board, where he became interested in low-income housing, and Stein persuaded him to devote his energies to housing in a philanthropic and practical manner.

Inside the RPAA

The RPAA made up in intensity what it lacked in numbers--at no time were there as many as twenty members. A core of members met at least two or three times a week for lunch or dinner, and occasionally somewhat more formal meetings were held over a weekend at the Hudson Guild Farm in Netcong, New Jersey, for strenuous, lengthy discussions. (The members brought their wives, and under the guidance of Benton MacKaye, they were one of the first groups to revive the traditional Appalachian folk songs and square dances.) During the first few meetings officers were elected, bylaws and a constitution were prepared, dues assessed, and committees were appointed. Most of these arrangements were short lived, however, as the group realized that they would remain small and focus on self-education rather than propagandizing. Friendship and a sense of community, springing from their generally shared vision of how things could and should be, held the group together rather than a program or bylaws. In fact, the membership avoided codifying their beliefs, or even defining them too narrowly as they felt there must be room for individual variances within the group. Therefore, Catherine Bauer, who did not embrace regionalism, could participate quite easily, sharing other beliefs, and exchanging ideas, without being subjected to a group dogma. The diversity was attested to by Mumford who pointed out that the members couldn't even agree on the size of a region. Stein originally thought in terms of the "state" or the "region," with the latter being very vaguely defined in his own mind, and MacKaye, to Mumford's horror, thought in continental terms, often speaking fondly of the Appalachian Empire.¹³

Raymond Unwin, the British planner, was a tremendous influence on the RPAA's thinking on economics and site planning of residential neighborhoods. Stein and Wright went to see the garden cities and suburbs which Unwin had helped design in England in 1924, and while there, visited both Unwin and Ebenezer Howard. Unwin's Nothing Gained by Overcrowding, a pamphlet published in 1912, demonstrated to Stein and Wright's satisfaction, that lower building densities returned as much to the investor as higher densities. The economic waste represented by streets was the key to Unwin's theory, as they were the most expensive as well as the least satisfactory form of open space. Unwin developed his ideas of low density, large scale building in the British war housing communities and in the garden city of Letchworth, and Stein and Wright later used the technique.

The RPAA exemplified solidarity drawn from commonly shared but diverse ideas. According to Stuart Chase, "we were mildly socialist though not at all communist; liberal but willing to abandon large areas of the free market in favor of a planned economy. So we were not doctrinaire socialists. We were open-minded; kind of Fabian Socialists".¹⁴ Most of the members put their theories into books, articles, and practical demonstrations such as Sunnyside Gardens and Radburn, two experimental residential developments designed by Stein and Wright. However, while these projects were synonymous with the RPAA in most peoples' minds, they were only a part of the total theoretical picture with which the association concerned itself.

Sunnyside Gardens and Radburn

Sunnyside Gardens and Radburn represented the effort of the RPAA to build an American garden city as a step towards their central idea to reorient the entire social basis of urban development through regional reconstruction and planning. Sunnyside, which was a preliminary exercise in neighborhood planning and housing, was also significant in that it provided a model for limited dividend housing projects, inexpensive housing which exemplified improved housing standards.

Mixing different sorts of dwelling units together around a large open green or an intimate court was an innovative social experiment, while the variety of buildings added aesthetic appeal as well, when compared to the monotony of subdivisions. The courts were designated for communal use with deed restrictions.

After the completion of Sunnyside Gardens in 1928, the City Housing Corporation began its garden city, Radburn, New Jersey. Even before the depression caused the bankruptcy of the CHC, the garden city goal was abandoned, and Radburn was relegated to the status of a suburb, although a unique one.

At Radburn, freed from New York's inflexible platting, Stein and Wright designed a neighborhood unit comprised of superblocks--large, irregularly shaped blocks penetrated by short dead end lanes. These cul de sacs protected houses from through traffic and ended in a large interior park with walkways meandering through the rest of the neighborhood, by the school, the swimming pool, and stores. Using Olmstead's and Vaux's

example in Central Park, Radburn's vehicular and pedestrian traffic were almost completely separated, with bridges or underpasses separating foot-paths from the roads they crossed. With the large blocks, the total savings in road construction and utility connections roughly equalled the cost of Radburn's interior parks. Thus, Radburn's residents paid the same price for their homes and parks, walkways, and lanes as other people paid for comparable subdivisions without Radburn's amenities.

In the realm of social planning, Radburn provided the first full demonstration of Clarence Perry's neighborhood unit. Perry consulted on Radburn at an RPAA conference in the fall of 1927. Building by neighborhood units reflected the RPAA's concern with fostering the sort of viable social life which existed in some urban neighborhoods and small towns, which they felt was threatened by increased urban congestion and suburban sprawl. Radburn's neighborhoods each revolved around its own elementary school and shopping center, and comprised several interconnected super-blocks.

The RPAA was significant both for its efforts to formulate the principles of good residential design and for its concern with reducing building costs at every possible point. Wright and Stein analyzed in exhaustive detail the cost factors at Sunnyside. Wright demonstrated that every new technological development in the internal structure added costs which resulted in a further cramping of the space, and since technological progress was inevitable, the RPAA felt it was even more necessary to reduce costs by planning houses, streets, and utilities in a single, unified operation.

But in spite of the extensive cost analyses and economies of standardization, mass purchasing, and unified operations, Sunnyside houses turned out to be more expensive than those of the speculative developer. The possible economies in site planning were thwarted by the refusal of the borough engineer to allow a modification of the gridiron system. And the six percent dividend rate of the City Housing Corporation was, though lower than the commercial market, not low enough to be of use to manual and clerical workers. More important, Stein and Wright had not considered the overhead of large scale operations in their calculations--an overhead which sometimes cancelled out the economies.

Community planning was favored by the members in order to have a good physical basis for a closer civic feeling among residents, but they had no concrete ideas for implementing this. Related to community organization was the role played by the development corporation, and once again, the membership could not agree. However, there was a feeling that some sacrifice of efficiency should be made in the interest of democratic participation, and that the residents needed training in community administration, as they would become apathetic and resentful of the company if they had no form of self-government.

The kernel of the RPAA's program was the cooperation of the social architect and planner in the design of large scale group and community housing, financed to some degree by low interest government loans, and directed toward the creation of the regional city. Sunnyside and Radburn were conceived as first steps toward the fulfillment of this program, but despite the hopes of the RPAA, they did not restrain metropolitan expansion or transform the regional city from an idea to a controlling factor

in American urban development. The two towns did represent the RPAA's idea of large scale social architecture which accommodated the full range of needs of a twentieth century urban population, and were later drawn upon by English new town planners as well as the New Deal programs.

One of the toughest problems for the RPAA was the stimulation of industrial development and what tack to pursue in choosing types of businesses for a balanced population. Stein indicated the difference between skilled and heavy industry wages, pointing out that if large numbers of low paid workers settled in the garden city, industry would have to subsidize their housing or raise their wages. It was also noted that trade unions would probably resist decentralization because of the obstacles it created for labor organization.

There was also conflict over the most desirable policy for educational facilities in the proposed town. One point of view stayed with the existing system of public education, while another favored at least one modern, progressive school to attract desirable population groups to the community. The latter opinion, offered by Mumford, aroused a general dissent, as most members felt that this policy would lead to class divisions within the new residents.

All of these problems remained live issues throughout the RPAA's programs, were not resolved in the Radburn project, and were found again in the 1930's in the community programs of the Division of Subsistence Homesteads and the Resettlement Administration under Rexford G. Tugwell.

Throughout the 1920's the RPAA pressed for establishment of financial mechanisms to channel government capital into the housing market to aid income groups which could not obtain satisfactory service from lending

and building institutions. Clarence Stein did much toward this end through his chairmanship of the New York State Commission of Housing and Regional Planning. Stein was aided by Mumford who surveyed various forms of government aid to housing in practice in Europe, by Wright, who prepared a regional report on New York State in 1926, and by MacKaye, who conducted studies of the economic flow from raw material to finished product. As Stein said,

The standard that the public has required for its own protection has gradually risen. The ability of the individual to pay for that standard has diminished. Thus there has steadily grown up this divergence--this ominous parting of the ways--between the standard of house set by the community--the adequate house--and the inadequate incomes of those that cannot dwell in that house.¹⁵

The Committee for Housing and Regional Planning (CHRP) proposed the creation of a State Housing Board with supervisory powers, and a State Housing Bank which would finance the limited dividend companies. However, the New York State Housing Law of 1926 eliminated the housing bank, which would have supplied low interest capital, thus eliminating any possibility that housing would be supplied in any significant amount for low and middle income groups by non-speculative means.¹⁶ As it turned out, New York became the only city to take advantage of the State Housing Law. This resulted in the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America's Amalgamated Housing Corporation, a group of six apartment houses in the Bronx accomodating 303 families and surrounding an interior garden court, and three additional projects which followed. The cooperative organization at the Amalgamated houses sponsored a kindergarten, a library, a gymnasium, and tea rooms, as well as two cooperative stores to serve the tenants.

This concern for the domestic, cultural, and recreational needs of tenants was similar to a limited version of the social goals of the community planning program of the RPAA. In nurturing the growth of the regional city, the association hoped to spread what MacKaye described as the "community of definite social structure, developing within certain geographic confines around a common civic purpose."¹⁷

Some members were greatly impressed with Oswald Spengler's historical criticism, The Decline of the West, (Mumford used it for the backbone of his article "Culture Cycle and City Planning"). Spengler's end of the culture cycle, the domination of the megalopolis and the sacrifice of the inner life to technical proficiency, appealed to Mumford and MacKaye.¹⁸ Mumford indulged in romantic splurges of enthusiasm for such ideas as French regionalism, with its dedication to the revival of medieval provincial culture, and MacKaye was enthusiastic about anything ruddy, hearty, individual, and particularly New England oriented, such as rustic small villages full of idiosyncratic individualists. Spengler's over-simplified denouncement of large cities, his claim that they are culturally sterile, and that their residents are traditionless, influenced Mumford to produce florid treatises which were vulnerable to critics of the RPAA by seeming completely unrealistic and hysterical. This was unfortunate, in that the basic theme of cities and civilization cycles was not necessarily wrong, but Mumford's and MacKaye's approach to stating the problem lessened the possibility of their proposed solutions being taken seriously by the general public.

Through labeling the members of the RPAA as antiurban and romantic agrarians, their critics effectively pushed the group's views out of the

realm of possibility. John Friedmann and William Alonso are typical of the status quo attitude when they say,

...Neither have we included the writings of regionalism, a form of cultural philosophy which flourished in the 1930's but is now widely regarded as an oddity, at least in the United States with its exceptionally fluid social patterns.¹⁹

The RPAA saw this fluidity as a symptom of cultural disintegration, with the megalopolis taking the place of the country, draining it of its variety of cultures and individual attractions--its regions. Metropolitan planners saw to it that streets were widened, buildings made higher, subways extended, suburban areas subdivided, thereby expanding the metropolis and its monetary values, assuring the continued dominance of the established financial and political nucleus. The RPAA was not attempting to push people back into a homesteading, pioneer sort of existence, but rather sought contemporary architectural solutions to city problems, relying heavily on modern technological theories to improve the quality of life. In addition to better home life, the RPAA felt that the garden city with its smaller regional educational institutions could offer a better system of education than the megalopolitan system of mass instruction in crowded institutions. A more active participation in civic affairs was always an aim and a necessary factor in the success of the garden city, or regional city, and finally, a more organic relation between industry, living, and the immediate environment.

The RPAA envisioned a new culture which would begin with a migration from the metropolis into stable and balanced communities. As part of their use of modern technology mentioned earlier, the automobile, which presented a huge problem in the congested urban centers, was looked on

as potentially supplying access to communities which had been abandoned when their former inhabitants migrated to the industrial towns located on railroad lines and rivers. Another technological advance was inexpensive long distance power service, which meant that industries could locate where they pleased, rather than close to traditional power sources. With technological advances supporting a new migration away from the urban centers, the justification for metropolitan growth on a technical and industrial basis was no longer valid. There was now a choice due to this new mobility--continued urban sprawl or planning new regions of controlled development.

Elements of the RPAA's Program

Garden Cities

Although the members of the RPAA embraced ecological planning and the garden city, they did not completely agree with Ebenezer Howard's belief in the concept as a cure-all. They wanted more variety in city size and layout, but they did utilize many of Howard's ideas, including greenbelts to prevent the usual city growth patterns, and common ownership to eliminate speculative pressures and reduce the cost of housing and community facilities. Howard's garden city also presented the concept of industrial and residential balance, self government, and a sense of the town in touch with its surrounding country environment. Howard conceived of garden cities regionally, and proposed a cluster of ten grouped contiguously to be called "social cities," which is related to the RPAA's "regional cities," connected by rapid transit. As Howard put it,

Each inhabitant of the whole group, though in one sense living in a town of small size, would be in reality living, and would enjoy all the advantages of, a great and most beautiful city; and yet all the fresh delights of the country--field, hedgerow, and woodland--not prim parks and gardens merely--would be within a very few minutes' walk or ride.²⁰

The garden city idea, based on municipal ownership of land and long-term rentals instead of private ownership, was designed to control residential property values by limiting growth and by returning the aforementioned appreciation in value back to the community. The hope was that the population would be attracted to the new cities by low rents, less congestion, and a pleasant environment. Constructive housing legislation to use public funds for low income housing was strongly opposed by realty speculators and investors, and labeled socialism. Congress feared public housing so much that when it finally passed the measure for war housing, the legislation stated that the housing units would be sold after the war, and a month after the armistice Congress halted work on all projects that were less than 75 percent complete. Thus, most of the proposed units were never built.

Townless Highways

In order to prevent the auto's disastrous effects found in the urban centers, Benton MacKaye used Radburn, where the community and auto were segregated, as a model for road planning. Using the railroad as an analogy, MacKaye suggested that the "townless highway" have limited access at strategic points, rather than the usual unlimited, haphazard system of intersections. He pointed out that the railroad, throughout large portions of the country, located most of the major industrial towns, and that the highway was blindly creating still another system, threatening

the primary types of environment by its aimless sprawl with the accompanying wayside development known as the "motor slum." MacKaye argued that the motor slum in the open country was as bad as the worst urban industrial slum, and that highways going through the hearts of cities and towns, making every crossing a grade crossing, were unsafe as well as unsightly.

The townless highway, as proposed, was to be a motorway in which the adjoining towns would be in the same relationship to the road as the residential cul-de-sacs in Radburn were to the main traffic avenues. Regional planning with this point of view would save both the local community and the open wayside environment, and give proper access to the wild places, having left some to visit through locating towns at definite, logically spaced points off the main road. The highways would have all the services motorists might need, like gas stations and restaurants, but nothing more, thereby eliminating the need for any cars to enter a city unless it was their destination. Public ownership of all abutting property would abolish approaches to the main highway except at certain points, and billboards and other forms of roadside advertisement would not be allowed. Of course, MacKaye was forecasting the modern high speed freeway, but the modern manifestations differ from his townless highway, especially in their penetration of urban areas for through traffic. MacKaye intended for the townless highway to stimulate the growth of the distinct community, compactly planned and limited in size, like the old New England village or the modern Radburn. This involved avoidance by the highway of the small town or village and its approach via a side lane or two.

The highway was to be used only for passenger traffic, with other express highways to be built for motor freight traffic. In short, Mackaye sought to utilize a definite national highway policy to guide people into appropriate communities for furthering the cultural growth, and not merely the industrial expansion, of American civilization.²¹

To increase the city sprawl into suburbia through uncontrolled population flow would cause the demise of the character and individuality of the city. The loss of inner cohesion would leave it increasingly without means to attract to itself the varied resources upon which the culture of cities has always depended.²²

Economic Planning

Economic planning was another facet of the RPAA's plan for regional reconstruction, under the guidance of Stuart Chase. His book, The Tragedy of Waste, pointed out that World War I had its by products of technical achievement, including the elimination of industrial waste through the coordinated control of the economic structure. With one-fourth of the work force involved in the war effort, Chase noted that "the standard of living held its own and probably increased somewhat."²³ Also, without luxury items being produced, the lower class position improved relative to the higher income groups. This was all made possible by the fact that the War Industries Board, the Food, Fuel, and Railroad Administrations, the U.S. Housing Corporation, and other federal agencies allocated materials and distributed goods in an effort to eliminate waste.

Chase maintained that the war control turned the sluggish profit oriented economic system into an efficient system of delivering goods and

services. In fact, it was through this World War I phenomenon that Stuart Chase became aware of the benefits of economic planning. Even though the system of industrial control ended with the war and Chase was fired by President Harding for being critical of big business, the RPAA, as conservationists, still held the conviction that resources were being wasted and sought a method of reinstating an idea similar to the wartime controls.

Chase had studied the Soviet Union's Gosplan as part of the first American trade union delegation to visit Russia, and was very impressed with their economic methods. He believed that planning regions as economic units would lower resource consumption, and that prices would decrease, improving the standard of living for everyone. Economic planning could also be used for building active and balanced regions, with factories being directed to locations where they were needed rather than the laissez-faire system of industrial location. The United States Shipping Board had demonstrated that housing also could be placed in the same manner, that is, according to need.

Rural Electrification

Rural electrification, another element in the regional reconstruction plan, was believed necessary in order to decrease the industrial dominance of the urban centers with their corner on electricity. A balance between country and city to overcome the rural population's increasing isolation, was envisioned by the RPAA through long distance power transmission. With these lines, not only could rural electrification be hooked in, allowing small towns to support industry, but farm life could be simplified by the added technological convenience.

Community Planning

The RPAA's "community planning" consisted of a unified approach to three variables which strongly influenced the form and growth of cities: residential site planning practices, housing costs, and the regional distribution of population, resources, and institutions. In the practice of residential planning, the group stressed the economic and social advantages of large scale development, but this type of development required great concentrations of capital in contrast to individual speculative builders working on smaller projects. Therefore, the RPAA sought to acquire through the government an ample supply of low cost capital for home building. Also, they theorized that if limited dividends or cooperative housing companies could be supplied with sufficient capital, the low and even middle income housing market might be withdrawn from the speculative sphere completely. Finally, the RPAA urged a regional reconstruction which encompassed the establishment of new towns, the renewal of existing cities (made economically feasible through decentralization), and preservation of the countryside.

The regional city proposed by the RPAA was not to be some ideal form, but rather a new approach to city building in the regional context. The term inferred a regional grouping of community types of all kinds, large and small, based upon a planned regional balance of population, resources, and institutions. In the regional city pattern, size would be a function of explicit social objectives.

Through the enlargement of the development unit, the RPAA maintained that the planner or architect could exploit existing advantages of site and topography, benefit from the economies of scale, including

street and utility expenditures, efficiently group open space, and provide in advance for the necessary social and recreational facilities. The members believed that these amenities, incorporated into the residential design, were important to the changing ratio between work and leisure time in the 20th Century. They hoped that urban growth along cellular lines would stimulate civic association, and that spatially defined, visually attractive residential environments might counteract some of the centrifugal pressures of urban life, thus reducing the huge complex of the city to the more satisfying and manageable scale of the neighborhood. These efforts to coordinate physical and social aspects of planning were central to the RPAA's program.

The RPAA and The New Deal

The New Deal's enticement of political legitimacy drew members of the RPAA into the governmental ranks, but they eventually realized that in the process of instituting its new wave of reform, the New Deal had only taken fragments of the RPAA's carefully detailed plan for regionalism. The TVA, which the members hailed as the embodiment of their greatest hopes, drawing Benton MacKaye and Tracy Augur to work for it, with Stuart Chase the self-appointed publicist for the program, fell short of its ultimate goal. Weaknesses in the TVA's design limited its authority as a regional planning agency, as the powers delegated to it were for the most part specific in nature, related to flood control, fertilizer, and power.

