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Reconsidering Progressivism: Agrarian Sentimentalists and Rural Social Organization

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"I believe in a free play in agriculture and country life for human motives other than the profit-making motives—for motives of pure sentiment, family history, prestige and pride; for motives of patriotism, and love of locality, landscape, horizon; for motives of religion, and self-sacrificing and duty to community."

Charles J. Galpin, "My Philosophy of Rural Life," 169.

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Finally, and most importantly, thank you to my parents Brent and Deborah Pontious. When I read the writings of Liberty Hyde Bailey and Charles J. Galpin, I immediately thought of my father's resourcefulness and dedication to family. For her part, my mother has inspired me both academically and creatively, and her compassion helped shape my abilities. Without their unconditional support and encouragement, I would not be who I am today: a Barnard woman with a completed thesis!

Introduction

Most scholars agree that the Progressive era crystallized around 1890, although its culminating date is less definitive. Richard Hofstadter argued that it only lasted until World War I and considered the 1920s to be a reversal of the American reform tradition.[1] When it came to agricultural politics, however, the aftermath of World War I presented farmers with one of the worst economic situations of the twentieth-century. As a response, the power of agricultural representatives in the federal government was stronger in the 1920s than it had been at any previous point during the Progressive era.[2] The endurance of the Progressive reform tradition led to the development of the country's first federal agriculture program, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics,[3] and the first sociological research unit, the Division of Farm Population and Rural Life. The chiefs of these two subdivisions of the United States Department of Agriculture, Henry C. Taylor and Charles J. Galpin, were social scientists dedicated to the improvement of the farmer's standard of living.

Situated between the agrarian revolts of the 1890s and the New Deal era, the Progressive era of rural reform has received comparatively little scholarship. Several academics, including Richard Hofstadter and William L. Bowers, have critiqued the motivations and effectiveness of rural reformers' efforts during the first three decades of the twentieth-century. Recently, however, scholars Olaf Larson and Julie Zimmerman have offered a countervailing analysis of these reformers through their research on the Division of Farm Population and Rural Life. A relatively small unit housed under the USDA, it was the first branch of government to study the

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[1] Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform; from Bryan to F.D.R.*, (New York: Knopf, 1955), 3.
[2] Donald L. Winters, "The Persistence of Progressivism: Henry Cantwell Wallace and the Movement for Agricultural Economics," *Agricultural History* 41, no. 2 (Apr., 1967): 109.
[3] Ibid., 110.

neighborhood organization and social participation of agricultural communities and their residents. The formation of the Division was the result of the developing social sciences and integrated approaches that combined these disciplines. Progressive rural reformers sought to understand agricultural communities through the study of economics, sociology, psychology, and anthropology. Many of these reformers sentimentalized the yeoman farming tradition that had existed in colonial America, and sought to reinvigorate the farmer's distinct culture while simultaneously improving his condition.

This thesis will examine what deficits in rural life attracted the attention of rural reformers and how their approach to studying and solving these issues was unique to the Progressive era, as the nature of governmental research shifted under the New Deal. Chapter one discusses the theoretical foundation laid by Theodore Roosevelt's Report of the Commission on Country Life and its contribution to the development of rural sociology. Chapter two examines this budding academic discipline that came to fruition under the guidance of Charles J. Galpin. Chapter three analyzes two research reports published by the Division during the 1920s and their continuation of the rural holistic approach demonstrated by the Report and Galpin's research. The thesis concludes with the changing direction of social scientific research under the USDA during the New Deal, a continuation of the Progressive tradition without its fundamental focus on social organization.

Chapter I: The Beginnings of Rural Holism in the Report of the Commission on Country Life

The Creation of the Report of the Commission on Country Life

In his introduction to the Report of the Commission on Country Life, Theodore Roosevelt stated:

> We were founded as a nation of farmers, and in spite of the great growth of our industrial life it still remains true that our whole system rests upon the farm, that the welfare of the whole community depends upon the welfare of the farmer. The strengthening of country life is the strengthening of the nation as a whole.[4]

This statement from Roosevelt in 1910 encapsulated several themes addressed in the Report and the country life movement.[5] Roosevelt underscored the importance of the farmer to the rest of the nation by illuminating the connection between agriculture and industry in early twentieth-century America. He appealed to the yeoman tradition romanticized by Thomas Jefferson, reminding readers of America's agricultural foundations before its transformation into an industrial economy.

Roosevelt formally established the National Commission on Country Life upon appointing horticulturist and agrarian philosopher Liberty Hyde Bailey as chairman on August 20, 1908.[6] Bailey founded Cornell University's College of Agriculture and occupied the position of dean at the time of his appointment. Many considered him the leader of the country life

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[4] United States, Country Life Commission, *Report of the Commission on Country Life* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1944), 10.

[5] Liberty Hyde Bailey defined the country life movement as "the working out of the desire to make rural civilization as effective and satisfying as other civilization." It was a reform movement of the American Progressive era that took place in the early decades of the twentieth-century. Bailey, Liberty Hyde, *The Country-Life Movement in the United States*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1911), 1.

[6] Clayton S. Ellsworth, "Theodore Roosevelt's Country-Life Commission," *Agricultural History* 34, no. 4 (1960): 163.

movement because of his philosophy on rural life.[7] Even before the Commission was established, Bailey advocated an approach to the amelioration of agricultural problems that combined economics and sociology.[8] He argued that, "standards of service must take the place of standards of property."[9] By this Bailey meant that economic prosperity should not be the only goal of farmers and agricultural communities−socialization was equally important to individual and community health. He also underscored the importance of personal service in order to solve larger systemic problems in American society. These arguments will be more fully examined in the context of the Report, but it is important to note Bailey's opinions on rural life and their influence on the Report's recommendations.

Other members of the Commission included Iowa journalist Henry Wallace, conservationist Gifford Pinchot from Connecticut, and agricultural scientist Kenyon Butterfield from Michigan. Liberty Hyde Bailey was particularly close with Kenyon Butterfield, and agreed to be chairman so long as Butterfield was a commission member.[10] The Report of the Commission on Country Life collected data for analysis by distributing 500,000 questionnaires, about 115,000 of which were returned. Additionally, the commissioners conducted social research through personal correspondence, holding forums in rural regions, and collecting feedback from meetings held by community leaders.[11] The Report represented the first governmental attempt to understand how industrialism had transformed American agriculture.[12]

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[7] William L. Bowers, *The Country Life Movement in America, 1900-1920*, (Port Washington, NY/London: Kennikat Press Corp., 1974): 45.
[8] Ibid., 46.
[9] Bailey, 203.
[10] Charles J. Galpin, "The Development of the Science and Philosophy of American Rural Society," *Agricultural History* vol. 12, no. 3 (July 1938): 201.
[11] Report of the Commission on Country Life, 54-58.
[12] Ellsworth, 155-156.

Roosevelt had varied motivations for establishing the Commission. His personal relationships with populist leader Tom Watson and Irish politician Sir Horace Plunkett were guiding forces.[13] While most remember Roosevelt for his concern with urban dilemmas, both Watson and Plunkett had experienced the deficiencies of rural life. In addition to Roosevelt's personal inclinations, American agriculture had undergone vast transformations since the Civil War. The agrarian populist movement of the 1890s emphasized the troubles brought upon by encroaching railroad monopolies, unstable currency standards, and oscillating economic depressions.[14] It is true, however, that the economic state of agriculture had advanced since the turn of the century, and the Report acknowledged as much by stating, "As agriculture is the immediate basis of country life, so it follows that the general affairs of the open country, speaking broadly, are in a condition of improvement."[15] Richard Hofstadter argued that this golden age of agriculture represented industrialism's conclusive victory over the farmer.[16] Hofstadter even went so far as to assert that the American city saved the farmer because domestic demand made up for diminishing foreign markets.[17] While Hofstadter was correct in arguing for the importance of domestic demand for agricultural products, he incorrectly assumed that the commercial market for agricultural products had permanently stabilized solely because an increase in urban population. Rather, this golden age was representative of cyclical economic prosperities and depressions characteristic of the American economy until World War II. Economic wealth was not guaranteed to farmers or agricultural laborers in the long-run, and this was one of the chief issues the Commission sought to address.

