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Community development clubs in Alcorn County, Mississippi

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Community Development Clubs IN ALCORN COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY
AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION

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STATE COLLEGE

MISSISSIPPI

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MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	5
II. HISTORY OF CLUBS IN ALCORN COUNTY	6
Founding of Clubs	6
Stages in Development	7
III. ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS	8
Formal Organization	8
Programs and Meetings	10
Goals	14
IV. INTERACTION PATTERN	17
Within the Club	17
Club and Community	18
Club and County	20
V. FUNCTIONS OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CLUBS	22
Formal Functions	22
Community development	22
Improved relations between town and country	22
An educational media	22
Community cohesion	24
Informal Functions	24
Change agent	24
Action facilitation	25
Community identity	25
Assumption of functions	25
An intermediate or catalytic agent	25
Community survival	26
Leadership training	26
Compulsion for conformity	26

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
1. Overall organization of the community development program in Alcorn County, Mississippi	8
2. Organization of community development clubs in Alcorn County, Mississippi	9

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
1. Types of regularly scheduled meetings, 1954-1958	11
2. Summary of educational programs presented, 1954-1958	11
3. Occupation of community residents and community club members for eleven communities and clubs, 1958	11
4. Occupation of heads of families belonging to community clubs	12
5. Agencies and organizations presenting educational topics at community club meetings, 1954-1958	13
6. Techniques of presentation of educational topics at club meetings, 1954-1958	13
7. Types of special meetings, 1954-1958	13
8. Percentage of club member families attending club meetings, 1958	17
9. Occupation of club member families and attendance, 1958	18
10. Participation in discussion at regular club meetings, 1955	18
11. Comparison of club and non-club communities	19
12. Comparison of club and non-club families in club communities	20
13. Percentage of named community leaders involved in community development clubs	21
14. Club contest scores, 1955, 1957, and 1958	22
15. Change in the use of recommended farm practices, 1954-1957	23
16. Adding and dropping of farm practices: Club and non-club members, 1954-1957	23

SUMMARY

1. In recent years there has been a growing interest in rural development as a means to help improve agricultural production and standards of living. There are about 450 rural community development clubs in Mississippi and 2,000 in the Southeast. This bulletin describes the community development clubs in Alcorn County, Mississippi, during the period 1954 through 1958.

2. The first community development club in Alcorn County was organized in 1952 through the efforts of county leaders. By the end of 1956, ten more communities had asked for assistance in organizing clubs. The clubs were at first most concerned with organizational problems and short range goals and gradually shifted to long range community development goals.

3. The Alcorn County Development Council, composed of representatives from agricultural agencies, Corinth civic clubs, and club members, was the coordinating group. Each club had its own officers. Over three-fourths of the club meetings had educational programs. About half of the educational programs were on agriculture, a third on the community, and the remainder on homemaking. The county goals

were printed in the annual contest score card. Each club established goals based on the county goals.

4. A community club is an example of people doing things together. The club members were regular in attendance. However, only one in four took part in the discussion during club meetings. Only 20 percent of the families in the club communities were members. The club membership seemed to be representative of the occupational groups. On the other hand, the club members ranked higher than non-club members in most measures of socio-economic status.

5. The functions performed by community development clubs may be divided into two categories, (a) the formally stated purposes of the clubs and (b) the informal functions occurring as a result of the operation of the clubs. The formal functions were community development, improvement of town and country relations, an educational media, and community cohesion. The informal functions were a change agent, action facilitation, community identity, assumption of functions, an intermediate or catalytic agent, community survival, leadership training, and compulsion for conformity.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CLUBS

IN

ALCORN COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

By ANDREW W. BAIRD and WILFRID C. BAILEY*

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years there has been a growing interest in rural development as a means to help improve agricultural production and standards of living. The Department of Agriculture has pointed out that trade area programs and community development programs have been effective in increasing incomes and raising levels of living. One of its recommendations was that farm, business, and other leadership should assume local responsibility and unite in efforts to develop agriculture's human resources.

A community development program may be defined as an organized activity with multiple interests and objectives which is operated in a delineated geographic area and is all inclusive as to participants and beneficiaries. In terms of emphasis and organizational features, community development programs in the Southeast may be classified into three types. One type, which might be termed individual grass roots programs, has no organizational stimulation from the outside and depends entirely on local leadership. A second type emphasizes a survey and study group approach. The third, and most extensive type, found in both rural and urban areas, is characterized by business sponsorship and contest features.¹

Community development usually involves the work of a local organization.