The Rural Electrification Administration, as another example, seemed to be undertaking the RPAA's plan to bring public power to the

countryside. But without the additional efforts to industrially stabilize the rural population as planned by the RPAA, rural electrification would inevitably increase agricultural productivity and encourage further migration to the already overcrowded cities.

Although Catherine Bauer and Edith Elmer Wood both worked for the New Deal administration, their housing ideals were not implemented as outlined in their RPAA proposals. The Roosevelt administration instituted a constructive housing program, but it was not couched in a regional framework, proposed as essential to the policy by the RPAA. The New Deal's public housing was primarily for reemployment of construction workers and to stimulate allied industries, and only secondarily as a supply of new housing for people who could not otherwise afford it.

The members of the RPAA who worked for the New Deal government were competent technicians focused on piecemeal reforms, which tended to restore stability to the metropolitan order they had set out to change. They later regretted losing sight of their regional reconstruction goals, and in 1948 Clarence Stein tried to revive the group as the Regional Development Council of America, but the spirit could not be recaptured and within a few years it dissolved.²⁴

Because regionalism as defined by the RPAA was a policy framework, housing, power development, highway building, are segments which reinforce that policy. In contrast, the New Deal administered such programs as separate entities, trying to use them to shore up the economy. The RPAA membership felt that their sort of regionalism demanded a commitment which coordinated all of the factors necessary to social change. The remaining organization members disapproved of the fact that other members, instead

of maintaining their integrated program, promoted specific reforms independent of the regional vision. Lewis Mumford felt this was because President Roosevelt was a true opportunist who used the talents of people caught up in the heady rush of New Deal rhetoric and power, to his own ends, which were likely to change rather quickly.

Conclusion

The decentralization which the RPAA had in mind was not based upon the notion of the removal of single factories to suburbs or open country, nor the moving of a group of factories or an industry from one place to another to benefit from cheaper labor, nor the reduction in size of large cities only to achieve low density suburban diffusion. The RPAA's regionalism implied centralization as much as its opposite, in that it sought to utilize the region as a planning unit involved in a unified program to build up old centers, break up congested centers, and found new centers. The members wanted the regional city to establish a symbiotic, rather than a parasitic relationship with the surrounding countryside. They set no city size, and no particular type of city as a criteria, feeling that the amount of concentration need would differ according to the geographic influences and the type of work involved. The range included the village to serve the agricultural community and the regional capital, acting as the center for regional administration, business, and higher education, as well as other specialized functions to service the area. Mumford assumed that minimum and maximum population groupings were a result of a function of regional agricultural and industrial development

along with a rich and diverse community life, rather than an "ideal" or arbitrary size decision.

In Mumford's opinion, neither the metropolis nor the suburb served the long range economic or the social needs of the regional population. Suburban diffusion destroyed the landscape and produced partial communities, lacking form or a sound economic and cultural base. In the metropolis, excessive money went into expensive transportation systems and other utilities, thus increasing congestion by raising the value and forcing a more intensive use of the land. Congestion and high real estate prices in turn discouraged setting aside land for public and community purposes and made it increasingly difficult to house the population adequately. Therefore, the RPAA proposed community building within the regional framework, as a better option than metropolitan centralization or low density suburban fragments and satellites.²⁵

NOTES - CHAPTER I

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CHAPTER II

THE NEW DEAL

When the future is laid out in clear and objective--even if tentative--terms, the result is equally unacceptable to politician and businessman. Neither can survive exactitude. Yet it is in this clear understanding that the public interest has its best chance to prevail.

--P.J.D. Wiles*

The RPAA, while not seeing their total program implemented, did influence the times to come, particularly the New Deal era, with its resultant emphasis on national planning. Regionalism appealed to Franklin Roosevelt (Eleanor Roosevelt, a greenbelt supporter, had served on the CHC board), and to his advisor, Rexford G. Tugwell. Without the RPAA's ten year advocacy of a publicly developed program of garden cities within regions, the Greenbelt Town Program would probably never have been thought of.¹ The President had addressed the RPAA's Round Table on Regionalism in 1931, and two years later the RPAA wrote to him, urging him to locate and design new communities in connection with industrial decentralization. But as finally implemented, the program focused on re-locating displaced country dwellers, reflecting Roosevelt's limited comprehension of the idea, in spite of the efforts of members who were employed in the New Deal administration to influence the program. Thus, the Greenbelt program lacked the decentralizing ingredient critical to the RPAA's design for regional reconstruction.

Rexford Tugwell

Rexford G. Tugwell was born in 1891 in Sinclairville in western New York state. The family moved to Wilson, New York in 1904, where he worked each summer in his father's canning plant during his college years. Through this job, he made the acquaintance of the impoverished Sicilians who were seasonal workers in the factory, and came to question the fairness of a system in which workers were given the lowest possible wages, and the morality of profit-seeking and unrestrained competition.

Tugwell received a Ph.D. from the Wharton School of Finance in 1922. He became an instructor in economics at Columbia University in 1920, and remained at Columbia until 1937. That he was impatient with orthodox economics, was evident from his earliest writings, beginning with his Ph.D. thesis, "The Economic Basis of Public Interest," published in 1922. Tugwell wrote articles to the same effect in academic quarterlies and in the New Republic, to which he was a contributing editor, and wrote and edited several books which criticized the existing laissez-faire economy and that called for economic planning and for the governmental regulation of industry to serve social, rather than individual, ends.

Tugwell mingled freely with the Socialists and the League for Industrial Democracy and the Civil Liberties Union, and in the summer of 1927 took advantage of an opportunity to spend two months in the Soviet Union with a delegation of trade unionists including Stuart Chase. He returned impressed, and co-edited with Chase and contributed a chapter on Russian agriculture to the book Soviet Russia in the Second Decade (Day, 1928).

His approach to economic problems, anticipated some features of the New Deal, and when Roosevelt was campaigning for the 1932 Democratic presidential nomination, Raymond Moley, who had known Tugwell at Columbia, suggested him as a valuable counselor. Tugwell joined Moley and A. A. Berle as one of Roosevelt's close pre-election advisors, particularly on agricultural problems; later he urged Moley to recommend Henry Wallace as Secretary of Agriculture. In 1933, he was asked by Wallace to be Assistant Secretary, joining the New Deal in an official capacity.

One of Roosevelt's "brain trusters," Tugwell became a leading spokesman for New Deal programs, and he advanced many original ideas for economic, social, and agricultural reform. In a newspaper interview in January 1933 he advocated the spending of \$5 billion for relief and redistribution of purchasing power, the rapid spending of public works money, and higher income and inheritance taxes, and he urged that consumer protection be part of the National Recovery Act. He opposed internationalism as a foreign policy but urged international agreements to control production--he was defeated on all scores.

In 1934, he was a member of the Housing Board, the Surplus Relief Administration, the Commercial Policy Committee, and the Public Works Board. From 1935 through 1936 he was administrator of the Rural Resettlement Administration, which relocated farmers from unproductive to fertile land and provided advice on scientific methods of farming. His green belt "Tugwell-towns" have served as models for private and government low-income suburban housing projects.

In addition to being strongly influenced by economic "Institutionalists" such as Simon Patten and Thorstein Veblen, "Progressivism," with

its optimism, environmentalism, moral fervor, and emphasis on leadership by a benevolent intellectual elite within the framework of a democratic society, was another important source of Tugwell's thinking in political economy.

Tugwell's ideas concerning society's accommodation of technology included four general assumptions: (1) concentration and control, (2) a managed economy, (3) price controls, and (4) consumer interests.

In the phrase, "concentration and control," which Charles R. Van Hise of the University of Wisconsin used before World War I, "Concentration" denoted unhampered development of huge productive units for technological efficiency. "Control" meant guarantees that the new industrial structure would benefit society as a whole. In a modern industrial system there would always be coordinators who would hold the keys to power. The choice, Tugwell said, was between a "supertrust outside our political forms (which may swamp the state in the backwash of its progress) and an assimilation to the state of the going system".² Either the government would supervise the planners, or the planners would supervise the government. He speculated that an all-embracing system could bring pressure to bear on coordinators who tried to take advantage of other businessmen and people at large.

Tugwell felt that American political and economic tradition, which was rooted in rural values, individualism and independence, in free enterprise, and the political philosophy of Jefferson, needed to be replaced by collectivistic ideas, by urban values, fitted to proletarian aspirations rather than those of large or small property holders.³ In addition,

he wanted some of the puritanism and provincialism of Americans replaced by a degree of European sophistication.

While Tugwell disapproved strongly of businessmen who abused the public interest, he did not blame them personally, because it was unrealistic to expect "conformity to a design which does not exist, nor to a sequential program which is not laid out."⁴ He believed that the elimination of unethical business practices lay not in the transformation of human nature but in institutional reforms.

In The Industrial Discipline and the Governmental Arts (1933), Tugwell outlined his ideas on the management of the economy. Intra-industry associations would create planning boards for each industry. The effectiveness of these boards would rest on the voluntary cooperation of the businesses within an industry. Employers, employees, and consumers would work out plans for production, prices, division of markets, and working conditions. When matters became interindustrial in scope, they would pass over to the jurisdiction of a central planning board. This central board would represent the various industries and the government. It would be a "mediating and integrating body," coordinating intra-industrial plans into a national planning program. It would also be a research organization, gathering the data needed for such a program. The central board would retain two crucial functions for itself: final supervision of capital investment and control of prices.

Price controls, in Tugwell's view, were essential to the maintenance of balance between production and consumption. Price policies which failed to pass on technological gains to consumers eventually resulted in a recession. Price controls fitted precisely into "concentration and

control." Tugwell held that in order to attempt positive control of prices invalidation of the ideology of antitrust laws was a necessity.⁵ Price controls would afford basic protection for consumers, and Tugwell also wanted specific representation in a national planning program of the consumer interest, as well as a balanced relationship between industry and agriculture for economic stabilization.

Tugwell's general guidelines for the coordinating scheme specified that intraindustry boards would work from the bottom up, and a central planning board would oversee interindustry affairs from the top down.⁶

Opponents said that his scheme could not work in a democracy, and they charged that it was socialistic, Marxist, Sovietist, totalitarian. Businessmen were his greatest opponents, as they feared the future laid out in clear, objective, terms, because they thrived on uncertainty and were gamblers, interested in keeping society insecure to create gambler's risk conditions. Politicians opposed a planned future which might interfere with their campaign promises and exploitation of the popular impulse toward an uncomplicated past.⁷ Tugwell considered the issue between private and public ownership unimportant to the planned economy. Most important to him was the achieving of publicly oriented direction, whether of publicly or privately owned agencies. Planning, far from being socialistic, would save capitalism.

To demonstrate peoples' reactions to Tugwell and his political beliefs either real or presumed, consider the case of the corporation executive of Wilmington, Delaware, who did not have to read Tugwell's words--he could identify a subversive just by looking at him. Tugwell was rooming in Washington with Jerome Frank, the successful young

corporation lawyer who had been named General Counsel of the A.A.A. The executive, an acquaintance of Frank's, returned to Wilmington after a visit to Washington and sent a telegram to Frank: BEWARE COMMA JEROME BEWARE STOP THIS MORNING AT YOUR BREAKFAST TABLE I SAW THE FACE OF ROBES-PIERRE STOP THAT MAN WOULD WILLINGLY GO TO THE GUILLOTINE FOR AN IDEAL AND TAKE HIS FRIENDS WITH HIM STOP BEWARE. One evening as they were driving home, Frank read the telegram aloud. Tugwell, usually a careful driver, swung a corner and grazed a curb. He said it was a hell of a life when idiots came in to look at you and then just said what they read in the papers.

"In any event," Frank replied, "you drive like Robespierre."⁸

The Planning Agency as the Fourth Power

"The Fourth Power"⁹ written in 1939 denoted Tugwell's recommendation of the establishment of a planning agency outside the three traditional branches of government. He believed that officials of the existing political system, with their short-run and political interests, could not effectively discharge the responsibility of planning (exercise the "directive power") in the public interest. He concluded that the ability to get ahead in politics and the ability to rise to statesmanship in public service seldom went together.¹⁰ The "Fourth Power" would be exercised by experts meeting highly selective qualifications. Their terms of appointment would be relatively long--longer than any others in government except the judiciary. The planning body would function under a fixed procedure of expert preparation, public hearings, agreed findings, and careful translation into law--subject to legislative ratification.¹¹ The

public would contribute ideas at the beginning of the process and a final say at the end. The experts would not determine social aims, but would devise ways of managing the economy to achieve the general aims which the public indicated it wanted to realize.

Tugwell believed that the federal government could create this kind of planning body without taking power away from the states, or exercising further control over private business. He preferred business self-government to direct governmental planning. Democratic voluntarism, through a coordinating setup, could make it unnecessary for a planning agency to exercise its reserved powers to control capital investment and prices. He believed that planning, being based on substantial agreement, would be more democratic than most governmental processes; it would regularize and make effective what is otherwise done, but not done as well as needed by society.

Roosevelt was painfully aware that there was no machinery through which he could gather reliable economic data, make forecasts, establish goals, issue orders, and analyze results. He made efforts to adapt or invent some central agency suitable for overall management, with little success. The liberal mentality was deeply divided on the matter of state intervention. All liberals advocated a vigorous intervening government, but those whose education had been in the Wilson-Brandeis tradition were hostile to interventions which appeared to foster a permanent administrative bureaucracy.

Reformers who were emotionally ready for national planning remained a minority, and FDR himself reflected the conflicts in the liberal mind, although he appeared to lean toward Tugwell rather than toward Brandeis.

Tugwell liked to describe those who, like himself, worked for a collectivist social management as "the middlemen of modernity." He knew they had been defeated as early as 1934, when he had a conversation about planning with FDR as the NRA headed towards its demise. Roosevelt made it clear that he was through with central planning, that the government would either accept regulatory roles piecemeal, as the situation might dictate, or fall back upon New Freedom progressivism and work for an end to monopoly. Tugwell realized that the effort at coordinated planning had failed, and the collectivists would not soon get another chance:

I was asking for too much. It was not only NRA, it was the whole organic conception of a living nation, equipped with institutions for foresight, conjecture, and balance. It was not yet time for it...¹²

Tugwell's work on reorganization of the government and his special assignments both related, at least in part, to conservation, which was at the heart of his concern for agriculture and rural America. In 1933, the desire to realize the aspirations he had harbored for years as "an earnest, if relatively amateur, conservationist" had been a decisive factor in his decision to go to Washington.¹³ Now, as a public official, Tugwell made his views on conservation known to a wider audience in the years 1933-1936 in many articles and speeches.¹⁴

New Deal Relocation Programs

In the summer of 1932 Rexford Tugwell met with Milburn L. Wilson, a farm economist from Montana, to begin mapping a possible program of national agricultural planning. Tugwell was already trying to steer Roosevelt closer to full commitment to national economic planning. The

advocacy of major planning policies by Wilson and Tugwell represented the fruition of ideas and policies advocated earlier by Ely, Patten, and a few other economic rebels. When this occurred in the New Deal, Tugwell and Wilson, in addition to their policy making influence in agricultural planning, were about to shape and direct the community program in its most formative years.

The National Land Use Planning Committee was made up of agricultural leaders from the Department of Agriculture, the Federal Farm Board, the Federal Farmers Loan Board, the land grant colleges, and the Department of the Interior. The committee studied land uses in the Tennessee Valley, investigated the possibilities of industrial decentralization, and offered some guidance to the back-to-the-land movement of the depression. In the New Deal it was merged, along with Ickes' National Planning Board in the Public Works Administration, into the National Resources Committee, which was the first truly national planning agency. M. L. Wilson was to become Director of the Division of Subsistence Homesteads.

A large program of land retirement was set up under the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, but with funds from the Federal Emergency Relief Administration. These programs were moved to the Resettlement Administration in 1935, where the land planners not only purchased submarginal land but provided a planning staff for the location of resettlement communities. In the Resettlement Administration, city planners joined the land planners.

Subsistence Homesteads Program

Franklin D. Roosevelt wanted to extend public planning to the country and create 'wholly new rural communities' with facilities for new industries. With a rural rather than an urban emphasis, Roosevelt, like Ebenezer Howard, wanted to wed the city to the country. He wondered "if out of this regional planning we are not going to be in a position to take the bull by the horns in the immediate future and adopt some kind of experimental work based on distribution of population."¹⁵

In January, 1933, Roosevelt asked Henry Wallace, Tugwell and Wilson to draw plans for the reorganization of the Department of Agriculture into an instrument of national planning. In his inauguration speech, Roosevelt asked that America "recognize the overbalance of population in our industrial centers and, by engaging on a national scale in a redistribution, endeavor to provide a better use of the land for those best fitted for the land."¹⁶

Land use planning, would certainly displace many farm families, and with mass unemployment in the cities, industry offered no refuge. The only possible answer in Wilson's opinion was industrial decentralization and small subsistence homesteads of a few acres. On this small acreage a family could grow all its food and thus be able to accept shorter hours in industry. Situated between commercial agriculture and full time industrial employment, it was hoped that subsistence homesteads communities would bring about a new balance between agriculture and industry, absorbing both the industrially unemployed and the displaced farmers.

Tugwell visualized the difficulty of change or adjustment and predicted that any planning by the state would necessitate involuntary regimentation and class conflict.¹⁷ He felt that the doctrine of individualism in the United States had prevented the expert supervision of farmers by those who knew how to improve a backward agriculture. As to community planning, he wanted garden cities for industrial workers, but he was never enthusiastic about Roosevelt and Wilson's ideas on communities of part-time farming and industry. Tugwell later described Roosevelt's strong support of subsistence homesteads as a bit of impractical agrarian sentimentality, a "Utopian notion out of the past--the idea that men are better off close to nature and working with their hands on their own acres."¹⁸

The Subsistence Homesteads Bill

Originally, the Subsistence Homesteads bill was introduced to Congress twice by Senator John H. Bankhead, with the details explicitly given for the qualifications of those selected and the financial arrangements for their ultimate purchase of the land they settled. However, since neither of the subsistence homesteads bills was acted upon by Congress, Senator Bankhead, with White House backing, was able to add an abbreviated form to the National Industrial Recovery Act in May, 1933. Almost hidden as Section 208 of Title II, it read:

To provide for aiding in the redistribution of the overbalance of population in industrial centers \$25,000,000 is hereby made available to the President, to be used by him through such agencies as he may establish and under such regulations as he may make, for making loans for and otherwise aiding in the purchase of subsistence homesteads. The moneys collected as repayment of said loans shall constitute a revolving fund to be administered as directed by the President for the purposes of this section.¹⁹

This abbreviated, generalized section hardly represented the more detailed ideas of its supporters--it did not specifically provide for any program of colonization or for planned communities, as its funds were not limited to that use. Turning over the planning of the program to the President was typical of the emergency legislation of 1933, and subjected each idea concerning subsistence homesteads to conflicting interpretations of implementation.

President Roosevelt designated Harold L. Ickes, Secretary of the Interior, to carry out the provisions of Section 208. Since this section contained almost no guide as to how the \$25,000,000 for subsistence homesteads should be spent, Ickes could have placed the program in his Public Works Administration, which was headed by Robert D. Kohn. With his experience in city planning and public housing in World War I and in the Regional Planning Association of America, Kohn wanted to use the funds to establish a few farm colonies and several garden cities of the Radburn type.

Ickes decided instead to place subsistence homesteads in a separate program, and sought advice from practically everyone interested in garden cities, farm colonies, or the back-to-the-land movement. As director of the program, Ickes selected M. L. Wilson, who brought with him not only a well formulated plan for subsistence homesteads but a conscious, defined social philosophy as well. While Wilson defined a "better life" as including some contact with the soil and countryside, he was aware of the freeing potentialities of technological improvements.