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[13] Ibid., 156.
[14] Ibid., 155.
[15] Report of the Commission on Country Life, 17.
[16] Hofstadter, 109.
[17] Ibid., 110.

While economic circumstances had improved in the ten years before Roosevelt issued the Report, the commissioners argued that the conditions of farm life had not progressed as much as they were entitled to.[18] Unions of industrial laborers represented a coalition of wage-earners, while the farmer "usually [stood] practically alone against organized interests."[19] It is important to note how the commissioners and other rural reformers compared farmers to industrialists and wage-earners. Liberty Hyde Bailey saw farmers as a balancing force between corporate interests and individual wage-earners.[20] Bailey's analysis was accurate in that many farmers were essentially independent businessmen selling to a commercial market. A lack of extensive capital prevented farmers from exerting significant interests, and this was one of the issues the Report sought to remedy. The authors of the Report argued that the farmer, and his surrounding rural community, had not obtained the same advancement as urban cities due to a lack of social and economic organization.

Rural Holism in the Progressive Era: Education and Organization

Scholars Julie Zimmerman and Olaf Larson argued that rural reformers in the Progressive era, such as those involved in the Report, challenged purely economic reasoning and addressed rural deficiencies through a holistic lens.[21] "Rural holism"[22] described an approach to studying insufficiencies in rural communities that combined agricultural science, sociology, anthropology, and economics.[23] According to Zimmerman and Larson, this rural holistic approach was the

[18] Report of the Commission on Country Life, 18.
[19] Ibid., 19.
[20] Liberty Hyde Bailey, `6.
[21] Julie N. Zimmerman and Olaf F. Larson, *Opening Windows Onto Hidden Lives: Women, Country Life, and Early Rural Sociological Research*, (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), viii.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.

outgrowth of agrarian sentimentalism.[24] Hofstadter defined agrarian sentimentalism as an idealization of America's rural past that became more pervasive as farming became a commercial business in the twentieth-century.[25] This analysis simplified the motivations of rural reformers during the Progressive era, and failed to take into account the personal backgrounds and educational experiences of said men. For example, Liberty Hyde Bailey was born to farmers in Michigan in 1858, right before the Civil War.[26] His rural upbringing inspired an admiration for the beauty of nature that encouraged him to become a horticulturist. Bailey became frustrated in the 1890s when he realized that for all of his research on the production aspect of agriculture, it had done little to relieve farmers and rural communities from economic depressions and cultural stagnation.[27] It was not solely an appreciation of the country side that motivated Bailey to study and propose remedies for the advancement of the agricultural industry and rural communities. Personal experiences from his childhood and years as a natural scientist taught Bailey the functions of agriculture and its subsequent systematic deficiencies. His agrarian sentimentalism led him to believe that more could be done to better the condition of the farmer and his community, and his vast knowledge directed him in doing so. Bailey typified the Progressive rural reformer in his upbringing and educational level. The authors of the Report shared his conclusions that there was more to be done to help American farming achieve equal footing with industrial occupations, primarily through social, cultural, and economic advancement.

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[24] Ibid., 11.
[25] Hofstadter, 24.
[26] Ellsworth, 157.
[27] Ibid., 158.

The Report of the Commission on Country Life identified the principal problem of rural life as "one of reconstruction."[28] By this, the commissioners meant that farmers and their communities needed to understand the problems afflicting them, and then develop a course of action to remedy these afflictions. Collecting information was the first step in understanding the problems afflicting rural America.

The questionnaires distributed by the Commission provided an important source of information for the Report. Unfortunately, many of the responses to the circulars were destroyed in 1913.[29] Only 12 summary reports and tabulations from the circulars survived, and Larson and Jones conducted a thorough analysis of them. The circulars included 12 questions that delved into the economic, social, and educational well-being of rural residents.[30] Such questions included:

- Are the schools in your neighborhood successfully training boys and girls satisfactorily for life on the farms?
- Do the farmers and the wives and their families in your neighborhood get together for mutual improvement, entertainment, and social intercourse as much as they should?[31]

The first question emphasized education. Many Progressive reformers argued that education was the strongest tool to reform society and, therefore, the best place to focus reform efforts.[32] This is evidenced by the incidence of professional educators involved in rural reform efforts at the beginning of the twentieth-century. The responses to this question in the surviving tabulated reports indicated an overwhelmingly negative opinion of the state of education in rural regions,

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[28] Report of the Commission on Country Life, 24.
[29] Ellsworth, 170.
[30] Olaf F. Larson and Thomas B. Jones, "The Unpublished Data from Roosevelt's Commission on Country Life," *Agricultural History* 50, no. 4 (1976): 586-587.
[31] Report of the Commission on Country Life, 151.
[32] William L. Bowers, "Country-Life Reform, 1900-1920: A Neglected Aspect of Progressive Era History," *Agricultural History* 45, no. 3 (July 1971): 216.

specifically by teachers and farmers.[33] The commissioners interpreted these negative results to mean that public education was not supplying children in rural regions with knowledge that would be useful in agricultural occupations. The Report advocated for "a new kind of education adapted to the real needs of the farming people."[34] The commissioners favored public education that was applicable to farm duties, including agricultural science, economics, and sociology.[35] The Report also added that the schoolhouse needed to become a social center for the community to represent neighborhood interests. Such gathering places were often lacking in rural America due to the sheer distance between neighbors.[36] For the commissioners, education served a dual-purpose: it improved communities through the dispersal of important information and techniques *and* it provided a sense of association for rural citizens. The commissioners wanted schoolhouses to become institutions for farmers and other rural residents to promote socialization.

Organization was one of the principal recommendations of the Report. This notion rested on the idea that it was necessary for farmers to work together for their common interests in politics, business, and recreation.[37] The commissioners argued that organization extended beyond the economic realm of markets and into social and recreational life through voluntary cooperation.[38] It was not something that could be instituted by the federal government and, thus, needed to be a bottom-up process that represented the actual needs of farmers. William Bowers argued that the commissioners' insistence on organization contradicted their appreciation of the farmer's independence.[39] This is a shallow interpretation of what organization meant to

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[33] Larson and Jones, 593.
[34] Report of the Commission on Country Life, 26.
[35] Ibid., 121.
[36] Ibid., 122.
[37] Ibid., 27.
[38] Bowers, The Country-Life Movement in America, 27.
[39] Ibid., 43.

Progressive reformers. In her biography of Herbert Hoover, Joan Hoff described the Progressive president's dedication to voluntary community cooperation as dependent upon "progressive individualism."[40] Progressives believed the most efficient form of progress would be achieved through personal initiative and a "cooperative work ethic."[41] As Liberty Hyde Bailey wrote, "It may be said that the reconstruction of the open country must depend in the main on the efforts of the country people themselves."[42] Much like the emphasis on education, the argument for organization involved a holistic approach to issues stemming from social isolation to economic inefficiency. More cooperation meant more political and economic power, as well as increased socialization. The need for the latter was seen in the overwhelmingly negative response to the last question on the questionnaire about social gatherings between neighbors.[43] Rural citizens themselves indicated a need for reform. Unlike the federal governmental action taken to address agricultural issues in the New Deal and later twentieth-century, Progressive reformers believed that giving farmers the tools to alleviate their own problems, through education and organization efforts, would allow farmers to direct rural progress. Instead of homogenizing the needs of farmers through governmental action, Progressives argued that the only way to address individual needs was with the help of individuals. The commissioners argued that if farmers worked together, as they had during the American Revolution, they would be able to achieve essential reform. These recommendations did not require the denial of individualism but rested on its necessity.