There are primarily two types of such organizations. (1) membership organizations or clubs and (2) committees. A community development club can be defined as a membership organization having regularly scheduled meetings, elected officers, and a planned program. This bulletin is concerned with the membership or club type of organization.

As early as 1923 the Agricultural Extension Service was promoting community development in Mississippi. During the period from 1923 to 1926 approximately 45 open county communities were organized. The movement at that early date had essentially the same characteristics as today's. The present-day movement in community development began in 1946. At this time the Community Development Foundation in Tupelo, Mississippi, began sponsoring community development in the rural area. Awards were offered to communities showing the most progress for the year. The Tupelo type program spread to other counties and has become popular throughout the Southeast. At about the same time, the Extension Sociologist at Mississippi State University began to offer technical advice and assistance to local communities. The local Extension Agents and the Extension Sociologist encouraged the movement at the county level. Since that time there has

*The authors wish to express their thanks for the splendid cooperation given to the project by the residents of Alcorn County. Special mention should be made of the contribution of club members and officers, Alcorn County Development Council, numerous civic minded citizens of Corinth, county Agricultural Extension Service staff, and other agricultural agency personnel. It was a pleasure to watch the community development clubs grow. Best wishes are expressed for their continued success.

The Tennessee Valley Authority cooperated with the project. Members of the staff of the Agricultural Economics Branch, Division of Agricultural Relations, were instrumental in the formation of the project and gave valuable assistance throughout. The TVA share in the project was officially known as the "Mississippi Community Fertilizer Education Experiment."

¹Harold F. Kaufman, *Community Development Programs in the Southeast*, The Social Science Research Center Community Series No. 6; State College: Mississippi State University, 1956.

been a steady increase in the number of communities participating in the movement.² At the present time there are about 450 community development clubs in Mississippi and over 2,000 in the Southeast.

Alcorn County, Mississippi, is representative of the low income area covering much of the Southeast. In the 1954 Agricultural Census nearly two-fifths of the farms were classified as part-time or residential, one-fifth were commercial farms with less than \$1,200 in gross sales, and only 4 percent of all farms had gross sales of over \$5,000. The farm-operator level-of-living index was in 1954 slightly higher than the average for Mississippi and less than the national average a decade earlier.

About 75 percent of the cash farm income was from cotton. Corn was grown on almost as many farms as cotton but contributed little to the cash income. Livestock has been increasing in importance. Nearly 60 percent of the land is best suited for timber but this resource has been under utilized.

The county contains three distinct land-use areas. The eastern and western thirds consist of poor hilly land, best suited to timber. Running north and south through the center of the county is a belt of relatively more level land, better suited to farming. Corinth, the county seat, is located at the northern end of this belt and is the only urban center. It has attracted industry, and its population has grown to an estimated 11,000. The rest of the county contains 37 open-country communities.

In November, 1954, the Department of Sociology and Rural Life, Missis-

issippi Agricultural Experiment Station, in cooperation with the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Alcorn County Development Council, began a study of Alcorn County. One aspect of the study was an experiment to evaluate the community development clubs as a medium for the diffusion of recommended farm and home practices.³

In order to determine the effectiveness of community clubs as an educational media certain questions had to be examined. What was the formal organizational structure of the community clubs? What was the interaction pattern within the clubs, between the club and the community, and between the club and the county? What functions did the clubs perform? These questions are examined in the following pages.

This bulletin discusses the community development clubs in Alcorn County during the period 1954 through 1958. It describes their organization, their activities, and their influence on community life. The effectiveness of the clubs as a means of farmer education is evaluated.

There has been no state-wide organization unifying the activities of the community development clubs in Mississippi. Most clubs participate in some sort of county program. Community development clubs in Alcorn County were representative of the sort of organization found in Mississippi and, perhaps, many other parts of the Southeast. Further, the interaction pattern and level of participation within the community development clubs is not too different than that observed in other rural organizations in Mississippi.

