

BUILDING A COMMUNITY BY A COMMUNITY BUILDING

(BY C. C. KIRKPATRICK.)

The following article, reprinted from The Harvester World, describes a community enterprise mentioned in The Bulletin before, and makes a point which the citizens of Bend would do well to realize.—Eds.)

Some cities, just like some men, grow and then get a real vision of the things which mean true growth.

In western Pennsylvania, in a county underlain with rich deposits of coal, I recently found evidence of a new order of city development. The little city of Washington, with a population of 25,000, owns a community building, and in and around this building are centered all of the city's people welfare activities. A brief story of how this community found itself, or how it came into existence, and put on the garments of real economic and civic growth, seems to me to be worth narrating.

The community building movement was started in Washington, Pennsylvania, in the month of September, 1914. At that very time was capitulated the Mexican (Chico) strike. The population of that city, about 100,000, was in a state of great excitement. And Washington, Pennsylvania, is like many other communities in America. As the town, in its early history, began to grow out of its swaddling clothes and take on its ways and to develop its manufacturing, the city fathers began to grow lax and make regulations looking to the health and ease of residents of the city and designed to make trading (trading for those who came in from the rural sections). Without these laws were abolished in the main streets and around the court house square.

Like all well-respecting farmers everywhere, the Washington county farmers resented this invasion of their personal liberties, and the old fight between the town and country was on its career. The small order business began to grow up and the smaller houses of the community got to be built which added to the ugliness of the city and, by this way, rendered sympathy for the rural residents. (Called some of Washington's trade.)

Board of Trade Wakes Up. About this time the Washington board of trade got busy and after a careful survey found that \$2,000,000 annually was going out of the county to the main order houses. This condition opened the eyes of business men and many demanded the return of the building, but in this city city fathers turned a deaf ear. This the board of trade found itself was who had a real vision. These eyes were put on \$2,000 each to buy and

remodel an old building in the very center of the business district, back of which was a large wagon yard. In this building they at once installed the executive offices of the Board of Trade, provided offices for the county agricultural agent, fitted up rooms for the free use of the farmers and the farmer's wives—reading rooms and reception rooms for the women, and smoking and waiting rooms for the men. They also provided hitching posts in the rear yards for more than half a hundred teams.

They sent out word to the country, inviting the people to come in, only to find that the rural residents were still suspicious of the meaning of their good deeds. This did not stop the zeal of these patriotic builders. The necessity and business men of Washington began to go out in groups and call on their neighbors in the rural sections, carrying with them a box of some of the products of the co-operation. They used the smaller rooms and the farmers to organize community lectures in city clubs. On one of these trips to Fairport, a smaller city in their county, two hundred business men formed a procession and marched down the main street, led by a band playing a dirge, and with water carriers carrying a huge coffin containing the body of "Mr. Village (Suspicion)". They were met by throngs of their rural neighbors and a tract of the Young Men's Christian Association was treated with fitting ceremony. From the tables of Virginia Commodities there sprang into existence a new name—"Community Spirit," and the bands sang together "We Welcome in Washington County and Want to Know Others Who Do," in the town of "We Won't Go Home Until March 1st."

Just a couple of illustrations will suffice to tell the story of the possibilities brought about by getting acquainted.

In the fall of 1915 the Washington county fair had 15,000 paid admissions, while the largest number in attendance any previous year was only 12,000. The county committee people had been an established affair for a number of years. The attendance at this annual event last year was over 25,000, while the former high mark in attendance had reached only 3,000.

Officials of the Board of Trade estimate that the community building is used daily by more than 200 people, 75 per cent of whom are farmers. A nominal membership of five dollars a year is now provided for farmers in the board of trade and scores of them are availing themselves of the

privilege. The farmers and business men now unite in campaigns for good roads, better livestock, cow testing associations, and in the production of more and better fruit and truck. Five free wagon yards are now found in various sections of the city. They have become acquainted with each other and they really do like each other, and they are building their community by the use of their community building.