The Legacy of the Report of the Commission on Country Life

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[40] Joan Hoff, *Herbert Hoover, Forgotten Progressive,* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1975), 6.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Bailey, 201.
[43] Larson and Jones, 596.

Theodore Roosevelt's Secretary of Agriculture James Wilson's antagonistic attitudes towards the Commission on Country Life ultimately resulted in the denial of funding from Congress. Roosevelt's successor, William Howard Taft, abandoned his predecessor's promises and refused to commit federal support to recommendations laid out in the Report.[44] Even though the Commission went out of business, the Report's intellectual legacy continued for another two decades into the New Deal era. This was primarily seen through the widespread use of social surveys and the subsequent establishment of rural sociology as an academic discipline.

The Report recommended instituting thorough rural surveys to take stock of the conditions of country life, so that deficiencies could be specifically understood and addressed. Liberty Hyde Bailey performed horticultural surveys as early as 1896, and the first official sociological rural survey was taken in 1906 under his leadership at Cornell University.[45] The commissioners recommended that the surveys examine, among many aspects, soil conditions, highway conditions, institutions and organizations, and the general economic and social status of the people themselves.[46] Since farming was inherently a local business, the locality needed to be considered in efforts to remedy problems.[47] Bowers asserted that the significance of the social survey was its technical approach to problem solving.[48] The scientific approach of the rural survey involved quantitative and qualitative investigations of rural life, and in this way was another marker of the holistic approach taken by the Commission on Country Life. The indexes of the surveys, which will be examined in the third chapter, accounted for more than economic livelihood and productive capacities. The most salient continuation of the *Report*'s

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[44] Ellsworth, 170.
[45] Bowers, The Country-Life Movement in America, 86.
[46] Report of the Commission on Country Life, 118-119.
[47] Ibid., 118.
[48] Bowers, The Country-Life Movement in America, 88.

recommendations was the 1919 establishment of the Division of Farm Population and Rural Life. Charles J. Galpin, the first chief of the Division, remarked in his memoirs that the Report of the Commission on Country Life created a "spontaneous movement for a new type of civilization among farm and village people."[49]

The discipline of rural sociology was an outgrowth of the rural surveys recommended by the Commission. Rural sociologist Dwight Sanderson wrote, "Rural sociology had its birth in the country life movement and rural social organization is merely the application of the scientific method to its objectives."[50] Sanderson emphasized the social scientific approach of rural surveys, much like Bowers. Sanderson credited the Report as an impetus for the country life movement,[51] and it is implied that rural sociology grew from the *Report* directly. Beyond the recommendation of social surveys, the idea that there was a distinct rural culture expressed in the Report justified a scientific study of such culture. In order to achieve "a new social and intellectual contact with life"[52] in rural regions, it was necessary to understand weaknesses that had prevented progress. In many ways, the Report's proposition for extensive survey work was closely related to its insistence on organization. The surveys allowed the state and federal governments, along with agricultural extension programs, to organize information on American rural life. This information was disseminated to farmers and rural citizens so they could instigate reform efforts themselves. Rural social surveys and rural sociology were ideologically rooted in the rural holistic approach of Progressives and represented the most notable achievements of the Report of the Commission on Country Life.

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[49] Charles J. Galpin, *My Drift into Rural Sociology*, (Louisiana State University Press, 1938), 15.
[50] Ezra Dwight Sanderson, *Rural Sociology and Rural Social Organization,* (J. Wiley & Sons, Inc, 1942), 710.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Report of the Commission on Country Life, 113.

The Report of the Commission on Country Life was an important impetus for rural reform efforts in the beginning of the twentieth-century. While agrarian unrest was common in the nineteenth-century, it was not until Roosevelt assembled the Commission on Country Life that inadequacies of American rural life were systematically investigated. The commissioners took a scientific approach to these inadequacies, but their considerations extended beyond efficient production. Instead, the commissioners argued for economic and social reform efforts that would create more fulfilling rural communities. For many at the time, the Report contained exciting new ideas to remedy old problems. Theodore Roosevelt, Liberty Hyde Bailey, and the rest of the commissioners wanted progress of an equal pace to that of cities for rural America. The ideas expressed in the Report of the Commission on Country Life guided governmental strategies for addressing rural dilemmas for the following two decades. This was primarily accomplished through the creation of Division of Farm Population and Rural Life and the work of its first chief, Charles J. Galpin.

Chapter II: Charles J. Galpin and the Development of Rural Sociology

Early Life and Career

Charles Josiah Galpin was born in the rural community of Hamilton, New York in 1864. Both his parents were the children of farmers, their families reaching back to the agricultural beginnings of America.[53] Galpin earned a scholarship to nearby Colgate University at the age of 17, where he studied mathematics and classics. Upon graduation, he accepted a position at Union Academy in Belleville, New York, where he was Headmaster for ten years.[54] Galpin's time at the Academy cemented his appreciation of rural communities, and proved fundamental in the formation of his scientific approach to the human conditions of farm life. Describing his commitment to the education of future farmers, Galpin wrote, "I felt as schoolman and Headmaster a social and economic urge to have the principles of farming taught to the boys and girls who were sure to go back to the land."[55] In 1901, he implemented one of the country's first primary school agricultural programs at Union Academy with one of Liberty Hyde Bailey's graduate students.[56] Like many Progressive rural reformers, Galpin was an educator who firmly believed in its improving powers. He had agrarian roots and dedicated himself to the betterment of farm life. His career arc varied slightly from other reformers in that he started in primary education instead of a university. In many ways this small agricultural community in upstate New York provided Galpin with his first sociological test group as he began studying the needs of the community through his role as Headmaster.

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[53] Galpin, My Drift into Rural Sociology, 1.
[54] Ibid., 4-5.
[55] Ibid., 6.
[56] Galpin, "The Development of the Science and Philosophy of American Rural Society," 203.

In 1894, Galpin took a year of absence from teaching and studied philosophy at Harvard. His professors included the so-called founder of American psychology, William James, and German-American psychologist Hugo Münsterberg.[57] Galpin was interested in Münsterberg's analysis of science "as having decided limits at the borderland between facts and values."[58] While Galpin believed in science's ability to improve human conditions, his interest in the advancement of rural life incorporated philosophy and anthropology as well. He wanted to understand why farmers and rural citizens behaved as they did.[59] Throughout his career, Galpin sought an approach to understanding rural life conditions that combined sociology, philosophy, and psychology. His time spent at Harvard familiarized him with the philosophical approach that guided his sociological studies. Bailey theorized on the values of agrarian lifestyles through prose; Galpin did so through sociological research.

Bouts of insomnia and overall ill health led to Galpin giving up his position at Union Academy. In 1901, he moved to 40 acres of "pine-stump land"[60] in Michigan. While there, he farmed small patches using crude tools and became familiar with local residents. Along with his acquaintances in Belleville, NY, these residents inspired his later studies and provided him with insight into the character of American farmers at the beginning of the twentieth-century.