In outlining to Ickes his thoughts on how best to use the limited appropriation for subsistence homesteads, Wilson advised widely distributed

experimental communities as object lessons in the decentralization of industry and in the creation of a new pattern of life. He recommended a federal plan of administration with decentralized administration and responsibility. The communities, which were to be located near available employment, were to include four types: experimental farm colonies, subsistence gardens for city workers, colonies for stranded workers, and primarily, homesteads for part time industrial workers. A constant problem was the farmers' fear of government sponsored competition. On the other side were some of the industrialists who would have liked to use subsistence homesteads to assure, at no expense to themselves, an ample, complacent labor force. In formulating policies, Wilson had the advice of a group of distinguished people who, sharing a common interest in subsistence homesteads, had voluntarily organized a National Advisory Committee on Subsistence Homesteads, with Rexford G. Tugwell, then Under-secretary of Agriculture, as one of its participating members.

The committee decided that the division would concentrate on three types of colonies: communities of part time farmers near industrial employment, all rural colonies for resettled submarginal farmers, and a few villages with newly decentralized industry. The last were to be the most experimental and the most controversial communities.

The division published its first information circular in 1933, explaining the purposes and policies of the subsistence homesteads program. A typical community was described as containing from 25 to 200 families living on individual homesteads of from one to five acres, containing an orchard, a vegetable garden, poultry, a pig, and, in some cases, a cow. Eventual ownership was promised for most colonists. The community sites

were to be approved by agricultural experts, and the homestead development had to be in accordance with approved planning, architectural, and engineering practices. Houses were to be moderate in cost, but conforming with standards of durability, attractiveness, and sanitation, with essential utilities provided. The homesteaders, selected from low income groups, were to be chosen only after an inquiry into character traits, agricultural fitness, employment prospects, and other factors. In all cases the federal funds were to be lent and not granted, with repayment over a period of thirty years at 4 percent interest, and the funds were to be lent by a Federal Subsistence Homesteads Corporation to local corporations at the community level.²⁰

The local corporation appeared to be an excellent device for carrying out the local work of the Division of Subsistence Homesteads. It could borrow the money, construct the communities, and issue purchase contracts to homesteaders. Local sponsors and prominent citizens would be on its board of directors, insuring local interest and support. Later, when the communities were completed, the corporation could collect payments from the homesteaders and manage the community. As the homesteaders gained equity in their homes, they would be given the stock of the corporation, making them joint owners of their own community. With its abilities to use ordinary business procedures, it could purchase land and contract for construction with much greater speed than the government could.

One of the most influential agrarians or distributists while not a member of the RPAA, was Ralph Borsodi, who in 1920 personally started subsistence farming on a small homestead near New York City. By utilizing labor-saving tools and by growing and processing a phenomenal number of

foods, Borsodi achieved economic independence and became the supreme exemplar of self-sufficient successful back-to-the-land. Borsodi, who also favored the single tax, aesthetically revolted against the ugliness of the city and proposed subsistence homesteads as an escape.²¹ In the depression Borsodi found several to follow him back to the land, and when the Division of Subsistence Homesteads was established, Borsodi was already guiding the development of a homestead colony in Dayton, Ohio. The first subsistence homesteads loan went to this project in October, 1933.

The ideas behind these plans combined the need for relief with Borsodi's escapist agrariansim and an emphasis on self-help. Homesteaders were to build their own homes, grow subsistence crops on a small acreage, carry on group activities, and have a common pasture and wood lot, while receiving wages for part time employment in Dayton. Weaving, sewing, and other family crafts were to be developed. Homesteads were to be leased to clients in a modified single-tax system.²³ A small loan of \$50,000 for the first of the planned communities was all Borsodi ever received from the Division of Subsistence Homesteads. His Dayton project was the only one in which the government never owned the land. From the beginning Borsodi resisted any federal control over his project, desiring financial aid without governmental control.

The second project was the most controversial and the most publicized of all the subsistence homesteads. It was a projected community of 200 family units for stranded coal miners at Reedsville, West Virginia. Coming directly from the work of Clarence Pickett and the humanitarian interest of Eleanor Roosevelt, this project, which was soon to be named

Arthurdale after the name of a former owner of the estate, was the first to be developed and was the site of much open experimentation and countless mistakes. In December 1933 and January 1934, three other stranded workers' communities were announced by the division--these were Cumberland Homesteads near Crossville, Tennessee, Tygard Valley Homesteads, near Elkins, West Virginia, and Westmoreland Homesteads, near Greensburg, Pennsylvania. They were designed for unemployed miners who had been stranded since the closing of coal mines as far back as 1920.

The four stranded communities were a source of constant embarrassment to the Division and its successor agencies, as they were the only subsistence homesteads to be settled by destitute relief clients who had no opportunity for employment. Since they were planned only for part time farming, with very small plots of ground, some type of industrial employment was essential--either industry had to move voluntarily to these communities or the Division had to find some method of providing economic security, or the homesteaders would remain stranded government dependents. Hosiery mills became a source of employment for some of the residents.

Perhaps the most interesting community developed by the Division of Subsistence Homesteads was Jersey Homesteads near Hightstown, New Jersey. Two hundred Jewish garment workers in New York City banded together to establish the colony, and supplementing the funds authorized by the Division with individual contributions of \$500 each, they planned a cooperative garment factory, a cooperative farm, and consumer cooperatives. In many ways Jersey Homesteads (later called Roosevelt) was to be more of a garden or satellite city than a part time farming, part time

industrial community. Because of long delays in its planning, its construction was entirely carried out by the Resettlement Administration.

Austin Homesteads at Austin, Minnesota, was unique in being located near a one-factory town and in being sponsored by the president of that one factory, George A. Hormel of the Hormel Packing Company. Seventy percent of the homesteaders at Austin were to be Hormel employees.²⁴ The fact that M. L. Wilson accepted the plans of Hormel and many other industrialists on other sponsoring committees, reflected his belief in the good intentions of industrial leaders and in the necessity of cooperation from industry in setting up part time farming, part time industrial communities.

Before June, 1934, which marked the end of Wilson's work in the Division of Subsistence Homesteads and an important change in policies, approximately thirty-one industrial type subsistence homesteads were announced, although of these only twenty-three were ever completed. As a whole, these were more successful and less controversial than the stranded-workers or the rural type, although much less publicized. From a financial standpoint, several of these were to prove the most successful of any of the communities constructed by the New Deal. They conformed more closely to the original intentions of the subsistence homesteads legislation and the administrators of the program. In one sense they were the only true subsistence homesteads, combining access to part time industrial employment with a partial subsistence from the land. All of them were located within commuting distance of some type of industrial employment, in either a small or large city, and were almost always sponsored

by a local corporation. There were variations beyond these similarities, but in most ways they conformed to the official definition of a subsistence homestead.²⁵

Comptroller General McCarl, by requiring the same accounting procedure from the local corporations as from government agencies, nullified one of the primary purposes of the corporate device. He also made it almost impossible to use the local corporations in other than an advisory capacity. This threatened the whole policy of decentralized administration which was at the foundation of the entire Subsistence Homesteads program.

This was only the beginning of a series of decisions rendered by McCarl which restricted the work of the Division of Subsistence Homesteads. An angry Ickes described McCarl as "not only a Republican but a reactionary Republican."²⁶

The question of local versus federal control led to the first major policy and administrative change in the subsistence homesteads program. Ickes, despite his resentment over McCarl's interferences, had long disliked the decentralized administration of the Division of Subsistence Homesteads. He began to dismantle the decentralized administrative structure by first forbidding any appointment at the local level, requiring all applications to be cleared through him, and finally abolishing all control by the local corporations, completely federalizing the subsistence homesteads program.

The federalization order not only dashed the hopes of many local groups, the sudden shift in policy seriously prejudiced the popularity of subsistence homesteads. Borsodi, at Dayton, fought back, refusing to

have his project federalized and brought suit against the Federal Subsistence Homesteads Corporation for breach of contract. The Division decided to honor the loan contract with Borsodi's group, allowing the project to continue under local direction.²⁷ The federalization order required a complete organizational change in the division. Although project plans submitted by local groups were still considered, a Planning Section was established to take the lead in initiating new projects. In addition, a Construction Section was organized to direct the projects' physical development, an Operation Section, which controlled the administrative problems of each local project, directed the project managers, and a Community Development Section was established to direct the new communities. As projects were occupied, the project managers were replaced by community managers, assisted by farm, home, health, and educational advisers.

Land tenure presented a real problem to the Division of Subsistence Homesteads. Since the single tax ideas of Henry George, most community planners had desired some limitation on fee simple or unrestricted land ownership. But most Americans had continued to accept fee simple ownership as an essential part of the American way of life and were either unaware of, or unconcerned about, such problems as speculation, high land prices, and uncontrolled exploitation of land resources. Even the limited restrictions imposed by zoning laws were viewed with alarm and apprehension by many. Thus the agricultural economists and social planners were usually at odds with the broader public on this important question. Because of the experimental and demonstrational nature of the subsistence homesteads communities, most officials of the division felt that, despite the expressed

desire of most homesteaders for free title to their individual pieces of land, something less than fee simple ownership would be in order to assure the success of the project while protecting the interests of the homesteader. They feared that free titles would lead to speculation in both land and homes, yet the homesteaders wanted the security and independence that they believed could come only with complete ownership.

The Division of Subsistence Homesteads solved this dilemma by a compromise. It announced that, in all but the stranded communities the homesteader would be permitted to purchase his own home within a thirty year period at three percent interest, without any down payment. But the homesteader could not receive title to his land until he had paid three-fourths of the purchase price and, in no case, not until after five years. This meant government control for from five to twenty-two years, yet partially appeased the proponents of fee simple. Actually, since no communities were completed when the Resettlement Administration absorbed the subsistence homesteads in May 1935, all homesteaders were under temporary licensing agreement.

The End of the Division of Subsistence Homesteads

In February 1935, the Comptroller General challenged the legality of nearly all the expenditures, made one year earlier, of the local corporations, ruling that there had been no authorization for the formation of local corporations, no authority for advancing funds to them, no authority for land purchased under Section 208, and no compliance with government procedures by the local corporations. This made new legislation imperative, but a more detailed subsistence homesteads bill, introduced

in the House, died in committee. Then McCarl ruled that the division, not having been extended by new legislation and as a temporary part of the National Industrial Recovery Act, would automatically go out of existence on June 16, 1935. This meant so many uncompleted communities and unfulfilled obligations that some new authorization was imperative. In May, two months before the expiration date, Roosevelt transferred all the property and assets of the Division of Subsistence Homesteads to the newly created Resettlement Administration.

The back-to-the-land and subsistence homesteads program had been born in the depths of the depression, and had been motivated largely by the despair of the depression. But by 1935 the sense of despair and urgency was disappearing. The emotional appeal of a homestead, of gardens and handicrafts, was beginning to fade, along with the honeymoon period of the New Deal, when desperation and a sense of impending disaster unified almost all groups and classes in a national effort toward recovery.

The Resettlement Administration

In the first 18 months of the Resettlement Administration, the community building program of the New Deal reached its climax. A large administrative organization was developed and an ambitious program was launched--however, planned communities became more controversial and more unpopular than ever before. In the opinions of most people, "Resettlement Administration" was almost synonymous with the name of its first administrator, Rexford G. Tugwell. Already one of the most controversial major figures of the New Deal, Tugwell insured that the R.A. program would be an object of attack and abuse. Most of Tugwell's unpopularity sprang from

his inability or unwillingness to conceal revolutionary ideas in traditional terminology. He wanted collectivism and called it by that name. He felt that the depression might be justified if it helped to break the pattern of dogmatized institutions and ideas. He held that the institution of capitalism, permitted the exploitation of both human and physical resources.

Tugwell desired an organic society, with a unity of purpose, a cooperative and collective economy, and a purposeful, functioning government. This would require a willingness on the part of the people to make some sacrifices, for a collective society would mean a publicly controlled economy, whether through nationalization or strict regulation of industry. It would mean a larger degree of regimentation, a necessity for discipline, an end to individualism as an economic concept, and the end of speculation. But it also could mean no glaring contrasts in income and well-being, a more balanced allotment of individual liberty, less exploitation of human resources. At the heart of a tremendously enlarged government with a strong executive having a large amount of delegated power, would be the social scientists, the experts, the planners, who would determine the future needs and possibilities of society and would lay out the progress routes.²⁸

But Tugwell's hopes were thwarted, as the vast majority of the citizenry continued to cling to individualism and independence, refusing even to consider collectivism. The Resettlement Administration was a repository for a multitude of New Deal programs. It was to carry on rural relief or rehabilitation, continue the whole land-utilization program, and continue and extend the New Deal community building program through

both rural and urban resettlement. Loans to individuals, to cooperatives, grants to destitute farmers, and the care of migratory workers were also included.

To Tugwell the assignment of the Resettlement Administration was twofold: rehabilitation and permanent reform, the latter he believed, meant a rearrangement of America according to plan. His first task was a staggering one--molding an integrated administrative organization that could direct several distinct programs, and in addition, formulating vital policies. The Resettlement Administration included the Division of Subsistence Homesteads, three sections of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, the state rural rehabilitation corporations, the Land Policy Section of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, and small sections of several other agencies. There was constant pressure for quick results, for the R.A. was part of the emergency relief program and was justified legislatively only as it provided immediate work relief for the unemployed. These facts should partially excuse any early mistakes made by the Resettlement Administration.

As in the F.E.R.A., Tugwell set up a completely decentralized organization for most of the Resettlement Administration program, dividing the country into eleven regions and placing most of the action programs in the regional offices, while small offices were also set up in each state and in most counties. This form of organization was necessary for the rehabilitation program, which involved loans and supervision in almost every rural county in the country. The suburban resettlement program, located in the environs of a few large cities, was controlled from Washington and had no connection with the regional offices.

The complex administrative organization of the Resettlement Administration was much criticized. Instead of four main divisions to perform the four main tasks of the Resettlement Administration--rural relief, land utilization, rural resettlement, and suburban resettlement--Tugwell created twelve coordinate divisions. The Rural Resettlement, Suburban Resettlement, Construction, and Management Divisions were most intimately connected with the R.A. communities. The Construction Division did all the construction for both rural and suburban divisions. Rural Resettlement approved plans for and initiated all rural communities, as well as continuing the planning of those uncompleted rural communities begun by the Subsistence Homesteads Division and the F.E.R.A. Suburban Resettlement, which has very little connection with the other divisions of the R.A., had complete control of the greenbelt cities and the uncompleted suburban subsistence homesteads. Management controlled completed communities, directing educational and community activities, developing economic opportunities, selecting settlers, organizing community governments, and taking care of the maintenance of the buildings in the communities.

Aware of the problems already encountered by the subsistence homesteads and rural industrial communities, the administrators of the R.A. attempted to formulate a different program for its new communities. The Suburban Resettlement Division set up a Technical Research Unit which studied English housing and garden cities. The Land Use Planning Section compiled an enormous report on resettlement policy and procedure, citing the prior settlement efforts in the United States and abroad. The report

reflected the cautious approach of the land economists and advised resettlement on individual or closely grouped farms rather than in organized communities.

The land economists urged that cooperatives be encouraged, but warned against compulsory or planned cooperation. They cautioned against any attempt to combine new industries with farm colonies and asked for an ultimate sale price based more on an appraised value and the client's earning power than on the actual cost to the Resettlement Administration. On the problem of land tenure, they wanted a permanent lease for the client unqualified for land ownership, a temporary trial lease with an option of future purchase for the average client and an extended, forty-year purchase contract for the superior client.²⁹

Also advising Tugwell on policy matters was a short lived Planning Division, whose personnel represented a very nonrural background. It advised against part time farming as a means of raising living standards of low income workers, stressed the small economic importance of handicrafts and the greater possibilities of cooperative enterprises, and recommended some plantation projects and completely cooperative farms as social experiments. It advised decentralization in existing industrial areas by town planning of the garden city type rather than by setting up more Arthurdales and then praying for industry to follow. Most of all, the Planning Division questioned the whole policy of loans as a means to rehabilitation, asking instead for grants and a frank subsidy to an already overburdened group.

Tugwell formulated an initial community program that incorporated ideas from both the Land Planning Section and the Planning Division.

Although he did not exclude a few more subsistence homesteads communities, Tugwell's main emphasis was to be on all rural communities for farmers and garden cities for full time industrial workers, neither depending upon a mixed agricultural and industrial economy. Rural resettlement projects would include both the infiltration of settlers into existing communities and the creation of new communities. The probability of some subsidy was accepted, but the policy of rehabilitation by loans was never dropped, and could not have been, due to public opinion. Cooperative enterprises were to be a major objective of the Resettlement Administration. Tugwell, who felt the need for some limitation on fee simple ownership, stressed security as a better goal than ownership, realized that some people needed continuous assistance and supervision, and asked for a long time relationship between the government and the individual, either by a long purchase contract or by a conditional lease. Tugwell's greatest interest was garden cities or greenbelt cities.

By December, 1935, eighteen industrial homesteads, inherited from the Subsistence Homesteads Division, were complete. These communities gave the R.A. fewer problems than any other inherited communities, since they were usually located near economic opportunities and usually had good settlers. The R.A. completed these communities according to original plans, but often added extra community facilities, such as community buildings.

The Resettlement Administration soon learned the forgetfulness of the public, for the four stranded subsistence homesteads communities, Arthurdale, Westmoreland, Tygart Valley, and Cumberland, were identified with Tugwell and became his mistakes, even though Tugwell constantly

reiterated that they were established "on a theory in which none of us believed."³⁰ He had always felt that it was fallacious to assume that industry, particularly in a time of depression, would decentralize voluntarily, particularly to isolated mountain communities. But since the Resettlement Administration had inherited the stranded communities, Tugwell decided to make the best of a sorry fate.

The economic situation on the four projects was not encouraging, and three methods were developed by the R.A. to relieve it. In some cases additional land was purchased and added to the cooperative farms. In all cases the construction of homes was not rushed to completion, allowing the homesteaders a longer period of employment. But primarily the Resettlement Administration relied on cooperative enterprises to benefit the communities. Both consumers' and producers' cooperatives were organized and aided by ample loans. They became good experiments in cooperation, but never solved the economic problems. Tugwell loved the use of cooperatives, and defied the enemies of these experiments, rejoicing that the government was finally organizing the sheep instead of aiding the wolves.³¹ The principle of the cooperative farm, the village form of agriculture, and the long term leases were the most important departures from traditional American agriculture and the ones most criticized.

Suburban Resettlement Division

The inherited communities were often considered a burden and a liability pushed upon the R.A. by other agencies and their many problems could be blamed on other men. Such was not the case of the communities planned and initiated by the Resettlement Administration. The garden

cities or greenbelt towns had been projected in the early New Deal days and were closest to Tugwell's heart. Immediately following the creation of the R.A., Tugwell had charted a program for the Suburban Resettlement Division which included twenty-five suburban communities. Limited appropriations and a court decision lowered to three the number actually constructed, but these three communities--Greenbelt, Maryland; Greenhills, Ohio; and Greendale, Wisconsin--were by far the largest and most important constructed by the New Deal. They were so different from a majority of the other communities that they represent an almost isolated aspect of the Resettlement Administration.

A serious obstacle to the Resettlement Administration came in the form of a lawsuit brought against it by the citizens near Bound Brook, in Franklin Township, New Jersey. A greenbelt town, Greenbrook, New Jersey, was planned for that area, and in essence, the citizens were suing because they objected to the loss of tax revenue, since the R.A. could pay no taxes, to the location of the project, to the type of architecture planned (fearing the concrete slab construction tried at Jersey Homesteads), to the low class of people they believed would live in the project, and to the purchase of such a large amount of land (needed for a greenbelt).³² When the first injunction was denied, the citizens of Franklin Township filed a new one in Washington, D.C. against Tugwell himself, with Dean Acheson as one of their attorneys. The court ruled that the whole Emergency Relief Act of 1935 was unconstitutional, as Congress unlawfully delegated through its legislative powers to the President by not specifying the actual programs which would be financed by the appropriation under the act. The R.A. program was declared in opposition to state rights,

as there was no constitutional power for the government to regulate housing or to resettle populations. One day after the decision, the Attorney General ruled that the decision, despite its sweeping language, applied only to the Greenbrook project, the only one included in the injunction. The result of the decision was that the Greenbrook project was discontinued.