And best of all, this idea is growing rapidly until today more than sixty cities and towns in America are being together in peace and harmony with the surrounding country because they use a community building to hold up their communities; and because they have learned to abolish the boundary line between town and country.

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No matter how much air you have in the house, it is not as good as the air outdoors.

Even if the outdoor air is damp and foggy, it is always healthier than stale air indoors. This is just as true in the city as in the country.

Children who have plenty of fresh air at school learn quickly and do not get sick easily.

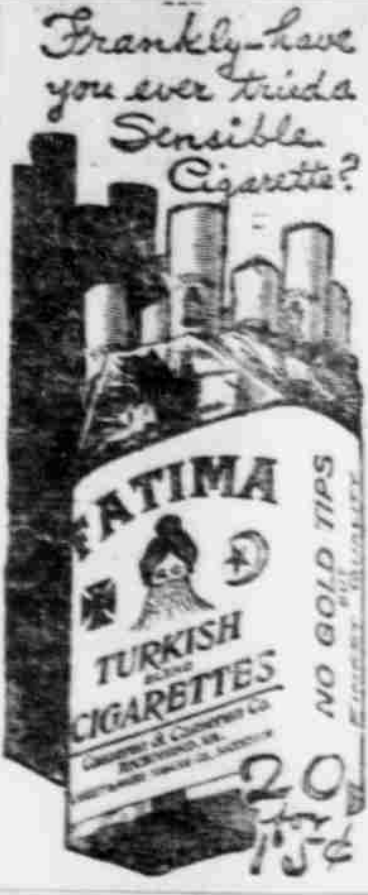
Learn to stay in the open air. If you do not get exercise while at work, walk at least part of the way to or from it. Play games outdoors, if you can.

DO YOU KNOW THAT

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- The United States Postal Health Service administers 10,000,000 twelve-grate to Federal employees.
- A little sweat is frequently the warning signal of tuberculosis.
- Bad teeth and bad breath may be the cause of rheumatism.
- Unpasteurized milk frequently spreads disease.
- The straight crawling leads out to the grave.
- Medication in all things prolongs life.
- The careless gutter is a public danger.

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For sign painting see Edwards.—Adv.

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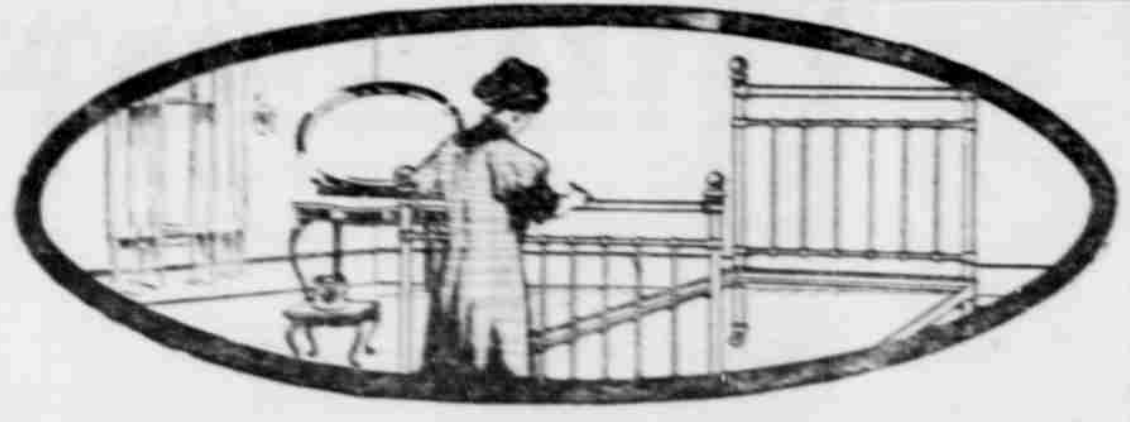
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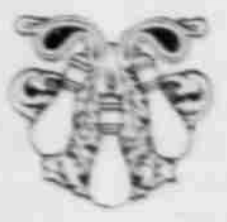
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