Galpin's Time at the University of Wisconsin-Madison

In 1905 Galpin accepted the position as student pastor of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, which he obtained due to his years of teaching experience.[61] Galpin served in this

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[57] Galpin, My Drift into Rural Sociology, 7.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Galpin, "The Development of the Science and Philosophy of American Rural Society," 207.
[60] Galpin, My Drift into Rural Sociology, 9.
[61] Henry C. Taylor, *A Farm Economist in Washington: 1919-1925*, (Madison: Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1992), 144.

position for seven years, but it was his acquaintance with agricultural economist Henry C. Taylor and the publication of the Report of the Commission on Country Life that provided a "turning point"[62] for his career. Taylor is widely regarded as the founder of agricultural economics, and was a student of Richard T. Ely. Ely developed one of the country's first economics departments at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.[63] Under his influence, Taylor switched from studying sociology to economics,[64] but maintained a holistic approach to the study of living conditions on American farms. Taylor felt that sociology in the 1890s relied too heavily on broad generalizations and lacked empirical data.[65] He appreciated a theoretical approach in providing a workable hypothesis for scientific study but maintained that concrete evidence was necessary to validate a hypothesis.[66] Both Taylor and Galpin exemplified a Progressive appreciation of scientific analysis applied to the study of human conditions. They believed the best way for government to improve the lives of citizens was through a scientific understanding of society. While this was a technical approach to the study of social relations, it would be incorrect to assume it reflected an elite or industrial attitude towards social research. Rather, the parallel developments of agricultural economics and rural sociology as academic disciplines required exhaustive methods and accumulation of data to obtain a comprehensive understanding of social organization.

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[62] Galpin, My Drift into Rural Sociology, 14.
[63] Lowry Nelson, *Rural Sociology: Its Origin and Growth in the United States,* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1969), 25.
[64] Ibid., 26.
[65] Russell Middleton, *History of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison*, (Madison: Anthropocene Press, 2017), 143.
[66] Henry C. Taylor, "The Historical Approach to the Economic Problems of Agriculture," *Agricultural History* 11, no. 3 (July, 1937): 221.

The publication of the Report of the Commission on Country Life coincided with the establishment of the nation's first Department of Agricultural Economics at the university in 1909 and resulted in the expansion of rural life studies. Until that point there had been very little development of sociological research. The first department of sociology was established at the University of Chicago in 1892.[67] The first course in rural sociology (although it was not called such) was taught at Chicago in 1894 by Charles R. Henderson and was titled Social Conditions in American Rural Life.[68] As was the case at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the evolution of rural sociology often occurred in agricultural economics departments.[69] Scholar Lowry Nelson argued that the unpopularity of the term "rural sociology" resulted from a weak understanding of the term "sociology" in general, and an interpretation of the discipline to only include the *study* of rural problems, not the proposition of solutions.[70] Thus, rural life studies were often more closely related to the study of agricultural economics than the broad field of sociology. The close relationship between agricultural economics and rural sociology (or "farm life studies,"[71] as Taylor called it) demonstrated the influence of the Report. Rather than isolating the economic and social conditions of rural communities as separate issues, Henry C. Taylor and Charles J. Galpin considered rural sociology and agricultural economics as two halves of a whole. This approach was unique to the Progressive era until the 1930s, and would not hold true for later social scientists, especially economists.

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[67] Ibid., 24.
[68] Dwight Sanderson, "The Teaching of Rural Sociology: Particularly in the Land-Grant Colleges and Universities," *American Journal of Sociology* 22, no. 4 (1917): 437.
[69] Nelson, 32.
[70] Ibid., 33.
[71] Taylor, 143.

When the University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of Agricultural Economics sought an instructor for a course in rural life studies, Galpin presented his research on rural social organization in Belleville, New York to Taylor. Taylor immediately recognized it as groundbreaking. In his memoir he wrote,

> Galpin's report suggested a practical method of studying country life which would show the extent and character of farmers' relations to churches, schools, farmers' organizations and women's organizations, and every other organized relation each home had with the outside world. This looked like a starting point for some vital research work in the field of country life.[72]

Galpin's research represented such a thorough scientific analysis of community relations that he was offered the instructor position in 1911.[73] At the time so little literature existed on the sociology of rural life that Galpin decided to collect firsthand evidence by traveling throughout rural Wisconsin. He became acquainted with farmers, their institutions, and the general quality of life on Wisconsin family farms. The first trip provided Galpin proof of the importance of rural social research: "I saw enough to convince me that rural society is a reality; that it was a virgin vein for research; and that both in and for itself and for urban society, a body of knowledge about rural life was worthwhile."[74]

One of Galpin's early groundbreaking studies at the university focused on Walworth County, WI and was published in a university research bulletin in May 1915 as "The Social Anatomy of an Agricultural Community." The goal of the survey was to determine "how the village or small city plays its part in the life of the farmer and the family."[75] Much of the research for this study was collected from community members—the report specifically listed

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[72] Ibid.
[73] Galpin, My Drift into Rural Sociology, 19.
[74] Ibid., 22.
[75] Charles J. Galpin, "The Social Anatomy of an Agricultural Community," (Madison: Agricultural Experiment Station of the University of Wisconsin, 1915): 1.

teachers, librarians, bankers, and clergymen.[76] Galpin was interested in the overlap between commercial relationships and social interaction. He used data collected from researchers to map relationships in 8 zones: trade, banking, newspaper, milking, church, high school, library, and school district. The report stated that the largest overlapping acquaintance of all the zones occurred for trading in the village center.[77] Galpin found that the trade zones encompassing Walworth County defined the boundaries of communities.[78] His focus on commercial relations among farm community residents led him to develop his thesis on what he defined as the "rurban problem." In the report, he explained that one should not consider the development of agricultural institutions, economic and social, in isolation from the rest of the nation. Instead "rurbanism" argued for the "social partnership of farm and village or small city, and then raises the question whether segregation of the farmer is desirable or even possible."[79] This was not an argument for urbanization of rural regions. The report appealed to an extension of village community relations to isolated farmers and agricultural laborers. Instead of isolating the farmer and rural communities even further, Galpin contended that emphasizing "mutual interests"[80] would benefit both city and rural dweller. Just as Theodore Roosevelt declared that the welfare of the nation heavily depended on the status of agriculture,[81] Galpin asserted that the farmer's problems were also the urban resident's problems. "Rurbanism" clarified the role of village interests in farmers' lives, and vice versa, in order to further understand the social conditions of

[76] Ibid., 3.
[77] Ibid., 7.
[78] Ibid., 18.
[79] Ibid., 33.
[80] Ibid., 34.
[81] Report of the Commission on Country Life, 10.

rural life.[82] "The Social Anatomy of an Agricultural Community" established a framework for rural social research that dominated the following decades.[83]

Lowry Nelson has argued that Galpin's theory of "rurbanism" was one of his greatest lasting impacts in the field of rural sociology.[84] It was one of many contributions he made while at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He authored *Rural Life* in 1918, one of the first publications outlining an approach to sociological research in agriculture. In addition to "The Social Anatomy," he published six Agricultural State Bulletins studying school districts, clubs, high schools, community farms, and farm tenancy in Wisconsin.[85] In his autobiography, Galpin stated that his courses on rural life at the university were not fully formed but more "sketchy courses in the *Rural Life of Wisconsin*."[86] This period of trial-and-error in an academic setting provided the inspiration and direction for Galpin's later research projects in his position as chief of the Division of Farm Population and Rural Life.

The Development of the Division of Farm Population and Rural Life

In 1919, Henry C. Taylor was offered the position of Chief of the Office of Farm Management in the United States Department of Agriculture. The Secretary of Agriculture at the time of Taylor's appointment was David F. Houston, a man with a demonstrated holistic approach to remedying the deficiencies of America's agricultural population.[87] Woodrow Wilson appointed Houston in 1913 and he occupied the position until 1920. Despite his disregard of the importance of Roosevelt's Commission on Country life[88]—a political matter due to his

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[82] Middleton, 150.
[83] Ibid., 152.
[84] Nelson, 34.
[85] For the complete list of publications see Middleton, 152.
[86] Galpin, My Drift into Rural Sociology, 29.
[87] Zimmerman and Larson, Opening Windows onto Hidden Lives, 17.
[88] Ellsworth, 170.