Many aspects of the resettlement program were not based on wide public support, despite attempts to maintain good public relations. Tugwell believed in broad, delegated executive powers which would permit the wide leeway needed by planners and experts. He was disdainful of congressmen, who, to him, often failed to represent the best interests of their constituents. He also doubted the efficiency of the slow legislative process, particularly in times of emergency. Therefore Tugwell, with his broad authority under the executive order, set up a large administration and initiated an ambitious program without any clear mandate from Congress. The Resettlement Administration itself was legislator and executor, and many of the policy decisions made by the R.A. staff would never have had majority support in Congress. Tugwell probably realized this, yet he felt that his staff, much more than Congress with its conflicting interests, knew what the lower third of rural and urban America needed. And so he set out, in a limited sense, to make America over, whether it wanted it or not. Just when he had begun the task, he began to face opposition from the courts, from the public, and from Congress. Many congressmen resented his usurping their power, and his program was doomed unless it found favor with a majority of congressmen, for Congress controlled the purse strings.

Both Tugwell personally and the resettlement communities were objects of attack in the election of 1936. As early as March 1936, the Republican National Committee had declared that the Resettlement Administration was setting up communist farms.³³ By election time it was rumored that the Resettlement Administration would soon be absorbed by the Department of Agriculture. Tugwell, already planning his resignation from government service, wanted a more permanent status for the Resettlement Administration and had been urging Roosevelt to place it in the Department of Agriculture. Tugwell then gave only personal reasons for his resignation, although there was much speculation in Washington about the old feud within the Department of Agriculture between liberals and conservatives, and about his long time role as "whipping boy" for the Department of Agriculture and, at times, for the whole New Deal. Years later Tugwell hinted that it was really Roosevelt who desired his resignation, not for personal reasons but for political expediency.³⁴ His resignation from both the Resettlement Administration and the Department of Agriculture was December 31, 1936, at which time his Resettlement Administration, by an executive order, became part of the Department of Agriculture.

After its transfer to the Department of Agriculture, the Resettlement Administration's community building program was slowly revised. A greater emphasis was placed on the infiltration type of resettlement, and experimentation in construction was replaced by standard designs. It was decided that construction efforts would be centered on the completion of projects already underway, as the Senate came very close to deducting

\$14,000,000 from the 1937 R.A. appropriation in order to show its desire to have all old projects completed before new ones were started.

By June 1937, the Resettlement Administration had completed the construction of only thirty-eight communities, while eight-four projects, including communities and scattered farms, were under construction. The remaining projects were all finished by the Farm Security Administration. Only 4,441 families were in residence at the time.³⁵

Inside the Resettlement Admin- istration Communities

One of the most interesting aspects of the New Deal communities was the fervent attempt to revive handicrafts, such as weaving, wood-working, and metal work. In the early days of the Division of Subsistence Homesteads, many people, including M. L. Wilson, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Clarence Pickett, believed (undoubtedly influenced strongly by Ralph Borsodi) that a revival of these handicrafts could provide part of the income of subsistence farmers, invoke a community spirit, and lead to a restored pride in workmanship, the latter so lacking in assembly line America.

Cooperation was to be the real key to the new society. The whole history of the New Deal communities could be related to the idea of co-operation, replacing competition. From M. L. Wilson, who thought cooperation was the only means of retaining democratic institutions, to Tugwell, whose desire for a collectivized, cooperative society was all-consuming, the New Deal communities would epitomize cooperation as the new alternative to the economic insecurity and chaos of the past. Among the services,

facilities, and activities organized on cooperative bases in the various communities were the following: pastures, dairies, wood lots, greenhouses, rock quarries, cattle breeding, canneries, barbershops, gristmills, orchards, inns, restaurants, hospitals, medical associations, blacksmith shops, farm equipment, cotton gins, hatcheries, sawmills, freezing plants, and even a burial association (which would be a real money saver today).³⁶ The medical cooperatives were evidently the most successful. By 1941, over 100,000 families were included in the Farm Security Administration medical program.³⁷

The Resettlement Administration realized that the project inhabitants would not be able to operate successful cooperatives without supervision and education, so it initiated a program of cooperative education, utilizing reading materials and lectures given by cooperative specialists in the field.

Although cooperation was desired as a substitute for individual enterprise, many projects found cooperative endeavors a matter of economic necessity rather than ideology. Because Congress had forbidden government factories on community projects and the Comptroller General (McCarl) refused to allow the R.A. to use government funds to subsidize private industries on the projects, the cooperative associations were used as the only remaining device to bring employment to the economically stranded communities. The consumer cooperatives, no matter how successful, could provide employment to only a few project members, as they were service rather than productive enterprises. The great need remained for some type of industry.

On June 21, 1937, the Resettlement Administration, after clearance from the Comptroller General, went ahead with plans that had been frustrated since 1935. Several loan agreements were made with cooperative associations on stranded projects to establish industrial enterprises. A total of \$4,328,000 was lent to the cooperative associations for investment in plants and early operating expenses. In each case the cooperative association worked out a managerial agreement with a private industry.

The cooperatives' venture into private industry was successful in only one respect--it provided, at least for a few years, jobs and a degree of economic security to the occupants of the projects. But to the cooperative associations, to the government, and even to the private industries involved, the enterprises were financial failures. The hosiery mills, pants factories, woodworking plant, tractor assembly plant, and others, all had to shut down, and the consensus by technical experts who investigated was that poor management was the cause.

The cooperative associations were supposed to serve one other purpose, that of giving the homesteaders a voice in managing their own community, and where they were all assured one equal vote. Even when the first communities were turned over to the homesteaders, ownership and management were placed, not in the individuals, but in cooperative homestead associations. The Farm Security Administration, with its large investment at stake, was afraid to turn the cooperative associations over to the inexperienced people of a community. Therefore, their participation in their cooperatives was often a mere formality, with either the project manager or a cooperative manager making all the important decisions.

The government colonies were peopled with American farmers, who had a deeply ingrained sense of individualism and no cohesive ideology. Many of them were ready to live in a cooperative colony when, in the depression, it offered them the only security they could find. But once on the project, settlers often disliked depending upon their less capable neighbors. Their central goal soon became farms of their own, where they could be free and independent. At Casa Grande, Arizona, the farm director resigned in 1939, calling the project a Russian cooperative.³⁸ Too often the homesteaders were overly idealistic in their expectations about their new homes and, when disappointed at the reality, became bitter toward the government. Policies were changed in Washington, and the homesteaders felt cheated. The large expenses in construction often aroused fears of such high purchase prices that the homesteader could never afford them. More than anything else, the long delay in granting purchase contracts led to dissatisfaction. Yet, by 1942, in the subsistence homesteads projects retained by the F.S.A., there had been a low turnover of 18 percent, much of this due to new employment, indicating that the new communities, even with their problems, were better than anything else available.³⁹

The Greenbelt Towns

The greenbelt towns remain the grandest monuments of Rexford G. Tugwell's work in the Resettlement Administration. They represented the most daring, original, and ambitious experiments in public housing in the history of the United States. Although only three of approximately 100 New Deal communities, the greenbelt towns absorbed over

one-third of the total cost and nearly one-fourth of the total settlers of the whole community program.

The three completed greenbelt cities represented the culmination of the garden city movement in America, combining the principal ideas of Ebenezer Howard with the new, automobile influenced planning techniques first attempted at Radburn, New Jersey. The two planners of Radburn, Clarence Stein and Henry Wright, both participated in the Resettlement Administration program. Tugwell while acknowledging the influence of Howard and the English garden city movement, stressed the fact that the greenbelt idea also came from a study of contemporary population movements which showed a steady growth in the periphery of cities. He believed that the suburban movement, then a new frontier, gave the best chance ever offered for the governmental planning of a favorable working and living environment. Past opportunities for federal planning had been ignored, with urban slums and rural poverty the results, and he felt this new area offered a last chance.⁴⁰

As conceived by Tugwell, the greenbelt city was to be a complete community of a limited size, encircled by a greenbelt of farms, owned collectively, with common utilities, and with gardens. The subsistence feature of the other suburban communities was not emphasized in the greenbelt cities, which were planned as full cities, with eventual populations of up to 10,000. They were more closely related to the urban housing programs than any other communities, designed to place land, houses, and people together in such a way as to strengthen the foundations of the whole structure of the society.

The Suburban Resettlement Division studied the economic background of 100 cities in the United States, learning the rate of population growth, the numbers employed in industry, wages paid, population trends after 1900, volume of manufacturing, and the diversity of industries and occupations. From these 100 cities, twenty-five were picked for further study. Tugwell envisioned greenbelt towns for all twenty-five of these cities, but he never received nearly the appropriation he desired. Finally, the program was reduced to four communities--on the outskirts of Washington, D.C., Cincinnati, Ohio, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and New York City. Before construction began, the last was blocked by a court injunction (Bound Brook, New Jersey vs. Tugwell, mentioned earlier).

The actual suburban sites were selected on the basis of a careful study of population trends, topography, land prices, and availability of employment. On these bases the sites were selected for Greenbelt at Berwyn, Maryland, about seven miles from Washington, for Greenhills, a site about five miles north of Cincinnati, and for Greendale, a valley three miles southwest of Milwaukee.

The Suburban Resettlement Division was completely responsible for the planning of the greenbelt cities. Under its head, John S. Lansill, were three relatively autonomous planning teams, one for each city, with each team having lots of freedom to allow the maximum possibility for new ideas and new approaches. Each greenbelt city became a distinct experiment in itself. Each planning team was headed by a group of equal rank, including one or more town planners, one or more engineers, one or more architects, and a regional coordinator.



Figure 2. Greenbelt, Maryland. 1, water tower; 2, disposal plant and incinerator; 3, picnic winter and lake; 4, community center; 5, retail stores; 6, areas planned for rural homesteads; 7, areas reserved for allotment gardens. From *Architectural Record*, LXXX (Sept., 1936), 219.

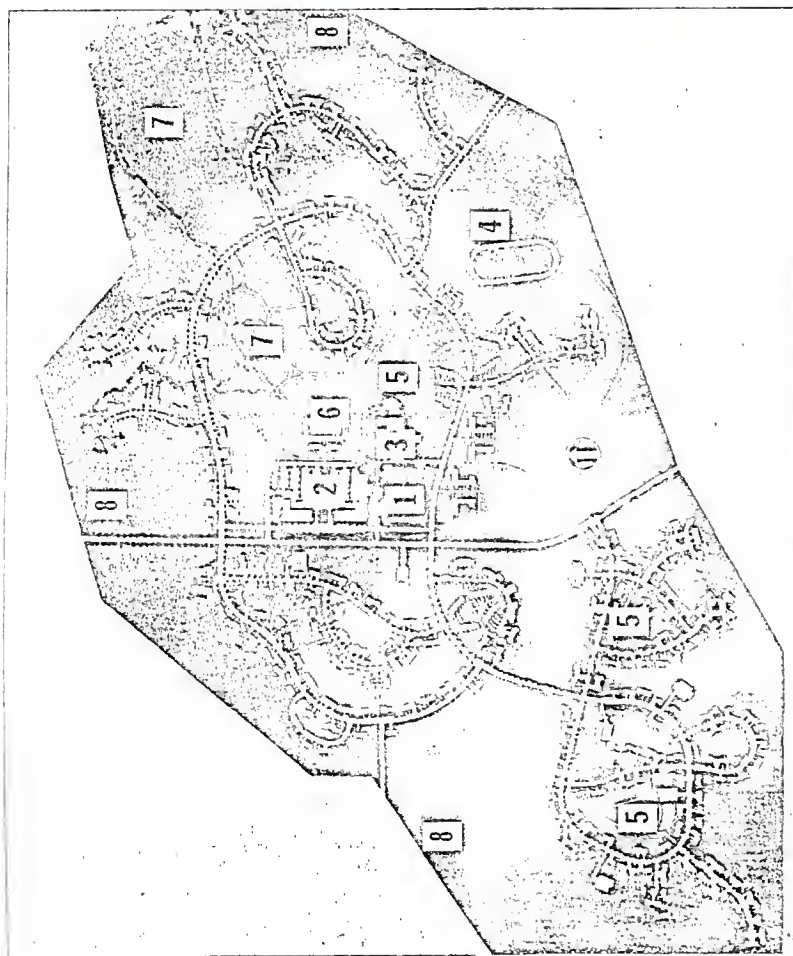


Figure 3. Greenhills, Ohio. 1, town common; 2, commercial center; 3, community building; 4, athletic field; 5, interior park; 6, swimming pool; 7, sites for future residential development; 8, rural residential development. From *Architectural Record*, LXX (Sept., 1950), 223.

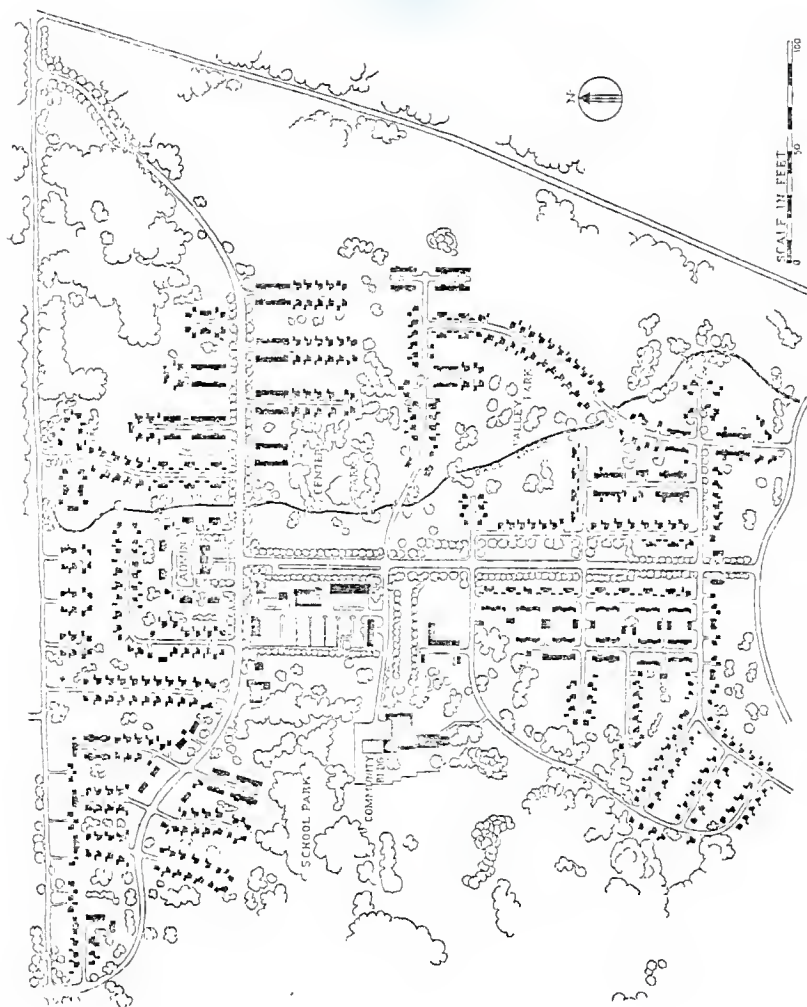


Figure 4. Greendale, Wisconsin. From *Architectural Forum*, LXIII (May, 1938), 420.

In 1936 and 1937 the construction progress was rapid, with an average monthly employment of over 7,000 on the three projects. At Greenbelt the construction program absorbed all the unemployed relief labor in Washington and in the adjacent Maryland counties. The first units were occupied at Greenbelt in September 1937, at Greenhills in May 1938, and at Greendale in June 1938. When completed the three projects contained 2,267 family units and complete community facilities, at a cost of over \$36,000,000.⁴¹

Greenbelt, Maryland

For Greenbelt, Maryland, the Resettlement Administration purchased 12,259 acres of submarginal land located next to the Department of Agriculture's National Research Center near College Park, Maryland. Eight thousand, six hundred and fifty-nine acres were placed under the jurisdiction of the Research Center, which formed part of the greenbelt, and 217 acres were used for the town, 500 acres reserved for future expansion, 250 acres for parks, 107 acres for allotment gardens, 20 acres for a county high school, and the rest remained in surplus and woodland, both available for recreation. Greenbelt was planned as a dormitory town for Washington, which was experiencing rapid growth and a severe housing shortage. Unlike the English garden cities, Greenbelt was not planned for any industry of its own. Unlike the other greenbelt cities, Greenbelt did not contain any farms in its greenbelt, primarily because the land was not suitable for farming. However, the Research Center was a contiguous farming area.

The physical design of Greenbelt became famous. As a garden city it was to be limited in size by the greenbelt, and was to be under public ownership. As in Radburn, it had extra large blocks, internal parks, separation of pedestrians and automobiles, and pedestrian underpasses. The dwelling units were largely located in five superblocks of from fifteen to twenty acres each. As at Radburn the houses or apartments faced two ways, toward a central park and pedestrian walkways on one side and toward the service entrances or cul-de-sacs on the other. Skirting the large blocks were the streets, limited by the design, to a total of only six miles. The parks in the center of each block were connected to each other by pedestrian underpasses. An underpass also connected the housing areas with the community center. A man made lake of twenty-five acres near the community center enhanced the beauty of the site.

Because of limited funds, the Resettlement Administration completed only 885 dwelling units at Greenbelt (1,000 had been planned). Of these, only five were detached, single family homes, whereas 574 were in multiple dwelling row houses and 306 in larger apartment buildings. Despite the multiple dwellings the housing density was only seven families per acre. The housing units varied in size from tiny one-bedroom apartments to seven-room dwellings.

The community center was planned as the heart of Greenbelt. It contained the community building, which was leased during the day to the county for an elementary school, the fire engine, the gas station, an inn and restaurant, the movie theater, and a mercantile center, which included a food and general merchandise store, a drugstore, a barbershop, a beauty shop, and a dry cleaning and valet shop. The community center also had a

playground, an outdoor swimming pool, and an athletic field. Other playgrounds, play boxes, and open areas were interspersed throughout the town, and the lake and greenbelt formed perfect natural playgrounds. The shopping center followed Ebenezer Howard's idea of a restricted market. Only one shop was allowed for each business or service, and all were under community control. A consolidated county high school was constructed by Prince George County near the town and on the very edge of the greenbelt.

Greenhills, Ohio

In September, 1935, the R.A. optioned 5,930 acres of farmland about eleven miles north of downtown Cincinnati. This was the site for Greenhills. The Cincinnati area was picked for a greenbelt city because of the density of industry, the proportionately large number of people engaged in industry, and the local housing shortage. Only about 1,300 acres of the roughest terrain were utilized in the central town, leaving over 4,000 acres in farm or woodland. Unlike Greenbelt, the site for Greenhills contained about thirty large farms and an equal number of subsistence farms. These farms already had homes and out-buildings and were only repaired by the Resettlement Administration. The farms were leased to tenants under five year leases, some eroded areas were reforested, and the R.A. helped the farmers work out crop plans. It was hoped that the farms could supply Greenhills with farm products, which were to be marketed through a farmers' market in the town. In actuality the farmers sold most of their products in Cincinnati.⁴²

Unlike Greenbelt, the site for Greenhills was crossed by a main highway. The roads and topography led to several narrow curving building areas separated from each other by the ravines or the roads. Thus, although there were several superblocks with cul-de-sacs and central park areas, much of the town consisted of single, fingerlike cul-de-sacs or small circular drives, both surrounded by the natural scenery. The community center, near the center of the town and on the main highway, was not as easily accessible by foot to all the homes as was the one at Greenbelt, as it was designed for automobile travel. Therefore, Greenhills was not planned with all the unique pedestrian facilities of Greenbelt, but it did have the advantage of being situated in a much more beautiful natural setting.