II. HISTORY OF CLUBS IN ALCORN COUNTY

Founding of Clubs

The community development club movement in Alcorn County began in the Spring of 1952 under the leadership

and guidance of the county agent, a vice president and farm management consultant of a local bank, and the manager of a co-op. In the words of

² Raymond Payne and A. Alexander Fanelli, **Community Organization in Mississippi**, Mississippi Agricultural Experiment Station Circular 183; State College, 1953; Dorris W. Rivers and Harold F. Kaufman, **Community Development**, Mississippi Agricultural Extension Service Publication 197; State College, 1955.

³ Wilfrid C. Bailey, **Mississippi Community Fertilizer Education Experiment: Final Report**, Preliminary Report on Sociology and Rural Life No. 7; State College: Mississippi Agricultural Experiment Station, 1959.

these three men, "We felt the need of this type of organization in order to fully develop the social, spiritual, and economic aspect of community life."

The proposed program was presented to the Corinth Kiwanis, Lion, and Rotary Clubs and they were asked for moral and financial support. The Kiwanis Club agreed to sponsor the first community club.

Hinkle was selected as the first community to be organized because of a strong local leadership within the community. This community was located in one of the better farming areas of the county and was considered to be one of the better rural communities.

The county agent and the bank farm consultant went to Hinkle community and personally consulted the leaders in the community on the possibilities of organizing. The leaders were interested and approximately 95 percent of the community residents were contacted on the proposed organization. Varied reactions and responses were received but most families agreed to attend a called meeting at Hinkle School to discuss the idea further.

To encourage attendance each family in the community received three different letters telling them of the first meeting. One was from the Extension office, one from the Kiwanis Club, and one from a bank. The women in the community who were members of the local Home Demonstration Club also received letters urging that they and the entire family attend.

On April 18, 1952, the first meeting was held with 67 people present. The purpose and the advantages of a community development club were explained to those present by the county agent. Two pastors of churches in the community stated that they thought the organization was just what the community needed. Several community members present at the meeting stated that they were in favor of such an organization and suggested that officers and directors be elected at this meeting. Hinkle Community Development

Club, the first community club in the county, was organized that night.

The community club movement began growing in the county. Soon other communities began asking for help to organize clubs in their communities. Hinkle Club, the first to be organized in the county, was organized because of outside persuasion and influence. Eight clubs, Farmington, Gift, Holly, Kossuth, Glen, Hickory Flat, Union, and Biggersville were organized because they asked for outside help to organize. Wheeler Grove and Pleasant Hill clubs were organized when residents of these communities who had been attending the Kossuth club asked for help to organize their own.

Following is a list of all community development clubs in the county, the date of organization, place of meeting, and number of member families at the close of the 1958 club year.

Club	Date of Organization	Place of Meeting	No. of Member Families
Hinkle	April, 1952	School	23
Farmington	Feb., 1953	School	39
Gift	Feb., 1953	School	28
Kossuth	April, 1953	School	24
Holly	Mar., 1954	School	28
Wheeler Grove	May, 1954	Church	27
Glen	Oct., 1954	School	27
Pleasant Hill	Dec., 1955	Church	27
Hickory Flat	Nov., 1956	School	24
Union	Nov., 1956	School	23
Biggersville	Dec., 1956	School	45

Stages in Development

Upon close examination of the growth of community clubs two distinct cycles or stages were observed. The first stage might be called the organizational stage and the other the development stage.¹ The first was characterized by organizational problems and adjustments. Officers were elected and committees appointed, but a period of confusion and uncertainty existed. Officers and other club leaders were willing but did not know how or what to do next. In many instances they had little or no experience in organized ac-

¹Dorris W. Rivers, "Programming Farmer Education Through Community Clubs," in *Community Structure and Farmer Education*, Sociology and Rural Life Series No. 8; Division of Sociology and Rural Life, State College: Mississippi State University, 1957, pp. 2-6.

tivities such as serving as an officer of a club or helping plan community wide projects and goals. Careful planning and leadership had to be supplied from outside sources. Goals and projects initiated and carried out during this stage were usually tangible and short range, being completed within a period of one year or less.

The second or development stage of the community club was characterized by a smoother functioning club, with long range planning, a greater variety of projects and accomplishments, and the utilization of more committees. The tangible, short range projects continued, but increasing importance was given to the long range, more intangible type of projects. Upon reaching the second stage the less interested community residents dropped from the

club rolls. The educational programs dominated the activities less and placed less emphasis on farming. The club continued to serve an important social function, but many of its projects were economic in nature and directed toward raising family and community income.