Democratic affiliation—Houston established the Rural Organization Service in his first year as Secretary.[89] A predecessor to the Division of Farm Population and Rural Life, the ROS aimed to undertake elaborate studies of rural life under the guidance of agricultural economist Thomas Nixon Carver.[90] Carver had been a professor of political economy at Harvard and wrote Principles of Rural Economics in 1911, the first agricultural economics book to include a chapter on rural social life.[91] Authority over the ROS was shared with the General Education Board, an agency that disapproved of the detailed nature of Carver's plans. After a year, the ROS merged with the USDA's Office of Markets and was absorbed by economic planning.[92]

Taylor convinced Houston to create another division to solely study rural social problems, tentatively called Farm Life Studies.[93] Taylor offered Galpin the position as chief and it was his close relationship with the agricultural economist that convinced him to resettle in Washington D.C. after 14 years in Wisconsin.[94] After the development of the Bureau of Agriculture Economics (BAE) in 1922, the unit was renamed the Division of Farm Population and Rural Life and operated under the BAE's chief, Taylor. Galpin appreciated the close alliance between social and economic research for the "sobering effect"[95] of profits and losses on farm life. The development of the Division under the BAE was the formalization of the Report of the Commission on Country Life's recommendation for extensive social surveys. Economic and sociological research were intrinsically linked in this formation. The fact that the first branch of government dedicated solely to sociological research occurred in the agriculture sector

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[89] Zimmerman and Larson, *Opening Windows onto Hidden Lives*, 15.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Galpin, "The Development of the Science and Philosophy of American Rural Society," 199.
[92] Zimmerman and Larson, Opening Windows onto Hidden Lives, 15-16.
[93] Ibid., 17.
[94] Galpin, My Drift into Rural Sociology, 35.
[95] Ibid., 36.

demonstrated the fundamental connection between rural reform efforts and social scientific analysis. This analysis was not purely economic, as it developed into in the next decade, but considered the social situation of farmers and rural residents as well. This relationship in the Progressive era built the foundation for the agricultural economic research under the New Deal. In the beginning, however, economics and sociology were not seen as separate but mutually beneficial areas of research.

While at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Galpin learned to stretch a budget and pursue the most important lines of research. His career as a government bureaucrat called upon this skill, as the Division constantly faced an uphill battle in securing funding.[96] Working with academics in university extension programs allowed Galpin to produce quality research on a restricted budget. Following with the mentality expressed in the Report and Progressive reformers' belief in the power of the individual, Galpin thought it was the farmer's duty to advance his community into modernity.[97] Federal and state governments played an important role in safeguarding the property rights of farmers, but local and personal initiative was to be the driving force of progress.[98] This was not an attempt of the government to shirk responsibility to the disenfranchised farmer; rather, Galpin exemplified a belief in the power of the individual to better his or her situation. He devised a plan for the Division and state agricultural colleges to "hold and steady the ladder"[99] for the farmer's advancement by establishing research units. At least one college of agriculture in each state needed an expert on farm life to conduct research for the Division and provide local support to farmers.[100] These research units would seek to

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[96] Ibid., 44.
[97] Charles J. Galpin, "When Fortune Favored the Farmer," *Rural America* 12, no. 8 (1934):10.
[98] Ibid., 10.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Galpin, My Drift into Rural Sociology, 39.

understand broad relationships between individuals and communities, determine regional unities, and bolster the science of rural living.[101] By seeking relationships with academic institutions the Division was able to conduct more thorough and wide-ranging investigations into American rural life with a limited budget.

Galpin's indefatigable commitment to executing research proved itself in his quest for accurate census numbers of rural regions. The Department of Agriculture granted Galpin's initial request in 1920, but replaced his statistic county-by-county mechanism for a crude measure of farm population by state and included only a few of his chosen characteristics.[102] With the assistance of Veda B. Larson, a mathematician from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Bureau of Census, the Division produced *The Farm Population of Eight Selected Counties* in 1924. The report covered eight states—New York, Wisconsin, Missouri, North Dakota, North Carolina, Texas and Washington—and measured the percentage of persons literate, the race and nativity of farm residents, and marital status in comparative charts. The report defined farm population as those living on farms and/or engaged in agricultural occupations.[103] The project encouraged the Census of Agriculture to establish a separate tabulation of farm population in 1925.[104] This early publication demonstrated Galpin's creative initiative in solving bureaucratic dilemmas, and provided insight into the type of research he pursued.

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[101] Ibid., 40.
[102] Ibid., 45.
[103] United States, Bureau of the Census and Bureau of Agricultural Economics, *Farm population of selected counties: Composition, characteristics, and occupations in detail for eight counties, comprising Otsego County, N.Y., Dane County, Wis., New Madrid and Scott counties, Mo., Cass County, N. Dak., Wake County, N.C., Ellis County, Tex., and King County, Wash.,* (Washington: Govt. print. Off., 1924), 9.
[104] Galpin, *My Drift into Rural Sociology*, 47.

Beyond the research the Division sponsored, which will be further examined in the next chapter, it commissioned one of the most comprehensive rural sociological texts to date. Zimmerman and Larson considered the publication of Pitirim Sorokin's A Systematic Sourcebook in Rural Sociology one of the Division's greatest contributions to rural sociology.[105] Galpin, concerned over the perception of rural social research in America as "provincial,"[106] hoped to obtain knowledge from a source more familiar with global sociological thought and research.[107] He was very impressed with Russian-American Pitirim Sorokin, a Harvard educated sociologist working at the University of Minnesota at the time of his acquaintance with Galpin. After some bureaucratic maneuvering, Galpin directly funded A Systematic Sourcebook through the Division.[108] While his contributions to the volume consisted of only the Preface and Dedication (to Theodore Roosevelt and Country Life commissioners Sir Horace Plunkett and Liberty Hyde Bailey), the project would not have been executed without Galpin's initiative and support.

In his appraisal of Charles J. Galpin's career in Washington, rural sociologist and successor as chief of the Division Carl C. Taylor wrote, "To him the significance of the problem or the situation was the really important thing and methodology only a tool to be used in studying and appraising these problems and situations."[109] Galpin's agrarian sentimentalism guided his approach to the study of rural social conditions, as he combined his psychological interest in farmers with statistical collection and analysis. This analysis blurred the boundaries between distinct social sciences and represented an integrated approach to studying human

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[105] Zimmerman and Larson, *Opening Windows onto Hidden Lives*, 24.
[106] Galpin, *My Drift into Rural Sociology,* 59.
[107] Ibid., 59-60.
[108] Ibid., 61.
[109] Carl C. Taylor, "Dr. Galpin at Washington," *Rural Sociology* 13, no. 2 (1948): 155.

conditions. Galpin was a self-taught social scientist whose innovative techniques laid the foundations of rural sociology in twentieth-century America.

Charles J. Galpin as a Progressive Reformer

As has been discussed, the Report of the Commission on Country Life exerted considerable influences on Charles J. Galpin. In particular, the rural reconstruction agenda of the Commission can be interpreted in Galpin's arguments for modernizing farm communities. Before the publication of the Report, Galpin was an educator from a rural background. His observations on the quality of education and its application to agricultural occupations allowed him to pioneer a new approach by establishing a Department of Agriculture at Union Academy. Like Liberty Hyde Bailey and other commissioners, Galpin believed education could be a remedying force for depressed agricultural communities. He argued that unless educational institutions, particularly high schools, incorporated agricultural education, rural communities would not achieve progress.[110]This argument extended the Report's statement on the need to develop an education curriculum applicable to children who would pursue agricultural occupations. Both Galpin and the commissioners believed in the vital role of education to reform rural communities. Particularly in his role as an educator, Galpin examined the deficiencies of educational institutions and argued for their importance in addressing the social needs of farming communities.