When completed, the town of Greenhills contained only 676 of a planned 1,000 family units. These were divided into 24 detached, three or four-bedroom, single family dwellings, 152 one and two-bedroom apartments, and 500 two, three, or four-bedroom units in row or group houses.

Greendale, Wisconsin

The third greenbelt city, which contained 3,510 acres just to the west of Milwaukee, was radically different in design from the other two greenbelt towns. It was placed near Milwaukee because of the housing shortage and the large percentage of people employed in industry. Planned for only 750 units, Greendale was less like Radburn than the other two cities. It had a small, ten-acre area reserved for light industry, although none was established by the Resettlement Administration. Approximately 1,830 acres were in farmland, with 13 full time dairy farms

and 53 small farms or subsistence units. A farm adviser was provided by the Farm Security Administration, which remodeled or repaired many of the farm buildings. Greendale was planned as a conventional country village, with a few cul-de-sacs and several normal city blocks. It contained only individual or small-group housing, being the largest housing project of this nature in the northern United States. The community and business section resembled the business area of an average village. Although in every way more conventional than Greenbelt or Greenhills, Greendale was thought to be more desirable by most tenants because of the predominance of individual houses. When completed, it contained only 572 dwelling units in the city proper. Of these, 274 were two and three-bedroom, detached, family dwellings, 90 were one, two, and four-bedroom duplexes, while only 208 were in multiple family units. Unlike those in the other two cities, the tenants at Greendale were individually responsible for their utilities. Also, Greendale's community center was constructed by contract rather than by relief labor.⁴³

Greenbelt Towns in Operation

The first tenant moved into Greenbelt on September 30, 1937. By that time, the Resettlement Administration had been besieged with over 12,000 applications for Greenbelt alone, making necessary a careful process of selection. The express purpose of the greenbelt towns, to serve low income workers, led to a wage ceiling of \$2,200 for each family. Preference was given to young married families with children, who were living in poor housing but who could afford the rent to be charged at the greenbelt cities. In all three cities, the new families were

predominantly young people, with the adults at Greenbelt averaging only thirty-one years old. In order to maintain high standards, the R.A. enforced strict rules in the cities. At Greenbelt no dogs were permitted, and no clothes were allowed to remain on the lines after four in the afternoon. Contrary to many of the rural communities, a strict rent discipline was maintained, with payments due in advance and eviction an ever present reality, resulting in a very low rate of delinquency.

Although the greenbelt cities were satellites, economically dependent upon their parent cities, they did contain their own retail shopping centers. These permitted the usual emphasis upon cooperation. Edward Filene, a merchant in Boston, gave \$1,000,000 to further the cooperative movement as the greenbelt cities were being constructed. The Consumer Distribution Corporation, created with this Filene grant, leased the commercial centers in the three greenbelt cities and had the stores ready for operation when the residents arrived. The externally financed cooperative service was to operate the stores only until the citizens could establish their own consumers' cooperative. The cooperatives paid limited dividends to each stockholder and other savings, if any, were passed on to the consumers. Also organized cooperatively were the credit unions and the group medical services. A typical medical plan, the one at Greendale, cost one dollar a month per person, or three dollars for a family.

According to the earliest plans, the greenbelt cities were to be complete, incorporated towns with their own municipal governments. In April 1937, months before completion, Greenbelt received a charter from the Maryland legislature, which officially established it as the first

Maryland town with a city manager type of government. Greendale and Greenhills were similarly incorporated in 1938, each with the city manager system. In each town the city manager was appointed by a democratically elected city council. Since the F.S.A. had its own community manager in each town, the town councils, for many years, also appointed him town manager. The existence of three or four governmental units (state, county, city, and federal) inevitably led to problems. The Farm Security Administration made payments in lieu of taxes not only to the county and state, but also to the city government for specific services. Since the city government could not tax the landowner--the federal government--most of the money for public utilities, street repairs, maintenance, and police and fire protection had to be provided by the federal government. Thus the city council and town manager could only make suggestions as to needed expenditures, getting the needed funds at the discretion of the F.S.A.

The greenbelt communities were constantly in the public eye, and criticized mercilessly. Local opinion prevented Greenbrook's completion, and a suit against Greendale was attempted unsuccessfully by the Milwaukee building and loan associations. In Cincinnati the Real Estate Board, the building and loan associations, and the Chamber of Commerce all opposed Greenhills. Real estate owners often feared lowered land values, and local governments (such as Bound Brook, New Jersey) feared a loss in tax revenue. The greenbelt cities--like all of Tugwell's ventures--were treated unfairly in a majority of the newspapers, the New York American describing Greendale as "the first Communist town in America."⁴⁴

The most valid criticism of the greenbelt cities was directed at their costs. Tugwell, when first beginning the greenbelt towns, had

thoroughly condemned private enterprise for not entering the field of low cost, prefabricated housing. Yet the average unit cost at Greenbelt was \$15,395, at Greenhills, \$16,093, and at Greendale, \$16,623. This was not low cost housing. At the price rented it was highly subsidized housing. According to the net income from rent at Greenbelt in 1941, it would take over 300 years for Greenbelt to pay for itself. In defense of the high costs, the F.S.A. logically argued that the use of unskilled relief labor added over a third of the cost. Further, the unused greenbelt could not be charged to the homes, since it had retained its original value. And the public and community facilities, usually furnished by local governments, had been added to the costs. Finally, the greenbelt cities had been constructed to accommodate over three times the original population, meaning that any future expansion would cost only a fraction as much per unit (proved at Greenbelt by the addition of wartime housing). On the other hand, the greenbelt towns proved that no private corporation could build complete towns, with all their facilities and an expensive greenbelt, and then be able to rent them to low income families.

Compared to many other New Deal experiments, the community program was relatively small in terms of final accomplishments, but had the enthusiasm of Roosevelt and others behind it early on. The back-to-the-land movement was a very romantic and appealing panacea in 1933. Its appeal won the support of numerous congressmen who were opposed to many of the other New Deal experiments. The community idea itself, whether connected with subsistence homesteads or resettlement, was flexible enough to appeal strongly to people with very diverse political beliefs, from the most reactionary to the most radical, from Ralph Borsodi to Rexford G.

Tugwell. In the abstract, most people favored planned communities or towns, decentralization of industry, subsistence gardens, handicrafts, and even cooperation. The community program died because of the controversial ideas of some of its directors, the practical difficulties encountered in implementing the community idea, the many problems resulting from the uncoordinated and hasty actions of an unwieldy federal government, an organized opposition to the New Deal itself, and a declining sentiment for reform after 1936.

The most critical decision affecting the New Deal communities was Roosevelt's choice of Tugwell to head the Resettlement Administration in 1935. The communities then became only one element in an ambitious program to reshape the face of rural and suburban America. As a director of the community program, the controversial Tugwell's collectivist ideas did not express the majority sentiment in the United States, particularly since that majority sentiment was shifting to the right. More than almost any other person in the New Deal, Tugwell advocated a logical, consistent, and thorough program of reform that touched on every aspect of the economy. He possessed personal magnetism and an incisively logical, and not always academic, appeal to American liberals. His political ineptitude, if such existed, demonstrated his tenacious honesty and high personal integrity. As a director he did compromise, and he was a better, more conservative administrator than his opponents would ever admit. His ideas of a collective society, to be achieved slowly and with hard work and costly sacrifices, were far too radical for most Americans. At a time when public opinion was becoming more conservative, the community program was becoming more daring and experimental than ever before.

The community idea, so appealing in the abstract, was much more difficult to achieve in actuality than almost anyone believed possible in 1933. All too often the settlers themselves were not anxious to participate in experimental reforms leading to a new America which they could not understand or appreciate--they simply wanted economic security.

By Roosevelt's second term, an anti-New Deal coalition had formed in Congress. Conservative Democrats joined with Republicans to police relief expenditures and to oppose any new, large scale reforms. By 1938 the New Deal was completed. Roosevelt himself was becoming preoccupied with foreign affairs, and seeking wider support, was accepting more conservative advisers.

Just when the conservative opposition solidified in Congress in 1937 and 1938, the New Deal communities were at a critical period of development. For the conservative opponents of the New Deal, the unsuccessful communities offered perfect ammunition. They were to be exploited for propaganda purposes until after the congressional investigation of the Farm Security Administration in 1943. If Tugwell had launched his Resettlement Administration program in 1933, and could have completed it by 1936, he probably would have achieved many of his goals without serious congressional opposition.

In retrospect, the program appears to have been most valuable in revealing the problems of detailed social planning and of effecting a rapid transition from an individualistic to a more collectivistic society. The greenbelt cities have been widely influential in the city planning

movement, and the excellent physical designs and the present day prosperity of most of the New Deal communities seem to have set right some of the early mistakes. It is unfortunate that the long political controversy which surrounded the Resettlement Administration and the Farm Security Administration has completely colored the memory of the New Deal communities, obscuring most of their virtues and magnifying all of their shortcomings.

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CHAPTER III

COMMUNITIES IN COOPERATION

...in the ethical progress of man, mutual support--not mutual struggle--has had the leading part.

--Peter Kropotkin*

In spite of its original intention, the Resettlement Administration retained ownership of the greenbelt towns. This situation greatly interfered with the towns' political, economic, and social institutions, and ultimately jeopardized the entire program. The R.A. stated that it did not want the greenbelt towns to be "federal islands," but rather normal American communities in which everyone had his share of both duties and privileges.¹ Both Tugwell and the officials under him firmly stated that the federal government would divest itself of ownership after the towns were complete, and the R.A.'s early press releases and other publications indicated the towns would become normal, tax paying communities. In December, 1935, Tugwell decided to transfer ownership of the towns to the people living in them. Residents would be citizens of the state, pay all state and local taxes, and retire their mortgage with the R.A. from rent payments to their own privately controlled housing authority. It was thought that the housing authority would sign a contract whereby the R.A. would administer the projects for a certain number of years.

However, further analysis revealed this plan to be financially unfeasible. Stein's report on operation maintenance costs was based on a projected income level averaging \$1,250 and indicated that the towns would have to have at least 1,000 units simply to pay maintenance costs. Mortgage payments were not included in this study.² As the total cost of Greenbelt rose, the planners tried to increase the number of units--in July 1936, Greenbelt was raised from 1,000 to 1,300 units, but this was cut back the next month to 1,250. During the fall it was reduced again to the 885 units then under construction, putting Greenbelt below Stein's figure for minimum pay-as-you-go services, not to mention Greenhills with only 672 units and Greendale with 572.³

The Resettlement Administration was in a true dilemma--if the towns were transferred to a private housing corporation, rents would have to exceed the amount that low or moderate income families could afford. This would not only contradict all the intentions of the R.A., but also might be an illegal use of the project funds under the executive order directing the R.A. to resettle destitute or low income families. Conversely, if the R.A. were to sell the towns at a price the residents could afford, the result would amount to a gigantic subsidy for a very small number of people. The third alternative was for the R.A. to retain ownership of the towns.

Greenbelt and Greenhills were incorporated with the same mayor-council-manager type of municipal government, and Greendale became an independent municipality known as a village. The three communities did have municipal charters, and the tenants could establish their own

governments. All the Resettlement Administration administrators agreed that these should be chartered independently of the federal government. However, they would be necessarily subordinate to the landlord--the R.A.--which would maintain its own staff of administrators in each community.

The decision to retain the towns under federal ownership had a number of advantages. It kept viable the possibility of completing the towns if Congress appropriated funds at a later date. It prevented the extensive undeveloped lands from falling into the hands of private developers who might use them without regard to the general town plans. It allowed the possibility of resettling increasingly lower income families in the towns after they became established in their localities as positive communities. The towns could, if Congress desired, become unique laboratories for experiments in housing, town planning, and community organization. Congress never gave any serious thought to this possibility during the 15 years in which the towns existed as half forgotten federal suburbs.

Democracy and Cooperation

The creators of the greenbelt towns wanted both a planned harmony of physical elements and the growth of political, social, and economic cooperation among the residents. Through democracy residents would build a society in which there would be both individual freedom and mutual aid through cooperative institutions. The program was a blend of the New England town meeting, the mutual aid of frontier towns, and the economic cooperatives of twentieth century farmers--all transmuted to the suburbs

for white and blue collar workers rather than farmers. The greenbelt cooperative program was clearly more radical as a demonstration for the rest of the nation to observe and follow than the physical planning. The physical town could be imitated by the construction industry without major manufacturing, but the appeal of economic cooperation to a majority of consumers, as well as manufacturers, would work a fundamental change in the American economic system.

The towns needed a grass roots democratic structure not only to direct socioeconomic cooperation, but also to provide the normal services of an independent municipality. The federal government held all the land, but the residents possessed the keys to local political power through the charters of incorporation. If these residents had moved into a typical public housing project they would have noticed few changes beyond improved sanitation and prompt repairs. But by moving into one of the greenbelt towns, with all the physical, economic, and legal trappings of an independent town, each resident achieved legal rights, political powers, and a common identity with other citizens that was quite impossible in a housing project. The further fact that the towns were without established patterns and institutions and were located several miles from the nearest community forced the first generation of residents to establish their own new society--a task which, for several years, radically changed their lives.

The residents disciplined themselves against any tendency to dependence on the Farm Security Administration. An editorial in the Greenbelt Cooperator criticized those who would turn to the government for funds

and equipment as supportive of criticism that people would only demand more if anything were given to them.⁴ In August 1938, when the possible building of a recreation center was being discussed, the Cooperator asked that citizens either pay for it themselves or forget the idea.⁵ The Greendale Citizens' Association discussing a proposal to build a community center separate from the school, also decided not to seek government funds. The majority of residents believed the F.S.A. had done enough for them and that they should furnish their own building. Even during the local recession in 1939, when Greendale residents sought federal aid for unemployment relief, they established their own Labor Relations Committee to find jobs for the unemployed of their town, and set up an Exchange of Skills Office where a list of available jobs and another of those with particular skills were kept.

Unquestionably, the towns relied on federal officials--particularly the community/town manager--for initial direction and continuing advice. But the local societies and institutions developed for the most part because of the enthusiasm and efforts of almost every citizen. During the first year at Greenbelt approximately thirty-five organizations were founded in addition to many temporary committees. Almost every adult belonged to at least one organization or committee.

One reason for the frenetic activity of the townspeople derives from their backgrounds. Most came from poor sections of Washington where they had had few opportunities for social organization and no city government to which they could contribute--as one might expect, they were culturally and politically starved. Their general educational backgrounds

were unusually high. In 1940 the median school year completed by Greenbelt residents over 25 years of age was 12.5. Approximately 65 percent had completed high school, 34 percent had some college education, and only 3 percent had less than eighth grade education. The national median educational level in 1940 for whites over 25 was 8.75 years of school. In 1960, the national median was still only 10.6 years.⁶

The growth and subsequent disintegration of cooperation in Greenbelt can be traced through its major institutions. The two major political institutions were the town council and the citizens' association. The council was established in the town charter as the official representative of the citizens, and its five elected members chose Louis Bessemer as chairman, thus mayor, a man who was a long time member of the District of Columbia Cooperative League. The Citizens' Association shared the municipal chores with the town council, establishing many committees to investigate numerous problems. During periods of controversy the Citizens' Association operated as a town meeting, providing communication channels between the residents and the town council or the federal government.

The day after the election of the town council (November 23, 1937), residents saw the first edition of the Greenbelt Cooperator. Founded by the new Journalism Club, the paper remains today a nonprofit enterprise staffed by volunteers. It is the only one of the three greenbelt town papers which has survived as an independent local newspaper, and is an invaluable record of Greenbelt's development.⁷ The consumer cooperative movement was supported against the charge by J. B. Matthews, research director for the House Un-American Activities Committee (Dies Committee),

that communists were working through consumer organizations to destroy the American profit system. The Cooperator pointed out that Matthews had previously been vice president of Consumers Research, a private group opposed to the consumer cooperative movement.⁸

The Greenbelt Consumer Cooperative founded in January of 1940, was the keystone in Greenbelt's structure of mutual aid. It survived the sale of the town and because of careful management, has expanded into Baltimore, Washington, and northern Virginia. A consumer co-op to operate the retail establishments at the three towns had been planned for a long time by the Resettlement Administration, who hoped to loan the residents funds repayable through the sale of stock and the proceeds of sales. However, no action was taken, and the R.A. was merged with the Department of Agriculture. The solicitor of the department said that no loans could be made to the town coops because all funds allocated to the R.A., and thus to the F.S.A., were for rural rehabilitation. The F.S.A. then turned to the Consumer Distribution Corporation financed by the Boston merchant, Edward A. Filene, who established a subsidiary called Greenbelt Consumer Services, which had exclusive right to operate all commercial facilities in Greenbelt. These included a supermarket, valet shop, barber shop, beauty parlor, motion picture theater, and a gasoline station. Rent for the buildings was based on a percentage of the sales, and was comparable to the ratio for privately rented stores. The G.C.S. was a nonprofit, self-liquidating subsidiary, which would return all profits to the consumers and turn over ownership to Greenbelt residents by December 31, 1940. During 1938 and 1939, a large number of Greenbelt residents organized a Greenbelt Consumer Co-op, selling \$5,000 worth of stock

at \$10.00 per share to over 400 residents. On January 2, 1940, Greenbelt Consumer Services was sold to the resident stockholders for \$40,000, \$5,000 of which was paid in cash and the balance in the form of a Consumer Distribution Corporation loan at four percent interest, was paid off over the following six years.⁹

A survey of the Greenbelt Coop by the University of Maryland in 1940 revealed that sixty-seven percent of the residents had purchased stock, and generally, it was in a strong financial position. The supermarket accounted for half the coop's revenue, and average food prices were nine percent lower than District of Columbia chain stores and 9.3 percent lower than independent food stores. It could have charged even lower prices had it not been for Maryland's retail price maintenance law. All members (stockholders) of the coop, received dividends on their purchases, and in 1940 these amounted to 3.85 percent.¹⁰

In 1943, after 1,000 defense homes had been completed in Greenbelt, the coop stores expanded, and a second food store opened adjacent to the new homes. The government also depended on the Greenbelt Consumer Cooperative for new services such as operation of a swimming pool opened in 1939 and a local bus service from 1945 to 1951. A large turnover of residents, thus of shareholders, weakened the institution. The addition of the defense homes, however, increased membership, and in November 1944, the coop hired a new general manager, and launched an expansion program which helped it survive the sale of the town and the opening of competitive private retail stores.

The Greenbelt Health Association, like the Credit Union, was established to take care of immediate needs--there was no doctor in Greenbelt

and no hospital in Prince George's County. The Health Association was patterned after a consumer-owned clinic in Washington, founded in 1937 by federal employees. It started with seventy-five families each of whom contributed a \$5.00 entry fee and a monthly payment of \$1.50 for a single person to \$2.25 for a family of six. By December 1938, 212 families had joined, and on April 1, 1938, the Greenbelt Health Association opened a clinic with a doctor whose salary was paid to treat members, although he could treat nonmembers on a fee-for-service basis. This arrangement did not suit the doctor, and he resigned, two more being hired in his place. One of these, Dr. Joseph Still, was enthusiastic about cooperative health associations and through his efforts Greenbelt opened a small twelve-bed hospital in May 1939.¹¹ In January 1942, the F.S.A. essentially destroyed the association by refusing to pay \$23,000 to cover the hospital expenses for fiscal 1942. The town held a referendum to determine if the residents wanted to pay the cost themselves, and decided not to. One reason given for rejection was that the county was constructing a hospital in Riverdale, which was nearby. Despite protests to the F.S.A. and an appeal to Mrs. Roosevelt, the hospital closed on January 31, 1942, and its only doctor left two months later. In March 1944, the Federal Public Housing Administration ruled that private doctors could open offices in Greenbelt, and the membership declined steadily until the last 180 members dissolved the organization in June 1950.¹²

The women of Greenbelt organized a cooperative nursery school which was the first in Prince George's County. In addition, they started a Better Buyers' Club which studied products, labeling, and consumer

legislation. The elementary school children even organized a coop for selling candy, pencils, and other small items, selling shares for ten cents, and the first profits were distributed by the end of the first half of the year.

The spirit of cooperation in the early years was strong enough to have unusual influences. In November 1939, the Citizens' Association and the town council firmly rejected the suggestion of a group of residents that Negroes be excluded from the supermarket lunch counter. This is notable in light of the rigid segregation in the county and the rest of Maryland. Also surprising for the time was the decision of the coop board of directors not to show the film "Birth of a Nation" at the Greenbelt Theater on the grounds that it was racist.¹³

The cooperative spirit flourished in the other two towns but did not maintain its early momentum to the degree seen at Greenbelt. The Greendale Cooperative Association was started by the residents in the summer of 1938, and a cooperative committee was formed which decided to follow Greenbelt's example and establish a consumer cooperative to operate Greendale's commercial facilities. The Co-op was incorporated in August 1938, with a loan from the Consumer Distribution Corporation, which also financed the Greenbelt co-op. The Greendale Cooperative Association leased the commercial center from the F.S.A., and established a food store, a variety store, a drug store, movie theater, shoe repair and valet shop, barber shop, beauty parlor, tavern/restaurant, and a gasoline station.

At its third annual meeting in 1941, the Greendale Cooperative Association, which had been a subsidiary of the Midland Cooperative Association from whom the staff had initially borrowed money to begin,

became independent. At that time all its enterprises were earning a net profit. After the war the Public Housing Administration (P.H.A.) leased several of the stores to private proprietors because the Co-op no longer wanted to operate them, and in 1948, the P.H.A. refused to renew the leases on remaining Co-op businesses and opened them to competitive bidding. The Co-op lost the food store, the variety store, and the barber shop, retaining only the tavern/restaurant and the gas station. The Co-op disbanded in December 1948.¹⁴ Co-op directors blamed the P.H.A. for its failures, but the accuracy of this is questionable, as Greendale was the smallest of the greenbelt towns and was located closer to private stores than any of the other towns. While the Co-op stores sold to a few people outside Greendale, the town residents traded in much larger numbers with outside competitors.

Greendale also attempted to establish a cooperative medical organization and two groups were established in 1933. The Greendale Medical Union failed after several months of operation. The Greendale Health Association, founded with the help of the Milwaukee Medical Center, functioned successfully until after the war when, its doctors pressured by Milwaukee hospitals, other area doctors, and P.H.A. sanctioned competition from private physicians in Greendale, it merged with the Milwaukee Medical Center.

The Greenhills Consumer Services survives today, but on a much smaller scale than that of the Greenbelt co-op. As in the other two towns, a consumer cooperative was established, with the aid of the Co-operative League of Cincinnati and a loan from Filene's Consumer Distribution Corporation. In April 1938, when there were only 100 families in the town,

a meeting was held at which a committee presented the co-op plan, and it was immediately adopted by unanimous vote. In 1939, the Co-op signed a ten-year lease with the F.S.A. for the commercial center and opened all the usual shops, and by 1940 about 400 residents were members. During the war the Co-op ran into financial trouble (a number of the residents were not pleased with the Co-op and preferred private chain stores) and divested itself of all businesses except the food and drug stores. In 1954 the food store built a new and larger structure and in 1960 opened a second store in the nearby community of Mt. Healthy. By 1962 total sales had risen from \$200,000 in 1940 to \$2,200,000. This is small compared to the Greenbelt co-op sales which in 1962 were over \$20,000,000.¹⁵

A question is why cooperative enterprise disintegrated at Greendale, declined at Greenhills, and expanded at Greenbelt. One reason may lie in the smaller sizes of the other two towns compared to Greenbelt, thus making it much harder to support the variety of business operated by the co-ops. If Greendale's co-op had consolidated its efforts in the food and drug stores during the war as the Greenhills co-op did, it might have survived. In addition, the Greenbelt co-op met its competition with expansion of its own facilities, through a stock sale to its residents from 1945 to 1947, resulting in the construction of a larger, modern supermarket in 1948. In the period 1954-56, when Greenbelt was adjusting to its sale, the co-op made some basic policy decisions which have had lasting effect. All of its Greenbelt business except the food, drug, and general merchandise stores which were consolidated in the supermarket through a \$200,000 extension of the building, were ended. The small

service station in the commercial center was also abandoned, but in its place the Co-op opened a \$100,000 automobile service plaza. Thus, while divesting itself of less profitable businesses, the total operation of the Co-op expanded, as did its membership. Finally, the Co-op absorbed the Westminster Cooperative in nearby Carroll County in 1956 and in 1959 merged with the Rochdale Cooperative in Prince George's County, which brought both more members and two more supermarkets. By 1967, Greenbelt Consumer Services had become a major business with 17,000 members and fourteen retail stores in the Baltimore-Washington area.¹⁶

It seems that cooperative democracy atrophied as a result of special circumstances in each individual community, but there were also common causes. The residents were unwilling or unable to devote the time and energy necessary to establish and maintain the required highly participatory democracy, and they lacked the money to hire enough people to handle the administration. Cooperative endeavors particularly require continuous citizen support, and participatory democracy and economic cooperation thrived in the early years because it was new and exhilarating as a unique experience, but soon became institutionalized and therefore less emotionally satisfying. The structure was also weakened by families moving in and out of towns faster than they could be assimilated into the demanding community institutions. Permanence of residency was made difficult by the F.S.A., but the coming of the Second World War made it impossible. If, in fact, local democracy and economic cooperation require a relatively stable population, this alone would explain the change of the greenbelt towns into more traditional suburban communities.

R.P.A.A. and Cooperative Housing

The R.P.A.A.'s approach to the problem of housing and development costs was never limited to innovations in site planning scale and procedures alone; cost analysis pervaded its entire community planning synthesis resulting in a new conception of government's role in housing. The City Housing Corporation, which limited dividends to six percent, was midway between the strictly commercial investor and the philanthropic fund and cooperative. Both the limited dividend company and philanthropic fund had been devised around the mid-nineteenth century to supply better housing at lower rents for urban workers than the commercial developer could offer.

Apart from an experimental and demonstration value, the philanthropic trust was obviously useless as a financial or administrative device to supply low cost housing in substantial quantities. The cooperative idea was more promising, but far more successful in Europe than in the United States, where labor support and government financial assistance were lacking. Many of the so-called cooperatives of the 1920's provided for joint management and ownership of common areas such as halls, but they did not preclude individual lease or sale of apartments at a profit. Private builders erected and sold them to individuals whose stock determined their voting power. In the genuine cooperative each member possessed one vote without regard to capital holdings, and he owned stock in the organization rather than individual apartments--these belonged to the society, which had first option on redemption of stock.

The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics showed only forty cooperative housing societies in existence during the mid 1920's. All

but two of these were in New York City. The Bureau collected data on thirty-two of the societies--twenty-two in Brooklyn, nine in Manhattan, and one in Wisconsin. America's meager cooperative housing tradition, like the innovations in residential design described earlier, was distinctively a product of the 1920's. Only two of the societies were in existence before 1920.¹⁷ Cooperative housing in the United States, representing one method of reducing costs or rentals, was not only scanty but frequently unsuccessful. The Milwaukee Garden Homes Company failed as a cooperative venture, and two apartments at Sunnyside sponsored by the Cooperative League proved less successful than dwellings for sale or rent.

The City Housing Corporation differed from previous limited dividend companies in that its sponsors sought to establish a permanent partnership between government and cooperative or limited dividend organizations, wherein direct government financial assistance would increase the supply of low cost capital available for non-commercial housing operations. In more general terms, the R.P.A.A. focussed attention upon the relationship between the quantity and quality of housing, and the amount and cost of capital. Its members strongly challenged the traditional assumption that government's role in housing was limited to minimum standards legislation. Throughout the 1920's, the R.P.A.A. pressed for the establishment of financial mechanisms to channel government capital into the housing market to benefit income groups which existing lending and building institutions did not satisfactorily accommodate. Clarence Stein assumed the pivotal role in the R.P.A.A.'s efforts to increase the supply and diminish the cost of capital available for non-speculative housing.

Bryn Gweled--A Thriving Cooperative Community

A contemporary example of a successful cooperative community which was established in the late years of the New Deal, is Bryn Gweled Homesteads, near Philadelphia. Unlike the aforementioned cooperative efforts, this community was not government sponsored.

Bryn Gweled Homesteads is a community of approximately seventy homesteads on 240 acres of rolling fields and woodlands in Lower Bucks County, Pennsylvania. It had its beginning in 1939 when a dozen families in Philadelphia came together to discuss the possibility of a cooperative venture. This group contacted Ralph Borsodi at "The School of Living" in Suffern, New York, and with his consultation, crystallized the ideals they were reaching for, and the means of realizing those ideals. Their primary purpose was to establish a true democracy, where people could come together regardless of differences in racial and religious backgrounds, to work for the community as a whole in solving problems, to the majority's satisfaction, and to share in recreation facilities and leisure time activities with others of similar interests. Some of the group had already had experience in various kinds of cooperatives, and they knew that by working together they could develop and maintain facilities which they could not hope to manage alone.

In the spring of 1940, the group incorporated as Bryn Gweled (Welsh for "Hill of Vision") Homesteads, designating 80 acres to be for the use and pleasure of all members, held forever as common woodland, the remaining land to be divided into building plots of one and one-half to two acres.

The membership of Bryn Gweled is composed of people of varied cultural, religious, and racial backgrounds, in a wide range of ages and occupations. In the original group, comprised mostly of professionals, there were, among others, engineers, a physician, teachers, social workers, architects, a minister, and an artist. The community belief in slow growth is reflected in the procedure for admitting members. Prospective homesteaders are invited to visit all of the families individually on the Homestead and to become thoroughly acquainted with the community and its way of life. They are asked to attend two Bryn Gweled meetings, and are then visited by the Membership Committee. Because congeniality and the sharing of ideas is vital to the success of the project, it is important for applicants and members to get to know each other. At the completion of these visits, questionnaires and reference letters are considered at a closed membership meeting. A four-fifths affirmative vote of the resident members brings new members into the Homestead.

The original members lived a more communal life than the families do now. They built their own roads, dug their own trenches for underground utility wires so that there would be no service poles or wires visible to destroy their views, and cooperatively built their houses, with one of the architects or engineers advising on details if needed. Communal landscaping and site planning was practiced, with one result being that each plot has complete privacy from the next without artificial fencing. A swimming pool was fashioned out of the remaining stone "base-ment" of a collapsed Pennsylvania Dutch barn, and ball diamonds, soccer fields, and tennis courts were also provided by the residents' efforts.

Originally, the homesteaders raised their own vegetables, poultry and pigs cooperatively, had steers butchered and shared the meat, and bought staples in quantity and fruits from farmers by the bushel, sharing in canning and preserving. They had sewing and window washing bees. As the homes were paid for and the country went into its era of prosperity, with increased incomes for the residents, there was less need to live so economically. However, the cooperative effort still prevails in their social existence, and a helping hand would be extended in any emergency, be it financial or emotional.

Bryn Gweled is a cooperative nonprofit corporation owned by its members. The land is capitalized at its value at the time of purchase in 1940. There are no paid officers, managers, bookkeepers, maintenance people, etc. All functions are performed gratis by members of the Homestead. Community business is conducted at a membership meeting held the first Saturday evening of each month. The Board of Directors, the President, Vice-President, the Membership Committee and the Nominating Committee are elected by the membership. The Board of Directors appoints the treasurer, secretary, and corresponding secretary. Everyone is expected to serve on at least one committee yearly, and members are encouraged to take part in a variety of responsibilities over the years.

The list of volunteer committees is long and provides some insight into the working of the Homestead: Property and Utilities, Children's Activities, Swimming Pool, Soccer, Community Maintenance, Community Activities, Grounds and Planting, Community News Sheet, and Tractor. Regular work parties are held each month and enable the project to operate

as economically as it does. There is also a communal, self-service gas station owned by the Homesteads.

When a family joins Bryn Gweled, it leases a lot for a 99 year renewable term. Monthly assessments of the Homestead cover such expenses as maintenance of community property and improvements, taxes on unleased lots and common land, community activities and other items. Monthly assessments vary slightly, depending on the size, location, and arability of the lot rather than on the improvements. A capital investment of approximately \$1,600 is required, to be paid at a minimum rate of \$10.00 per month. Wives as well as husbands are members, so that there is equality of voice in management.

Each family builds or buys a home, and owns all such improvements, but does not own the land. If a member secures a mortgage, Bryn Gweled is asked to join in the mortgage, reserving the right to continue payment in case of the individual's default, though assuming no liability to repay the loan. Banks and Building and Loan Associations have accepted mortgages on leased land under this arrangement. Bryn Gweled and its members are assessed for taxes by the county and township as are any other real estate and home owners.

When a family is ready to build, the Community Planning Committee reviews the plans, offers its experience, and helps in explaining township and Bryn Gweled requirements concerning structures, well, septic tank, tile drain field, and distances between the improvements and the lot boundaries. Neighbors are consulted on the acceptability of major features of plantings and structures. Within this framework a family

develops its lot according to its individual wishes. If a family withdraws from Bryn Gweled, the owner is responsible for the sale of the house, which may be made only to another Bryn Gweled member family. Occasionally houses are for rent, although the ideal of owner-occupied homes is important for the full democratic participation of the community.

The ten original houses were designed by four architects and built cooperatively or individually. There is little similarity in roof lines or in specific proportions, but the individualistic quality of the design and the appropriateness of materials create a bond more interesting and significant than standardization could produce. The contemporary homes at Bryn Gweled were created without any preconceived images--simply out of the owner's requirements for living. The homesteaders are proud that in many cases they had no clear idea of the house exterior before it was built, the plan and the function furnishing the bases for discussions with the architects.

Bryn Gweled was originally planned as a commuting community, with most of the men working in either Philadelphia or Princeton, New Jersey. In its March, 1946 issue, Progressive Architecture criticized this inconvenience, in addition to the lack of cluster development in the homesteads, saying that the inability to reach by foot essential facilities (stores, an elementary school, a post office, church, or auditorium) prevents Bryn Gweled from becoming a complete neighborhood. While one-acre lots may have provided the desired privacy and also guaranteed a closer physical relationship between the residents, the predominant desire of these settlers, having come out of large apartment complexes in the city, was

country living with space enough for not only gardening, but small scale cooperative subsistence farming. Given a larger, government sponsored public enterprise of this nature, without the specific requirements of this group, more efficient use of space could be arranged, resulting in a closer neighborhood unit.

One interesting point made in the Progressive Architecture article, was that the Bryn Gweled method of homesteading does not make sufficient savings possible to send the children to out-of-town colleges which is almost imperative in a community of this location and type.¹⁸ In direct contradiction to that statement, recent contact with the members of the community has revealed that not only has their way of life proved successful, but the combination of working jobs in the "outside world" while cooperating on expenses at home has resulted in their children attending some of the best schools in the country.

For the times in which they were built, Bryn Gweled houses display a variety of structural innovations. In one house there are neither radiators nor hot air vents, but imbedded in the floors are pipes of circulating warm water that provide its heat. Another home has air conditioned walls. The children's wing of another has movable partitions, so that, by day, the separate sleeping rooms can be opened into one big playroom. Several of the homes are built on one floor, with wide eaves that keep out the sun in summer and let it in for warmth in winter, while some have water-shingled roofs, each consisting of a tank which covers the house with a four-inch sheet of circulating water that repels summer heat. In winter the tank is drained and the black composition surface absorbs heat from the sun's rays. One family was so fond of picnics, that they

incorporated a second story sun deck into the design of their home, complete with an outdoor fireplace. At night, double doors swing open and beds roll out to convert this sun deck into a sleeping porch.

Instead of Borsodi's back to basics approach to kitchen ware and lifestyle in general, the inhabitants of Bryn Gweled have equipped their homes with convenient, labor saving appliances, but all are designed for living--not streamlined out of all humanity, after the modern "functional" houses designed at that time. Many of these devices pertain to not only the canning, freezing, sewing, and other household chores, but the crafts pursued by nearly all of the residents--weaving, ceramics, stained glass, and others.

Bryn Gweled draws no religious or color line. Many of the original families are Quakers (now numbering about twenty-five percent) and the feeling throughout the community for racial and religious tolerance is strong. On the questionnaire that candidates are asked to read and sign it's stated:

There may be German, English, Italian, Chinese, Russian, Negro, Jewish, Japanese, etc., members living on the Homesteads. Does this meet with your approval for such things as eating with them, swimming with them, and working with them cooperatively?

Any family that answers "no" automatically excludes itself. On the other hand, individuality is cherished, and in the by-laws of the corporation is an article:

The rights of members to absolute freedom of religion, politics, association, expression, production and exchange shall never be abridged or impaired by the group, except so far as the freedom of individual members conflicts with the rights of other members.

Another quotation which gives insight into the concerns of the Homesteaders comes from their brochure called, The Gully Trail, which maps and describes all the common woods and trails which wind through Bryn Gweled, and which includes a complete inventory of all trees and shrubs on the entire property:

We have seen how all nature works together harmoniously and constantly for new creation. It is only by pausing to realize what is happening that we can respect, enjoy, and love it, and help preserve it for our children and their children's children.

This brochure not only contains botanical sketches of the leaves of each of the trees, vines, wild flowers and shrubs, but tells which birds and animals feed on or seek shelter from them, a truly valuable ecological guide to both children and adults.

There has been and perhaps will always be talk about the homesteaders. They have been accused of being almost everything (communists, socialists) except what they really are--a group of people who have found it possible to live together in a community and provide for themselves and their children a feeling of belonging and security.¹⁹

Conclusion

The organization of the Regional Planning Association of America in 1923 signified a sharp break with traditional housing and planning thought in the United States. Composed of a small number of talented technicians and social critics, the R.P.A.A. was distinctive for its uncompromising criticism of metropolitan centralization, small scale speculative housing development and planning efforts which failed to relate physical and social change within a regional framework. As an alternative,

the R.P.A.A. devised a community planning program based upon innovations in residential design site planning and financing, and the development of regional cities, comprised of a multiplicity of community types. The members felt that both the large metropolitan areas as well as the smaller regional communities would benefit from a more equal distribution of the population.

The New Deal rural resettlement programs originally tried to incorporate an enhanced social vision as well as physical redevelopment activities, but they failed in their basic objectives for relocating depression-struck farmers and city dwellers into rural subsistence homesteads. The government used the R.P.A.A.'s ideas selectively, but never followed through on a national scale. The Greenbelt town program, out of the Suburban Resettlement section of the R.A., for example, was too small and too suburban to do justice to the R.P.A.A.'s regionalism. The three towns that were finally built--Greenbelt, Greenhills, and Greendale--exemplified the rising standards in community planning. Henry Wright, Clarence Stein, Robert Kohn, and Catherine Bauer, all R.P.A.A. members, made at least some direct contribution to the program's limited success.