Much like the Report's emphasis on organization, Galpin argued that the only way to modernize American agricultural communities, and thus ensure equal development to urban regions, was for the farmer to organize his interests. This extended beyond economic and productive cooperation and into understanding "the principles of human relationships in the

[110] Charles J. Galpin, *Rural Social Problems,* (The Century Co., 1924), 96.

building up of farm communities, just as thoroughly as you seek to know the principles underlying good farming."[111] Galpin saw self-reliance as the philosophy of the commissioners[112] and in order to alleviate the inadequacies of the farmer's institutions, it was the responsibility of the farmer himself to understand his community better. Experts like Galpin could assist farm leaders in the scientific analysis of building communities, one of the direct applications of rural sociology.[113] This approach relied on individual agency from farmers and government support to provide direction for community improvement. This was one of the primary goals of the Division of Farm Population and Rural Life, as it established relationships with extension programs across the country. The Division, in the role of government, could work with community researchers to collect information that could be applied to organizational efforts. In this context, rural holism was not only the marriage between social and natural sciences, but a concerted effort that combined the powers of federal government with academic institutions and community leaders to address systemic issues.

Galpin pioneered an understanding of rural problems by focusing on the "human element"[114] of farm life. By establishing a census tabulation of the farm population and collaborating with land grant universities for research projects, he helped accumulate data on the circumstances of farmers and their families. The funding of Sorokin's A Systematic Sourcebook of Rural Sociology contributed to rural sociology as an academic discipline and the overall sociological understanding of farmers. Galpin argued that the farmer's standard of living was not a purely economic problem, but a "complicated social, human, psychological, and political

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[111] Charles J. Galpin, "Discriminations Against Rural People" *Rural America* 7, no. 4 (1929): 6.
[112] Galpin, "When Fortune Favored the Farmer," 10.
[113] Galpin, "Discriminations Against Rural People," 6.
[114] Galpin, *Rural Social Problems*, Preface.

problem"[115] that required an integrated method of study. His agrarian sentimentalism led him to believe that economic affluence alone would not help the farmer achieve progress. Galpin appealed to the popular Progressive notion that the farmer's problems in particular needed to be considered because he represented the "backbone of the nation's integrity, justice, and democracy."[116] This idea was undergoing a transformation during the 1920s, after which the needs of farmers were only considered in an economic context.[117] Galpin's romantic sentiments on the value of farming echoed those expressed by the authors of the Report of the Commission on Country Life. For both the commissioners and Galpin, these sentiments inspired them to consider the cultural and social benefits of the occupation, not only the economics.

Throughout his career as a rural sociologist at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and chief of the Division of Farm Population and Rural Life, Galpin argued for a scientific analysis of farming communities.[118] He was not the first individual to make the connection between economic and social organization, but he developed pioneering methods in the study of rural life problems. Galpin's close relationship with Henry C. Taylor was a guiding force in his life, and he dedicated several of his publications to the agricultural economist. Galpin's career as a government bureaucrat lasted beyond Taylor's (who was fired in 1925 due to his disagreements with President Calvin Coolidge[119]) and this can be credited to his resolve in analyzing rural conditions in America. His close associations with farmers and their communities, from his boyhood and beyond, led him to not only pinpoint deficiencies but also suggest solutions. Galpin

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[115] Charles J. Galpin, "The Human Side of Farm Economy," *Journal of Farm Economics* 2, no. 2 (Apr., 1920): 109.
[116] Ibid., 107.
[117] Clifford B. Anderson, "The Metamorphosis of American Agrarian Idealism in the 1920's and 1930's," *Agricultural History* 35, no. 4 (Oct., 1961): 183.
[118] Charles J. Galpin, "The Human Side of Farming," *Rural Sociology* 13, no. 2 (1948): 160.
[119] Middleton, 163.

was not just an academic or a government bureaucrat—he was an agrarian sentimentalist committed to improving rural communities to the standards of their urban counterparts. The Division of Farm Population and Rural Life extended the Report of the Commission on Country Life and Galpin's holistic approach by analyzing agricultural communities in a sociological, as well as economic, context and proposing resolutions.

Chapter III: Division of Farm Population and Rural Life Research under Galpin

As discussed in the previous chapter, Charles J. Galpin exerted consider influence over the activities of the Division of Farm Population and Rural Life during his tenure as chief from 1919 to 1934. This chapter will investigate how other researchers, such as J.H. Kolb and E.L. Kirkpatrick, continued Galpin's investigations into the human conditions of rural life, with a focus on Wisconsin. The two studies examined in this chapter were accomplished through cooperative research agreements at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and spoke to Galpin's efforts to legitimize the field of rural sociology through extension work.[120] Both reviewed the social organization of institutions and voluntary organizations among farmers and rural citizens. These subjected reflected the Progressive era's emphasis on organization and the issues guiding the development of rural sociology. Galpin and his researchers were interested in modernizing the farmer's institutions while preserving the agrarian characteristics of self-sufficiency. After Galpin's retirement in 1934, social organization and voluntary association were not given special consideration by the Division.[121] The change in approach during the New Deal reflected a growing emphasis on the economic importance of the farmer, without regard to his psychological and social well-being.[122] The Division's research on rural social institutions and voluntary cooperation during the 1920s was the culmination of the country life movement and the innovations of early rural sociologists.

The 1920s was also a decade of partisan continuity in the executive branch, as each president elected was Republican. This allowed Galpin a freedom of sorts in directly

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[120] Olaf F. Larson and Julie N. Zimmerman, *Sociology in Government: The Galpin-Taylor Years in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1919-1934*, (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 45.
[121] Ibid., 121.
[122] Anderson, 184.

constructing the Division's research agenda.[123] The two studies examined in this chapter represented an extension of the fundamental guidelines of rural sociological research described in the Report of the Commission on Country Life and applied by Galpin at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Rural Primary Groups by J.H. Kolb (1921)

Like many rural reformers during the Progressive era, John Harrison Kolb grew up on a farm in the Midwest. Raised in Berlin, WI, Kolb earned a B.S. from Northwestern University in 1912 and a master's degree from University of Chicago in 1913. He performed agricultural extension work at the University of Minnesota for the next four years. He began work on his doctorate in Agricultural Economics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1919.[124] Kolb intended to study under Galpin, but his appointment as chief of the Division disrupted this plan. Richard Middleton argued that Galpin's research exerted considerable influence on Kolb throughout his career, specifically in the 1920s.[125] Eventually, Kolb became the first Professor of Rural Sociology in 1929 at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, even though the department was not established until the following year.[126] He was chair of the department until his retirement in 1949 and many rural sociologists attributed its success to his groundbreaking research and extensive administrative efforts.[127]

Rural Primary Groups was Kolb's doctoral dissertation and the first cooperative study funded by the Division.[128] It studied the agricultural communities in Dane County, WI. Kolb

[123] Larson and Zimmerman, *Sociology in Government*, 46.
[124] Middleton, 167.
[125] Ibid.
[126] Ibid., 168.
[127] Ibid., 169.
[128] Larson and Zimmerman, *Sociology in Government*, 88.

consulted with Galpin on numerous occasions and specially acknowledged Galpin and Richard T. Ely's contributions to the study.[129] Kolb's first steps were to collect information on primary groups—which he defined as relationships characterized by face-to-face contact[130]—and then map the relations in groupings. The importance of primary groups, which Kolb used interchangeably with the term neighborhood, were their influence on the individual. Kolb argued that neighborhoods were "essentially a psychological thing,"[131] but could be mapped through geographical proximity.[132] This attention to the psychological organization of farmers and their communities reflected the influence of Galpin's Social Anatomy of an Agricultural Community. Kolb began his research from the standpoint of primary groups centered on a trading area because it suggested there was a "distinct local cohesion."[133] Galpin's argument that trade centers represented the greatest source of social interaction among rural residents in The Social Anatomy of an Agricultural Community became the primary point of investigation for Kolb in Rural Primary Groups.