The reasons for failure of the Resettlement Administration's programs were many and complex. The atmosphere in the new agency had become a little heady. The aspirations could not have been more benevolent, and much hard thought went into plans and programs. But somehow, the R.A. insiders neglected to take the American people into their confidence. The whole effort skipped too many basic attitudes. M. L. Wilson used to talk about the "white-lighters, never satisfied, but excited," who could not bear to be by themselves in rural solitude.²⁰ The trouble lay

basically in the fact that most Americans were white-lighters, from an individualistic and competitive culture, lacking any faith in the community idea.

The New Deal also failed to establish a sufficiently appreciative and supportive political constituency for its planning policies and programs among the electorate, the various pressure groups, Congress and its powerful committees. It was, in fact, for such political reasons, as well as for substantive and technical failures, that some of the New Deal's main pieces of planning were ultimately embattled and finally demolished.

The problem of economic opportunities plagued the whole New Deal community program. The stranded communities were planned with a sufficient economic base and suffered thereafter because of this lack, while the suburban communities, and particularly the greenbelt cities, were located near enough to industrial employment to eliminate any employment problems, but the low income families could not repay the government for its investment in what turned out to be rather expensive housing. They could afford to live in and maintain their new communities. The industrial type subsistence homesteads, located between industry and agriculture, were ideally situated for economical living, but not unless the subsistence plots were intensively utilized. This meant that the R.A. must educate the homesteaders in gardening and home production. The all rural communities, planned for full time agriculture, were really testing grounds for American small farm agriculture, and most of these projects from 1936 to 1941 did not provide a net profit, let alone permit any repayment to the government.

For Tugwell, the Resettlement Administration was an assignment about which he had mixed feelings. While he was very concerned about the fate of the rural poor and wished to offer solutions to their dilemma, in particular, he fundamentally disapproved of the whole subsistence homestead approach. Tugwell felt that to go against technology was to go against history--if the family farm or the subsistence homestead had a role, it was at best peripheral, exacting a far higher economic cost than social value justified. While he was always willing to humor Roosevelt by chat about the advantages of decentralization, he did his best to deflate Roosevelt's belief that the land could absorb the urban unemployed and to diminish the fantasy of a new rural-urban society.²¹ Nonetheless, the administrative inheritance of the Resettlement Administration had a momentum of its own, both from the projects to which it was already committed and from the personnel which it had already attracted. Receiving nearly a hundred rural communities, in process or in prospect, from Subsistence Homesteads and F.E.R.A., Tugwell confronted the problem of giving them an economic basis which would save them from decaying into rural slums. They had not attracted industry as M. L. Wilson had hoped, and Congress had forbidden them publicly owned factories. The remaining solution, in Tugwell's view, was commercial agriculture made possible through collective operation of the land, an idea which failed to appeal to the citizens of the 1930's.

Tugwell was enthusiastic about the Greenbelt towns, and while he would have liked more of them, the prohibitive costs of the three initial experiments, among other problems, made this impossible. However, the

greenbelt cities stand as monuments to Tugwell's ideas for social experiments in cooperation, site planning, architecture, and community planning on a human scale.

NOTES - CHAPTER III

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CHAPTER IV

EXPANSION AND COOPERATION

Almost predictably the conditions the Regional Planning Association of America deplored in the twenties worsened. By 1920, just half of the nation's population lived in cities. By the same statistical standard, the figure now approaches three-quarters of the population. More important, a large proportion of these people live in the over-extended metropolitan areas; most live in suburbs. Financiers still control urban development, although they now depend on federal complicity. Slums abound, and the move away from the human scale takes increasingly bizarre forms. The country weathered an urban crisis without any real change in national attitudes toward the city, and environmental conditions have seriously deteriorated.

After tracing the ideas of the RPAA, with particular emphasis on its cooperative theories, the community planning program of the New Deal, including the Subsistence Homesteads program and the Greenbelt towns under Rexford Tugwell, and a currently operating cooperative community, Bryn Gweled Homesteads, certain conclusions have been drawn, utilizing various aspects of these philosophies and programs. In order to attain the stated goal of decentralizing the population through expanding strategically placed small towns, the cooperative method of community planning, complete with self-built cooperative housing endeavors, is a possible

economic and social solution. As regional cities succeed in drawing people away from the large urban centers, similar cooperative enterprises would be instituted in the inner cities, allowing established ethnic groups to rehabilitate their neighborhoods, avoiding the usual problem with lending institutions.

The federal government would initially subsidize the cooperative building efforts, with the towns, or neighborhoods, gradually assuming control. A national planning program would be implemented by the federal government, with regional or state branches, to screen applications by towns wishing to expand, and to consult with the local government as the programs are undertaken. A reference for implementation possibilities is England, where there has been considerable experience in both small town expansion and decentralizing population.

Planned Expansion of Existing Towns

The growing imbalance in the distribution of population and industry throughout the country is shown in the already congested areas attracting large numbers of people and industries, while many of the smaller country towns have declined both in population and relative importance. Many of these smaller towns once held important roles in the nation, being situated on railroad routes, close to major highways, or on waterways. As the United States enters another era in growth, focussing on the South and Southwest as its new target areas, with the northeastern seaboard left in an economic slump, it appears that some form of planned dispersal of industry and population is needed to secure a better distribution throughout the country.

The majority of the smaller country towns which were not suitably sited to perform commuter functions have suffered a decline in both population and general prosperity during the present century. In order that some of the more viable among them may remain and continue to thrive as economic entities, some grafting onto them of additional population and industry is essential. In this way their servicing functions will also be increased and they will be able to survive as useful regional sub-centers, supplying the needs of extensive surrounding rural areas as well as amply satisfying the requirements of their own inhabitants. Many of the towns possess considerable character and charm and although some of this will probably be lost in the further development and expansion process, nevertheless much of their beauty and outstanding features can still be preserved by careful planning and integration of the new development with the old.

In order that country towns can expand to any significant extent, planning on a national level concerning dispersal of population and industry from over populated and badly congested large urban centers is necessary. There is a real need for a large measure of planned long-range dispersal, as opposed to spontaneous peripheral dispersal. Living, traveling and working conditions in the very large cities have many deficiencies - cramped housing and working conditions exist for many people, accompanied by intense traffic congestion and long time-wasting and tiring journeys. As the large city continues to sprawl, the open countryside becomes more inaccessible to many of its residents. Furthermore, it is becoming exceedingly difficult to find new sites in large centers of

population for rehousing people from slums and for carrying out urgent and vital redevelopment proposals, such as the provision of new housing, schools, open spaces and road improvements, unless large numbers of people and many industries leave the large cities.

There are many considerations and obstacles to overcome in the formulation and execution of this proposed program of town expansion. First, it is important that each town to be expanded is in a suitable location with good lines of communication, and that the necessary work required for redevelopment can be done at a reasonable cost. Mutual agreement of all the participating parties (local government, residents, planners, etc.) is essential as no compulsory action would work, and maximum cooperation and good will is needed at all stages in order to succeed. In addition, it is frequently difficult to try to persuade industrialists to move to a small expanding town, and once established, attracting sufficient numbers of workers often becomes a major problem. The local government must receive adequate financial resources to undertake the extensive and costly job of town expansion without a burden falling on the local taxes. Satisfactory integration of old and new residents can be far from easy, and should be approached with care and forethought. Great emphasis should be placed on requiring the skills of the planners to prevent the destruction of the character and charm of the small towns undergoing expansion programs.

English Experience with Town Expansion

In England in 1940, the report of the Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population was presented to Parliament. This is usually referred to as the 'Barlow Report' after the chairman of the commission, Sir Montague Barlow. The report recommended the setting up of a central authority, national both in scope and character, to control the redevelopment of congested urban areas, the decentralization or dispersal, both of industries and industrial population from these areas, and to encourage a reasonable balance of industrial development throughout Great Britain, coupled with appropriate diversification of industry throughout each region of the country. It was considered that the continued drift of the industrial population to London constituted a social, economic and strategic problem, which demanded immediate attention. The Central Authority have power to refuse consent to the establishment of additional industrial development in London or the Home Counties, except where it could be shown that the proposed undertaking could not be conducted on an economic basis elsewhere.

Following the Barlow Report, the Distribution of Industry Act provided for the first time some government control over the geographical siting of new industries. The government department responsible for securing a balance in the distribution of industry in England is the Board of Trade. Distressed or 'development areas' are developed with government aid with modern factories and a good variety of industries. Development (or expansion) areas also have priority in the Board of Trade's direction of industry. An industrialist wishing to construct a factory

with a floor area in excess of 5,000 square feet has to obtain an industrial development certificate from the Board of Trade before he can apply for planning permission. The Control of Office and Industrial Development Act of 1965 has extended the control of new factories down to floor areas of 1,000 square feet in certain areas (primarily London, southeast England and the Midlands) and introduced control of new office buildings in excess of 3,000 square feet in certain areas (as in the metropolitan region).¹

To implement a town expansion program, manufacturers must be found who are prepared to build or rent factories in expanding towns. Often, the new towns could be attractive to industrialists imaginative enough to refurbish older existing factory buildings, thereby saving money in both initial outlay compared to building new establishments, and in lower taxes. Some industries are compelled to move because the sites they occupy in the city are needed for other purposes, such as housing, schools, road improvements, etc. Others either can't afford the high taxes of the urban area, or wish to expand, are unable to do so on their present sites, and can thus benefit from a move to an expanding town.

Most towns tend to grow by a process of natural increase spread over a long period, possibly 50 to 100 years. The development in an expanding town would be condensed into a much shorter period, probably 10 to 15 years, and this requires skillful planning to secure smooth integration of old and new. Careful planning and coordination is also required to ensure that the various essential services and buildings are provided

in advance of requirements, but not prematurely, for financial reasons. There is a danger in some cases that unless a carefully considered plan for expansion is prepared, undesirable developments may take place, such as is happening in the Southeast and Southwest. Given the proper lead time, towns scheduled for expansion can develop in the manner that they themselves desire, and opportunities will be provided to develop the best kind of communities in accordance with the concepts of best planning practice.

Apart from the economic risk resulting from dependence on a single main industry, there is often an associated social imbalance and a need for only one class of work or one-sex labor. Mining towns have in the past been notorious for their lack of opportunities for female employment and the consequent emigration of young women in search of work. Therefore, many small towns previously dependent upon one industry would be enthusiastic about an expansion program which would help balance their employment possibilities. Expansion programs offer a real chance to small towns of recovering lost industry and simultaneously bringing in a stream of young and able-bodied citizens. With the increase in population comes the economic diversification, the fuller range of social activities and the increased local income that this brings with it. In addition, a town which may not be large enough to maintain adequate playing fields, a swimming pool and other amenities, could do so with a larger population.

If the scale of expansion is reasonable, then, unlike new towns, the investment in public services, in social facilities such as schools hospitals, and in shops and offices per factory space is likely to be

much less. It would also spread the additional industrial and domestic traffic load onto less used and more cheaply improved roads of the rural areas to the relief of the freeways around the cities. Additionally, the towns would achieve a sense of well being that comes from expanding economic opportunity--the stimulus that leads to more enthusiasm in local government and in community enterprise, and indeed to renewal.

Some of the more important matters considered when examining a potential expanding town site include such aspects as:

1. Relative ease and cost of provision of basic services, such as water supply, sewerage, sewage disposal and electricity.

2. Similar considerations with the provision of major social services such as schools, shopping, health services, etc.

3. Suitability of sites for development and estimated cost of development.

4. Comparative agricultural value of land.

5. General weakness or strength of the town as a center.

6. History of population movement in the town and surrounding countryside and changes in its structure.

7. Probable attractiveness of the town to industry.

A brief list of how to go about setting up the expansion program for an existing small town might include the following:

1. Joint exploration by both local government and the Federal government before anyone is committed.

2. Development shall only take place in areas zoned by the local planning authority for housing and industry.

3. Avoidance of good agricultural land wherever possible.

4. Amount and rate of expansion shall be that which the local government (and its citizens) consider desirable. They are asked to agree to expansion at a rate which they can, without undue disturbance, absorb the new population and industry.

5. No family will leave an urban area for an expanding town unless a job is already there or will be provided by the transfer of a business.

6. As expansion proceeds, the local housing needs will be satisfied at the same time. An effort would be made to mix the existing and new population to avoid the segregation of newcomers.

7. There shall be a standing consulting and advisory committee of the local and federal government during the period of expansion.

The support of the majority of local residents is essential if town expansion ideas are to operate smoothly. In this connection, it is important that the local government takes all possible steps to keep the public fully informed and to secure their confidence, approval, and support. A public meeting should be held to enable local people to examine the proposals at the earliest possible stage, giving them the opportunity to make informal observations on the draft proposals. The joint committee mentioned in item 7 above, comprised of representatives of a national planning agency and representatives of the local government, would be charged with submitting for approval:

I. A 'master plan' covering such matters as:

1. uses to be made of land
2. zoning proposals

3. densities of development
 4. road patterns
 5. siting of public utilities, buildings, and amenities.
- II. An annual program of operations and an annual estimate of expenditure.
- III. A Capital Improvements Program.

A minimum size limit should be established for towns before any grafting of additional population and industry can take place. One of the main advantages claimed for town development procedure is the existence of a nucleus around which the new development can be established. This nucleus contains the main shops, banks, entertainment facilities, municipal offices, schools, cultural activities, etc., which are available to the first of the new residents. With towns having populations below 6,000 to 7,000 these facilities are normally limited in both scope and content but they do vary with the rural service area attached to the town. From his investigation of expanding towns, Ivor H. Seeley² suggests that a town of 15,000 to 30,000 population would offer a far better basis for an expansion program than a town of about 5,000 persons, and could absorb satisfactorily a much larger addition of population. However, even a town of 5,000 population has advantages over a virgin site for a new town in that it does provide some form of social nucleus.

The concept of an expanding town should be to gradually build on the foundation of an existing community in such a way and at such a speed that at each stage of growth the expanding community is a balanced and integrated community. The scale and pace at which this can be done is necessarily governed by the capacity of the original community to absorb

expansion. The speed of expansion should be based on sociological considerations rather than considerations of expediency or convenience. Successful integration of old and new residents is more likely to be achieved with a slower rate of growth.

One of the most binding influences in uniting a community of old and new residents would be the establishment of as many cooperative systems as possible. This would give some of the older residents an important position as sources of information on location and availability of consumer goods, building materials for cooperative house building, as well as allow some of the new residents to share their skills in such endeavors as cooperative nursery schools, crafts instruction, etc. If the expanded housing program could be patterned after the system at Greenbelt, set up by the New Deal, as opposed to the privately developed new towns of the recent past which have had constant economic problems, then people of all income brackets could, in fact, build a town, sharing their skills and knowledge.

The problem of the exploding metropolis has been tackled in various ways--through urban renewal, which now has its own literature of failure, through privately sponsored new towns, which suffer from economic problems as well as fail to serve the needs of a cross section of the population, and through public housing, for the most part a source of shame as a demonstration project in depersonalization and alienation. Pruitt-Igoe is an overused example of the failure of public housing, but a more positive and hopeful example is the public housing facility in the Bronx whose residents, exasperated with the intolerable conditions and non-existent management which seems to accompany government housing projects,

demanded control of the facility. When they gained control, they proceeded to meet, set up committees, and in a short time had the project running on little money, but on a purely cooperative basis, collecting their own rents and keeping their own books in a far more efficient, and more important, more humane atmosphere.

The detailed formulation and implementation of the expansion program could advantageously be undertaken on a regional basis. In this way positive regional plans could link groups of expanding towns to either a major expansion or a larger established town to form a regional city cluster which could provide services at a regional level, such as specialized shopping, higher educational establishment, airport, hospital services, theatres and other cultural activities. Development of this sort would need a comprehensive regional road network linked to national traffic routes and good rail systems.

In this way genuine counter-magnets to metropolitan areas could be established, existing communities revitalized, dispersal of services and industry would be encouraged and, where suitably located, it would be possible to link the clusters of towns to existing ports. The town cluster formation should foster economies in administration and execution of schemes.

The federal government must assert a specific interest in the movement of people, displaced by technology or driven by poverty, from rural to urban areas, and also in the movement from densely populated central cities to suburban areas. Much of the present urban crisis derives from the almost total absence of any provision for an orderly movement of persons from the countryside into the city. The federal

government made extraordinarily successful efforts to provide for the resettlement of Hungarian refugees in the 1950's and Cuban refugees in the 1960's, but almost nothing has been done for Americans driven from their homes by forces equally severe.

Rural to urban migration has not stopped, and will not for some time. Doubtless the United States will remain a nation of exceptionally mobile persons, but the completely unassisted processes of the past need not continue with respect to the migration of impoverished rural populations. Knowing the potential millions of persons to be added to the U.S. population in the next few years, it is folly to have no policy with respect to where they will be located. To let nature take its course is a policy. To consider what might be best for all concerned and to seek to provide it is surely a more acceptable goal.

Housing Cooperatives

Non-profit continuing cooperatives offer a possibility for innovative housing. They combine proprietary rights with the concept of non-profit, they put residents (members) in the position of both landlord and tenant, they create non-market housing that is privately owned, they encourage future occupants of multiple housing to have a hand in planning their accommodation, and they provide for a broad mix of incomes in a society accustomed to thinking that housing must be arranged by income groupings.

This form of housing is a thoroughly logical answer to many of the tremendous housing problems of modern society. Pressure on land will eventually force us into various forms of multiple housing and reduce the

number of single detached houses to a much smaller proportion. At the same time, citizens in modern society are demanding more and more control over their own affairs, including housing.

The concept, however, is not readily grasped if thought of in traditional ways. In a capitalistic society, we are accustomed to thinking of all business and essential services as being divided among investors, management and consumers--that is, those who own, those who control and those who use. Cooperatives are the very antithesis of this, for they are enterprises in which owners, those who control and those who use, are all the same people--this is essentially an integrated system.

The cooperative approach tries to bring about some sort of balance between producers and consumers in a market where the producers have long held sway. The producers on the one hand are builders, developers, landlords, mortgage lenders, planners, professionals, suppliers, and real estate companies who have, traditionally, been in complete control. Consumers on the other hand are home buyers, tenants, mortgagors, borrowers, purchasers and users of the end product, and their bargaining strength has generally been weak--they haven't written many of the rules and conditions. A cooperative puts them in a position to do so, or at least bargain from the strength of a group. If the strength of the average citizen has been weak in the housing market, the poor have had no bargaining power at all. Their only leverage has been pity or charity, uncertain and shifting in the matter of housing.

The non-profit housing cooperative is such a new concept that it is sometimes not well understood by seasoned cooperative members accustomed to other facets of the cooperative idea, such as credit unions and consumer

cooperatives. In these, membership may be casual, but in a housing cooperative, one's membership is firm and continuous. A further important point of difference from most other cooperatives is the participation of government and various public authorities in cooperative housing. Cooperatives generally have prided themselves on self-reliance and independence from government--whatever strength they generated came from within. But housing is a different kind of enterprise, usually calling for a great deal of assistance or concurrence from various levels of government. This is especially true of housing that provides accommodation for people of low income.

Finally, the very concept of non-profit is different for housing. In a conventional consumer's cooperative, the aim is service at cost--whatever profit accrues to the cooperative belongs to the members. But in a housing cooperative operated on a non-profit basis, any advantage in costs must be taken in the form of reduced monthly charges. If and when circumstances require the disposal of the assets of the cooperative, they cannot be distributed among the members currently living in the project so as to yield a personal gain to anyone. Non-profit in continuing cooperatives goes all the way, and can also be called non-market housing. The individual homeowner has a dual relationship to his house--it is both shelter and investment. But in a non-profit continuing cooperative, the ownership is collective and is for shelter, or use, only. A member occupies a particular unit as his home, but when he leaves he cannot sell it because he has it under leasehold. As long as he remains, he pays only for the use of housing. On departure he takes only the cash contribution

he made to capital, plus the cost of changes or improvements in the unit approved by the cooperative's board of directors.