Kolb focused on the historic foundations of neighborhood formations and institutions. Nationality of settlers, along with the topographical conditions and religious associations, were fundamental in group formations in Dane County.[134] When the study was conducted, economic and educational organizations were the most common institutions.[135] Kolb argued that economic institutions had always played an important role in neighborhood organization, "It should be

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[129] J.H. Kolb, *Rural Primary Groups: A Study of Agricultural Neighborhoods*, (1921), Preliminary Statement: 1, 3.
[130] Ibid., 2.
[131] Ibid., 5.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Ibid., 4.
[134] Ibid., 26.
[135] Ibid., 24.

emphasized that this economic factor was after all fundamental in the life and origin of each group. Farming was primary in the struggle to get a living; it was the accepted occupation."[136] This statement described the historic economic opportunities of Dane County as primarily agricultural. Contrary to the arguments of agrarian sentimentalists like Galpin and Liberty Hyde Bailey, it indicated that settlers operated farms because it was the best means to make a living. The study found that education had played a critical role in the original formation of neighborhoods and was still one of the strongest social institutions in rural life in Dane County. Often, the establishment of education centers had led to the formation of economic activities.[137] The strength of these institutions led Kolb to declare, "The district school is distinctly the institution of the rural neighborhood group."[138] This finding demonstrated that rural reformers' concern over quality of education was well-founded, as schools were central in community organization. Kolb's conclusions on the historic foundations of institutions and their conditions at the time of the study largely agreed with the Report of the Commission on Country Life's recommendations and led to further lines of inquiry for rural social scientists.

Rural Primary Groups concluded that declining populations and organization efforts in neighborhoods were the results of expanding means of transportation and communication. Many neighborhoods were "losing their identity"[139] as transportation led to less socialization with neighbors. The farther rural residents could travel and socialize with those outside of their neighborhoods, the less need there was for community association. Means of religious associations and cooperative efforts were no longer focused in the local sphere.[140] Part of this

[136] Ibid., 25.
[137] Ibid., 66.
[138] Ibid., 33.
[139] Ibid., 41.
[140] Ibid., 42.

could be accounted for in the influence of the village as a source of economic and social opportunities because rural citizens were able to travel further using automobiles.[141] Kolb also located the source of disintegration of communities in the lack of young leadership and religious divisions.[142] In order to promote unity among neighborhood residents, Kolb recommended exploiting common interests and organizing efforts to address local issues.[143] His conclusions over the source of community fragmentation displayed the concern over the effects of modernization on rural society. His work proved that these forced did have an effect on rural community ties, and that perhaps this was leading to dissatisfaction on behalf of farmers and other rural citizens. At the same time, Kolb argued that in order to reinvigorate community socialization, it was necessary to reconsider social bonds and bridge differences in beliefs in order to cement a local mentality. These recommendations reflected the Progressive emphasis on the ability of the individual to work collectively in order to solve local issues.

Rural Primary Groups was an important first step in the observation of rural communities for the Division of Farm Population and Rural Life. The extensive efforts undertaken by J.H. Kolb and his associates represented the thorough approach of rural social surveys in the 1920s. Much like Galpin organized his study on Walworth County into zones to study community organization, Kolb mapped primary groups and institutions in order to understand the changing social ties of agricultural communities. His results largely corroborated the belief that local organization efforts were declining as industry consolidated in economic centers. While agrarian sentiments were not expressed in the conclusions of the study, it was motivated by an underlying concern with the sociological state of agricultural communities. Rural Primary Groups was an

[141] Ibid., 73.
[142] Ibid., 46-47.
[143] Ibid., 49-50.

extension of Galpin's work at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and sought to examine the concerns raised in the Report of the Commission on Country Life.

Rural Organizations and the Farm Family by E.L. Kirkpatrick (1929)

The Division's studies on the standards of living and farm family income levels began in the mid-1920s, and Ellis Lore Kirkpatrick was the first to be recruited due to his innovative research at Cornell University.[144] In his memoir, Henry C. Taylor wrote, "No single type of rural study has awakened more thought than the study of the standard of living and cost of living of farm families."[145] Taylor saw these studies as examples of research that could be used in the implementation of programs that directly benefitted agricultural communities.[146] The longevity of these standards of living studies related to their economic focus, and this concentration made it easier to draft policies that would benefit farmers. Rural Organizations and the Farm Family was unique in that it studied how economic means influenced social participation in community institutions. This integrated analysis reflected the academic and research efforts of Galpin and other rural sociologists during the Progressive era.

Prior to joining the Division, Kirkpatrick had studied standards of living reports performed in American urban centers and Europe.[147] In partnership with the Division, Kirkpatrick published The Standards of Living in a Typical Section of Diversified Farming in 1923. The research took place in Livingston County, NY and laid the foundation for future research in the Division and rural sociology.[148] Kirkpatrick argued that standards of living for farmers and other rural residents were contingent upon economic opportunities *and* socialization,

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[144] Larson and Zimmerman, *Sociology in Government*, 47.
[145] Taylor, *A Farm Economist in Washington: 1919-1925*, 145.
[146] Ibid., 146.
[147] Larson and Zimmerman, *Sociology in Government*, 74.
[148] Ibid.

specifically in regards to education and religious practice.[149] Kirkpatrick's conclusions demonstrated the holistic arguments of social scientists in the USDA during the 1920s. The study of farm family standards of living did not typically fall under social organization studies in the Division's rubric, but in 1929 Kirkpatrick partnered with J.H. Kolb at the University of Wisconsin-Madison to produce a follow-up study on one of Kolb's previous reports co-authored with A.F. Wileden, Special Interest Groups in Rural Society (1927).[150]

Rural Organizations and the Farm Family stated the purpose of its investigation to be the study of organizational affiliations of the farm family beyond its immediate locality.[151] Whereas Kolb examined the social connections between farm families in a geographic community, Kirkpatrick wanted to understand the increasing connections between farm families and villages. The method of data collection included survey answers from interviews with 282 farm families and their individual members.[152] The regions within the two counties studied (one of which was Walworth, from Galpin's original examination) were arranged into three districts: high organization, middle organization, and low organization. The classifications of communities depended upon the participation of residents in institutional affiliation, meeting attendance, financial contributions, and committee work and leadership.[153] Kirkpatrick determined that the main factors influencing organizational affiliations were families' farm business resources, educational and cultural activities, and living facilities.[154] Of these predominant factors, farm business resources and educational and cultural activities exerted the most influence.

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[149] Ibid., 74.
[150] Ibid., 121.
[151] E.L. Kirkpatrick, *Rural Organizations and the Farm Family,* (Madison: Agricultural Experiment Station of the University of Wisconsin, 1929), 1.
[152] Ibid., 1-2.
[153] Ibid., 3.
[154] Ibid., 14.

The findings on the relationship between farm business resources and organizational associations demonstrated that there were more opportunities for socialization available to citizens located nearer to villages. Families in high organization districts lived, on average, three miles closer to village centers.[155] These families also lived on smaller farms and obtained a greater percentage of income from non-farming resources.[156] Their income levels were higher than those in low organization districts.[157] The negative correlation between farm income levels and organizational affiliations indicated that those engaged solely in the occupation of farming were less likely to seek social ties. In only one instance did those in low organization districts exhibit a stronger attachment and greater participation in social activities, and that was related to religious institutions.[158] This indicated that religious institutions played a larger role when there were less organizations in general. Kirkpatrick's analysis of data between the correlation of farm income levels and organizational affiliations confirmed Kolb's conclusion that neighborhood associations were decreasing while economic centers attracted a greater amount of associations. While some of these discoveries might seem obvious in hindsight, it largely confirmed Progressive rural reformers' concerns over decreasing socialization within agricultural communities.