The concepts inherent to non-profit housing cooperatives are, to many people, quite radical. As a consequence, sound cooperatives are not going to spring up everywhere overnight--they are going to take time and the process may be slow until a firm foundation is laid.

Proof that cooperatives can be developed to form a major sector of housing is provided by four Scandinavian countries: Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland, which together have built over 1.4 million units of cooperative housing to date. In 1972, cooperatives accounted for 80,000 new units, or 30 percent of all housing in the four countries. In Poland, the proportion of cooperative units to total housing production is much higher and, the percentage of state housing to all new housing has fallen while the percentage of cooperatives has risen dramatically.³

It is not merely living in the same general area that makes a number of people a community. Two or three hundred families in a private rental highrise building who hardly know one another cannot be called a community. A typical suburb can often be a collection of isolated families and individuals who just happen to be occupying houses in the same geographical area, in the planning of which they had no hand and shared no ideas, and have little to say about its control and management. In a private rental project, the landlord makes the rules and tenants usually have little to say about creating their own housing environment, while in public housing, a government agency is in control and only recently have tenants been encouraged to organize and have a voice in influencing management. The basic concept emerging from these observations

is that community is something more than a certain geographical area. It is people who are conscious of having broad control over deciding their own living environment and life style, and deciding that they have to and want to take responsibility for shaping a certain kind of neighborhood for themselves and their children. It is people having a deep sense of interdependence, of concern for one another, of commitment to sharing many things together.

It is fundamental that people who are going to live in a cooperative project must be involved as consumers in planning it, whether it is going to be new construction or renovated existing housing. There must be a preparatory period during which the membership is built before the building begins. If mistakes are going to be made, it is better that those who will have to live with them, perhaps for a long time, have also had a hand in making them. To objections raised about the participation of members at an early stage, saying that it slows down the planning process, the Canadian experiences indicate that it will not cause any slowdown or delay if there is a good technical resources group and an experienced coordinator.⁴

A preparatory educational program gives the future members of the cooperative an opportunity to assess and select their own leadership team and elect a competent board of directors. This sifting out of capabilities and personalities at an early stage gives the members time to select good directors. It is often the board of directors that makes the difference between success and failure in any cooperative enterprise.

The question of size is important from the viewpoint of community. The objective should be to strike a balance between a project that is too

small for diversity of interests and one that is too large for people to get together easily. Projects with fewer than 50 units may have difficulty organizing such an important community service as a daycare center, while one over 200 units may tend to be too impersonal and subject to policies set by management.

Housing by People

In the same cooperative vein as housing planned by the residents, and expanded towns organized by uniting old and new residents with cooperatives of all sorts, the actual building of the housing can be done more efficiently and with greater personal satisfaction if the method of construction is cooperative and undertaken by the residents themselves. To point out the material diseconomies, social dysfunctions, and general counter-productivity of centrally administered governmental housing supply systems, does not mean that government has no role. A radical change of relations is needed between people and government in which government ceases to persist in doing what it does badly or uneconomically--building and managing houses--and concentrates on what it has the authority to do--to ensure equitable access to resources which local communities and people cannot provide for themselves. To fight instead for the restoration or extension of public expenditure on conventional housing programs is as reactionary as the failure to press for land reform and the liberation of housing finance from corporate banking.

Interestingly enough, the relatively well off U.S. owner-builders (along with the self-help rehabilitators and cooperative tenant-managers) teach the same basic lessons as the far poorer squatters of Peru and most

other so-called developing countries. Because housing decisions are controlled by households themselves, or by local associations and enterprises, they generate a great deal of wealth in proportion to their income. Not only do those housed through locally self-governing systems have higher standard homes than those provided by unsubsidized, centrally administered systems, but they have far healthier social environments than their heteronomous* substitutes, whether subsidized or not. The evidence of cases like Pruitt-Igo and Co-op City shows how much material waste and human alienation can be produced by centrally administered systems. Instead of generating wealth, heteronomy often produces poverty even among those it supplies. By suppressing local organizations, local enterprises, and personal and community initiative, it proves itself counter-productive.

The central proposition of Freedom To Build is that, for a viable housing process to exist, local and personal control is essential.⁵ This proposition was formulated after the discovery that the material savings and human benefits of owner building, rehabilitation, and improvement in the United States could be traced to dense local communication and supply networks open to local residents. As long as building plots or vacant buildings were available at reasonable prices and not inflated by speculation or monopolistic aggregation, as long as there was a plentiful supply of appropriate tools and materials through local distributors who did not discriminate against small or non-professional purchasers, and as long as local banks gave credit and were not absorbed into impersonally administered national corporations, then individual households and small groups could maximize the use of their own resources. Learning from experience

and making do with what is at hand obviously depend on personal communication. No one person has to know many others very well, as long as there are plenty of connections between various sets of friends.

The simultaneous satisfaction of the universal need for physical shelter, the cultural need for belonging to a particular society and the highly differentiated and personal need for self expression gives housing its special meaning when done at the level of personal and community action. Although there may be no analytical way to prove it, it seems obvious that both economy and conviviality can come about only through personal responsibility.

The basic lessons to be drawn from contemporary housing experience in the United States are no different from those in the rest of the world. Even if big housing developments do not look hideous to everyone, they are hideously expensive and usually socially destructive. Whether in the United States or elsewhere, both material and human viability evidently demand a small scale, social and physical diversity, and variety. It is becoming clearer that this can only be provided, and sustained, by large numbers of responsibly self-governing persons, cooperating groups, and small local enterprises. This is not meant to imply that the poor should take over from the government. In our world, resources are in the control of governmental or propertied elites, and there should be instead local control dependent on personal and local access to resources which only central government can guarantee.

In the years since 1973 when John F. C. Turner returned to his native country, there has been a rapid change in the way in which housing issues are perceived in Britain, a change which has even penetrated

governmental thinking. A demand has arisen, not just for the consultation of tenants, but for tenant control, for the transfer of both publicly and privately rented housing to tenants' cooperatives, for dweller controlled rehabilitation, for self-build housing associations, for widening the range of options open to people. Turner has been in the midst of a network of activists in all these fields, just as he is the British link with a worldwide network of advocates of alternatives in housing. Recently, in response to more perceptive analyses of the social psychology of alienation, as well as to direct pressures from local groups of angry voters, citizen participation has even been built into planning and building law, as in Britain, or as a prerequisite for federal support, as in the United States, but participation also costs more when it has to be built into central agencies' programs.

Forecasts of housing demands almost always fail. This occurs mainly because it is wrongly supposed that people will spend a given proportion of income on housing. Calculations of what people will spend are based upon what bank or government agency officials assume people can invest. But close observations in North and South America and in-depth studies in Central America suggest that apparent coincidences of what people will spend and what they can spend are superficial. If a family or household has to spend nearly all its cash income on food in order to keep alive, the proportion it can spend on housing is negligible--or even negative after feeding and clothing, and paying for the breadwinner's journey to work. So, they squat, or double up with relatives. And to suppose, as many agencies and statisticians do, that any family can spend

up to a quarter, or even a third, of its income on housing, is dangerously wrong in such cases.

Unfortunately, most overly simple observations emphasize the need for physical flexibility within dwellings or of dwellings. This has led to a great deal of investment in expensive construction systems that allow for internal rearrangements and the expansion and contraction of individual units--a mechanical view of 'loose-fit'.⁶ This investment has proved both expensive and of only marginal benefit. It has done very little in the way of providing for the vital needs of the great majority of people. Their requirements are not measured only by arrangement of rooms and windows, but by the degree of accessibility that they have to their friends and relatives, to their sources of income and to the places where they spend it--all of which demand 'loose fit'. Large-scale systems have created some of the most segregated cities the world has known.

Gordon's low energy characteristic of viable building is receiving a great deal of current attention. Not only does the relatively short life of large scale, centrally administered modern housing accelerate the exhaustion of scarce resources, but it uses vastly more. Indigenous buildings can offer enormous energy savings over conventional modern buildings.

For large organizations to provide adequate housing, they must standardize procedures and products in order to operate economically. By necessity this conflicts with the local and personal variety of housing priorities which are so important to successful housing programs. The larger the organization and the more centralized management becomes, the more frequent and greater the mismatches between people's housing

priorities and the housing they get. As the mismatches increase, so does the users' dissatisfaction. As a result, their investment of local and personal resources decreases and other resources must be found as substitutes. These are generally heavy equipment and complex technologies suitable for centralized organization, which only reinforces the cycle. As these demand large amounts of scarce and increasingly expensive resources, such as fossil fuel technologies and highly paid bureaucracies, financial inflation is inevitable. Any further streamlining of centrally administered housing systems to reduce costs only aggravates the cycle where only the very wealthy or a heavily subsidized minority can expect to be adequately housed.

In a democratic and genuinely socialist context, planning and administration are legislative processes limited to establishing and maintaining an equitable distribution of resources. For centrally administered societies, the amount of information needed for such distribution is extremely complex, but in the case of non-authoritarian societies, the information needed is quite different and far simpler. All that the latter's central planners need to know is the demand for resources and large scale infrastructure (public utilities and community facilities) which cannot be provided at local levels. Instead of needing to know how many houses are or will be demanded in a given place and time or for a given social sector the planners and administrators need only know the approximate quantities of building materials, tools and labor, land and credit that will be required. The local forms of these elements can be left to the people and the local businesses that serve them. According to Turner, the bureaucratic heteronomous system produces things of a high

standard, at great cost, and of dubious use value, while the autonomous system produces things of extremely varied standard, but at low cost, and of high use value. In the long run, the productivity of centrally administered systems diminishes as it consumes capital resource while the productivity of locally self governing systems increases as it generates capital through the investment of income.⁷ Big, far from being better, is not only more expensive and more wasteful of resources, but also increases the mismatches between the provision of, and people's variable demands for housing. Only people and local organization--localized housing systems--can provide the necessary variety in housing and the great range of production techniques needed to build it.

For a cooperative group to build their own housing, they must have appropriate technologies that allow them to use their own personal resources. Hand tools, small powered tools, easily and cheaply transported materials and locally available skills and labor are the common stock-in-trade of local builders. Large firms tend to use large machines and heavy technologies to reduce the highly variable human and local contributions which complicate central administration and reduce its productivity. Traditional local and human technologies are too expensive for a large organization. As a consequence, central administrations have far less access to loose-fit low energy and long life technologies than locally self-governing systems. The usual differences of cost between heteronomous and autonomous housing, when both have equal access to their preferred resources, is inevitably at least double in the first instance and, in the long run, many more times than that.

The larger the organization that builds and manages housing, the tighter the fit, the greater the mismatch of housing and households, the lower the effective demand. The higher the energy required and the greater the capital costs, the shorter the lives of the buildings and the greater the costs in use. The issue of housing economy is very simple and straightforward: it can be a function of the productivity of large organizations or it can be a matter of resourcefulness, whatever the scale or kind of organization. If the former continues to be preferred by the majority of administrators, planners, legislators, and architects, then concern will be concentrated on improving the efficiency and productivity of large scale industry. But if economy could be considered a matter of resourcefulness, or the efficient use of available resources, then the 'efficiency' of large organizations is evidently counterproductive.

It is what housing does for people that matters more than what it is, or how it looks. And therefore it is illogical to state housing problems in the modern convention of 'deficits' of units to some material standard. It is just this illogical basis used by centralized housing systems for assessing housing needs that leads to the fictitious demands on which nearly all housing policies are based. To be meaningful and useful as a means of action, people's housing needs must always be stated in terms of priorities. Three universal housing needs are: access to the people, institutions and amenities on which a tenant's livelihood depends, shelter from climate and neighbors, and tenure long enough to make a move worthwhile.

Conclusion

The one undebatable strategy that is needed now is somehow to equalize opportunity and to redistribute resources and the good things of life to the end that we may have a genuine regional equalization and balance of people instead of the powerful conflict of people in nationalistic and economic competition. The answers to these situations will be found in a major strategy which provides opportunity for each region to produce wealth and use it wisely within its own domain, yet at the same time provides ample opportunity through technology and communication for the movement of people and resources to and from the region with opportunity for achievement outside as well as inside the region. The assumptions of balance include a great deal more than the technically defined balanced economy with its balanced agriculture and industry. The heart of regional balance is found in the search for equal opportunity for all the people through the conservation, development, and use of their resources in the places where they live, adjusted to the interregional culture and economy of the other regions of the nation. The goal, therefore, is one of balanced culture as well as economy, in which there is equality of opportunity in education, in public health, in job opportunities, and in the elimination of handicapping differentials between different groups by involving them in a cooperative effort. These are the very ideals of the Regional Planning Association of America, and later the New Deal's Resettlement Administration under Rexford Guy Tugwell. For reasons of politics and economy as well as war and American individuality, these early advances toward a redistribution of the population,

respect for nature and natural resources, and efforts to establish a strong cooperative system of existence, did not fare as well as may have been hoped. However, there are still vestiges of those early efforts, prime examples of which are Greenbelt, Maryland and the Borsodi-inspired Bryn Gweled. These are good subjects for the study of cooperative success and failure, but the regional development through expansion of strategically placed small towns has yet to be implemented. The Subsistence Homesteads attempt and the later Resettlement Administration program produced no true viable network of settlements or towns, so the work needs to start afresh.

In American society, it is not so much a question of centralization of authority in conflict with states' rights as it is a problem of developing an adequate federalized central authority capable of achieving realistic decentralization. In other words, it is necessary to have some sort of national order of organization before the regions can be integrated and before they can be cooperatively developed at their best. There must be strong national character and organization before the nation can be made strong through the integration of its diverse regions so that regionalism may supplant the separatism and isolationism of our sectional development. The point of emphasis here is that it is through cooperative arrangement and the integration of diversified groups of people, both economically and ethnically, that strength and stability are to be found.

Such a functional regionalism becomes a tool for attaining balance and equilibrium between people and resources, men and machines, the state and the people. It is a tool of the democratic process in that it

provides for the redistribution of the good things of life and of the opportunity to work within the framework of different geographical areas and their inherent cultural equipment. It can be a tool for democratic world reconstruction, because it is through cooperative regionalism rather than economic nationalism that the society of the future can be organized for human welfare instead of for military achievements. It is a tool for social planning, because it takes into consideration the rights, privileges, and resources of people and areas and stresses self-government and self-development as opposed to coercive centralized power, and also because it offers specific technical workable ways of developing and conserving resources for human use ends.

When decentralization serves as a device primarily for effective administration it often strengthens the hand of centralization. It must be clear that the mere establishment of regional centers of what are primarily administrative districts does not constitute regionalism. An example of this fallacy is the case of the National Resources Planning Board in the New Deal era. This was an arrangement contrary to the earlier recommendations of the committee Report on "Regional Factors in National Planning and Development" where nine cities were designated as field offices directed by personnel from the central office. The regions were without boundaries or specific service objectives, the cities had no prime purpose of serving their regions and no physical relation to their economic or political constituency. Thus, vast areas were left as hinterland, or no man's land.⁸ The previous year's Report contained an equally fallacious method of administrative regionalism. The proposed federal organization of national planning through the administrative

units of a total system of river valleys, would make possible an almost completely centralized control of resources and economic process in contradiction to such a balanced and regionally related program as the TVA.⁹

The promise of regionalism must depend largely not only upon the previously stated definitions and conceptualizations but upon their acceptance. Both because such definitions and conceptualization have not been accomplished and because most scholars and planners are afraid to venture too far out, scepticism and opposition are logical products. A part of this fear is based upon the thought that the conceptualization called for is too complex and involves too much interdisciplinary co-operation. That is, of course, exactly what is intended, and yet it does demand more than most planners, social scientists or politicians are willing to underwrite. The conclusion at this time must be conservative on any very large immediate promise of regionalism, except in the gradual evolutionary process and in the logical developments made necessary by the changing structure and crises of our civilization.

The nation remains committed to the same metropolitan ideal pursued decades ago. The years since the New Deal bear out the RPAA's predictions of crime and congestion, urban fiscal crisis, and wasteful suburban sprawl. These are the still crumbling ruins of our metropolitan emphasis, and the great task outlined by the RPAA and aspects of the New Deal community program still confronts us. Any effort to resolve the problems of metropolitanism while maintaining its present economic and political foundation, will only deepen the original crisis. The situation, in

short, cannot be ameliorated without embarking on a bold new course. Despite all of the political obstacles to change and the ideological momentum to keep things as they are, there must be a fundamental commitment. Instead of working pragmatically on meaningless civic improvement projects, there must be a dedication to a new social order where people have decent homes, a stable community life, a healthy and varied environment, and a genuinely urban culture. That is the ultimate challenge to be found in a program of gradual change from mutual struggle to mutual support.

NOTES - CHAPTER IV

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 3. Laidlaw, A. F., Housing and People, published by Canadian Council on Social Development, Vol. 5, Nos. 2 and 3, p. 4.
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 6. Gordon, Alex, Loose Fit, Low Energy, Long Life, in RIBA Journal, January, 1974.
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 8. National Resources Board, Report, December, 1935, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, p. 159.
 9. National Resources Board, Report, December, 1934, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- * Heteronomy (2). Subjection to the rule of another being or power... subjection to external law opp. to autonomy. O.E.D.

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YESTERDAY'S SOLUTIONS TO TODAY'S PROBLEMS:
A PROPOSAL FOR PLANNED EXPANSION OF SMALL TOWNS
AS REGIONAL POPULATION MAGNETS

by

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ABSTRACT

After tracing the ideas of the Regional Planning Association of America, a loosely organized group of technicians and planners active in the 1920's, as well as the community planning programs of the New Deal in the 1930's, the thesis proposes utilizing various aspects of these programs today. In particular it emphasizes the merits of decentralizing the population through expanding strategically placed small towns, in order to create population magnets counter to those of the large metropolitan areas.

Rexford G. Tugwell's position in the New Deal as advisor to President Roosevelt and head of the Resettlement Administration, receives special attention. Tugwell played a pivotal role between the back-to-the-earth philosophy of the Regional Planning Association of America and the developing technocratic ideas of the future, and his performance in the government's national planning program reflects that combination. He was in charge of the Subsistence Homesteads Program, but was primarily known for his favorite project, the Greenbelt towns - Greenbelt, Maryland, Greenhills, Ohio, and Greendale, Wisconsin.

The cooperative method of community planning, complete with self-built cooperative housing endeavors, is studied as a possible economic solution to the expansion of small towns into a regional system. The cooperative theories of the RPAA, the Subsistence Homesteads program, and the Greenbelt towns are traced, and a currently operating cooperative

community, Bryn Gweled Homesteads, near Philadelphia, is featured. This community was established in the late New Deal era through consultations with Ralph Borsodi, a noted organizer of self-sufficient settlements, and it has flourished over the years. The life style and success of Bryn Gweled are documented through personal interviews and observations.

Finally, a proposal for a solution to today's problems concerning national population imbalance due to the attraction of the metropolitan areas draws upon the ideas of the RPAA and the Greenbelt towns. Although these programs were never implemented with any real degree of success, the economic and political climate was not favorable at the time. The thesis asserts that the time is now favorable, both economically and politically, for expansion of towns in a regional matrix, using a cooperative economic and social structure. A national planning program would be implemented by the federal government, with regional or state branches, to screen applications by strategically placed towns wishing to expand. These regionally expanded cities would be clustered for mutually shared amenities, such as universities, symphony orchestras, and large medical centers, obviating the necessity for each city to provide its own. The federal government would initially subsidize the cooperative building efforts, with the towns gradually assuming control.

As regional cities succeed in drawing people away from the large urban centers, similar cooperative enterprises would be instituted in the inner cities, allowing the established ethnic groups to self-build and rehabilitate their own dwellings, avoiding the usual problem with lending institutions. Regional cooperative efforts should promote a sense of mutual aid and reestablish the diminished community spirit in America's cities and towns.