Of all the factors studied in comparison to organizational affiliations, educational and cultural activities carried the highest correlation.[159] Kirkpatrick argued that historical and cultural influences bore a higher tendency of citizens to participate in voluntary groups.[160] Cultural

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[155] Ibid., 17.
[156] Ibid., 19-20.
[157] Ibid., 20.
[158] Ibid., 17.
[159] Ibid., 48.
[160] Ibid, 47.

influences of the past, relating to the nationality of customs of original settlers, exerted an influence in the willingness of families to participate in community socialization. If a neighborhood was made up of the same nationality, such as Germans, they were more likely to commune with each other.[161] This was another aspect of the study that correlated with Kolb's findings in Rural Primary Groups. Overall, the more time families spent on recreational activities, such as reading and listening to radio, the more likely they were to associate with organizations beyond the home and neighborhood.[162] An interesting connection that Kirkpatrick did not note might have been the relationship between recreational time and the percentage of income related to farming. In other words, those who were less reliant upon farming as their sole source of income might have enjoyed a larger amount of recreation that then led to more organizational association.

Larson and Zimmerman considered Kirkpatrick's study the leading investigation of organizational behavior among farmers.[163] It is easy to get lost in his data analysis as it is primarily technical and offered few decisive conclusions. It did, however, examine important relations between economic resources, geographic locations, and participation in community institutions and organizations. Following the approach of Galpin in The Social Anatomy of an Agricultural Community and J.H. Kolb in Rural Primary Groups, Kirkpatrick's line of inquiry demonstrated a scientific approach to questions involving the conditions of rural social life. More reliant on numbers than Kolb's study, the two sociologists came to the same conclusions that institutions in exclusively rural locations were declining while those in townships were growing

[161] Ibid., 48.
[162] Ibid., 26.
[163] Larson and Zimmerman, *Sociology in Government*, 121.

stronger. The rural church was one exception to this trend.[164] Rural Organizations and the Farm Family exhibited the thorough approach to research on rural social life made possible through the Division's cooperative policy with agricultural extension programs.[165]

Lasting Associations at the University of Wisconsin-Madison

E.L. Kirkpatrick accepted a position in the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Rural Sociology department in the 1930s and continued his research under J.H. Kolb's supervision.[166] While there he performed some of the most interesting research for sociological theory,[167] some of which was published through the Division. Even after Galpin retired, Kolb and Kirkpatrick coordinated on projects with the Division during the New Deal era.[168] That research, however, did not exclusively focus on the social organization of rural life but economics of the farmer's standard of living. Both Rural Primary Groups and Rural Organizations and the Farm Family demonstrated the lasting influence of Progressive sociological thought throughout the 1920s. In many ways, these reports were extended studies of the concerns raised in the Report of the Commission on Country Life. As different as both studies were, the methodology solidified by Galpin during his time at the University of Wisconsin-Madison continued. This was primarily seen in the investigations of social organization among farmers. Both Kolb and Kirkpatrick contributed to the development of rural sociology as not only the study of rural problems, but the study of groupings in rural society and these groups' behaviors. In this way, they inherited Galpin's legacy and extended his research into the ne next stage of solidifying an academic discipline.

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[164] Kirkpatrick, 23.
[165] Larson and Zimmerman, *Sociology in Government*, 121.
[166] Middleton, 169.
[167] Larson and Zimmerman, *Sociology in Government*, 121.
[168] Middleton, 172.

Conclusion

Charles J. Galpin considered the 1930 publication of Pitirim Sorokin's A Systematic Sourcebook in Rural Sociology as "the climax"[169] of his career in the academic discipline. Upon his retirement from the Division of Farm Population and Rural Life in 1934, his budget had been reduced by two thirds[170] and the USDA had discontinued research with land grant universities.[171] These were emergency actions taken by president Franklin D. Roosevelt and did not last for long. Yet at the time Galpin stateed "my Division smouldered, but could not flame."[172] Carl C. Taylor, a rural sociologist from Iowa, took up the position of chief in 1934. Taylor retained this title until the Division's demise in 1953.

Unlike Galpin's period of direction, external factors, such as the Great Depression and World War II, greatly influenced Carl C. Taylor's research.[173] Whereas Galpin's research aimed to directly benefit the farmer by providing him and his community with information, the research conducted under Taylor aided government officials in drafting legislative policy. This change in approach reflected the increasingly popular argument of improving the farmer's condition through economics. Galpin and other rural sociologists in the 1920s, such as J.H. Kolb and E.L. Kirkpatrick, viewed farming as a unique occupation that sometimes, but not exclusively, required the acquisition of business skills. Such skills included cooperation with other farmers to ensure a fairer price for agricultural products and utilizing modern technology in order to increase productivity. The procurement of these abilities, however, were not the only actions that farmers needed to take in order to improve their livelihood and communities. Following the

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[169] Galpin, My Drift into Rural Sociology, 62.
[170] Larson and Zimmerman, *Sociology in Government*, 48.
[171] Galpin, *My Drift into Rural Sociology,* 62.
[172] Ibid.
[173] Larson and Zimmerman, *Sociology in Government,* 47-48.

theoretical approach of rural holism, Galpin argued that farmers also needed to work with neighbors and community members to create more fulfilling social institutions and a cooperative work ethic. Agrarian sentimentalism often inspired these Progressive rural reformers to create social scientific studies on the conditions of American farm life. New Dealers, however, discarded arguments of agrarian sentimentalism and focused on how to improve the farmer's economic condition.[174] By focusing on the farmer's action as a businessman, social scientists were able to appeal to a broader audience in urban areas.[175] The farmer not making enough money from his agricultural product was in the same position as an industrial laborer being paid too little for his work.[176] While the economic approach of New Dealers can be understood as creating a coalition of underprivileged laborers, it discarded the importance of community life for rural residents. By abandoning its consideration of rural institutions and social organization, the USDA promulgated a view of agriculture as another arena for corporate business interests.

Writing in 1938, Galpin hoped the next stage of rural sociology would accomplish a theoretical and philosophical understanding of rural life.[177] He wanted Pitirim Sorokin and Carl C. Taylor to lead the charge in this approach, so the scientific aspect of rural sociology would be cemented with philosophical explanations.[178] Galpin believed that the only way to solidify the importance of economics and sociology was to approach research through the lens of both disciplines.[179] His approach to the study of human conditions was unique in its integrated perspectives as a farmer, professor, and social scientist. Much like his predecessor Liberty Hyde

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[174] Anderson, 184.
[175] Ibid.
[176] Ibid., 187.
[177] Galpin, "The Development of the Science and Philosophy of American Rural Society," 208.
[178] Ibid., 207.
[179] Ibid., 195.

Bailey, he did not begin his career solely interested in the problems of farmers. Life experiences, from teaching in an agricultural community to being a student pastor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, guided Galpin's intellectual direction.

The country life movement and the Report of the Commission on Country Life pioneered an interest and study in the conditions of American farmers and their communities. This approach was extended by social scientists with rural backgrounds, primarily Charles J. Galpin and Henry C. Taylor. The 1920s marked an unprecedented period for social scientific research in the USDA and through the efforts of researchers like J.H. Kolb and E.L. Kirkpatrick, this research was made known to both universities and agricultural communities. The efforts of Progressive rural reformers resulted in the development of agricultural economics and rural sociology and cemented these disciplines' importance to government research.

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