Because of the gradual shift it was difficult to pin-point just when a club moved from the organizational to the development stage. However, the period of time involved for a club to make the shift varied, depending upon local leadership, and contacts a younger club had with older and more experienced clubs. The first clubs organized took about three years to grow out of the organizational stage. On the other hand, one of the last clubs to be established made the transition after one year.

III. ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMS

The activities of the community development clubs in Alcorn County can be understood through an examination of the formal organization and the programs of the clubs carried out in club meetings and in work to achieve established goals. The formal organization was divided into two parts, the Alcorn

County Development Council and the individual clubs located in the rural communities.

Formal Organization

Alcorn County Development Council

The Alcorn County Development Council was the coordinating body of the community development program

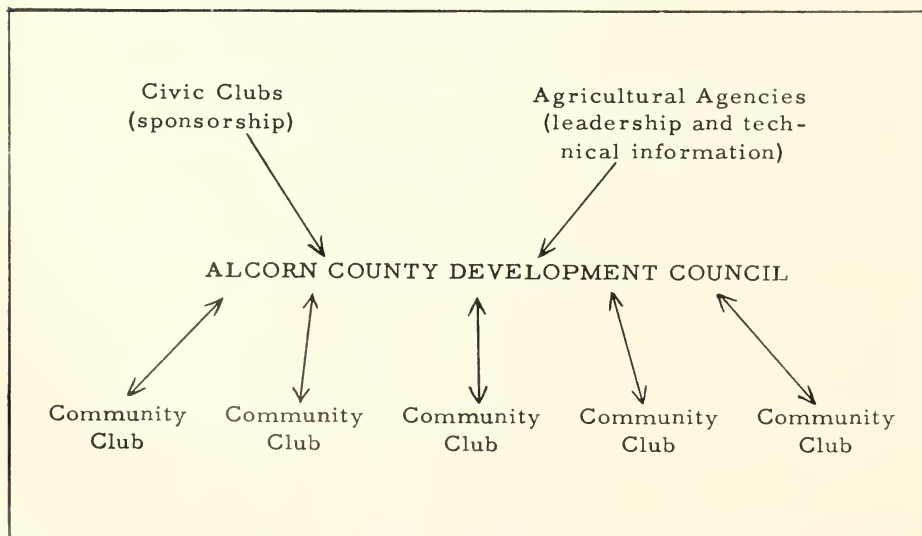


Figure 1. Organization of the Community Development Program in Alcorn County, Miss.

in the county. (Figure 1) The Council was formed to promote the economic, spiritual, and social aspects of every farm family in Alcorn County, and to bring about a closer relationship between the citizens living in Corinth and those living in the county. It was a non-sectarian, non-political, and non-profit organization.

Membership in the Council was of three classes designated as follows:

(1) Professional agricultural workers residing in and working with farmers in the county and devoting their full time to agricultural work. These people provided leadership and technical information to the individual clubs.

(2) Three representatives from each of the sponsoring civic clubs. The representatives were appointed by the sponsoring civic organizations. The civic clubs sponsored the individual clubs.

(3) Three representatives from each Alcorn County community development club. The representatives were appointed by the Board of Directors of the community clubs. Community clubs making application to be members of the Council agreed to the by-laws be-

fore being accepted as members. The acceptance of the by-laws was in writing by the secretary of the organization and was forwarded to the secretary of the Council.

The officers of the Council consisted of a president, a vice president, a secretary, a treasurer, an executive board, a nominating committee, and various other committees. The president appointed a nominating committee for Council officers at least thirty days before the meeting for election of officers. This committee reported to the Council its nominations for Council officers. Nominations from the floor were also made by Council members.

Only members duly appointed to the Council were entitled to vote on issues that arose from time to time at meetings of the Council and at elections. In case of a tie the chairman of the Council cast the deciding vote. Quarterly meetings were held regularly by the Council. Special meetings were called by the chairman or a majority of the Executive Board from time to time as needed.

Community Development Clubs

A Board of Directors acted as the governing body of each community development club. (Figure 2) Other club

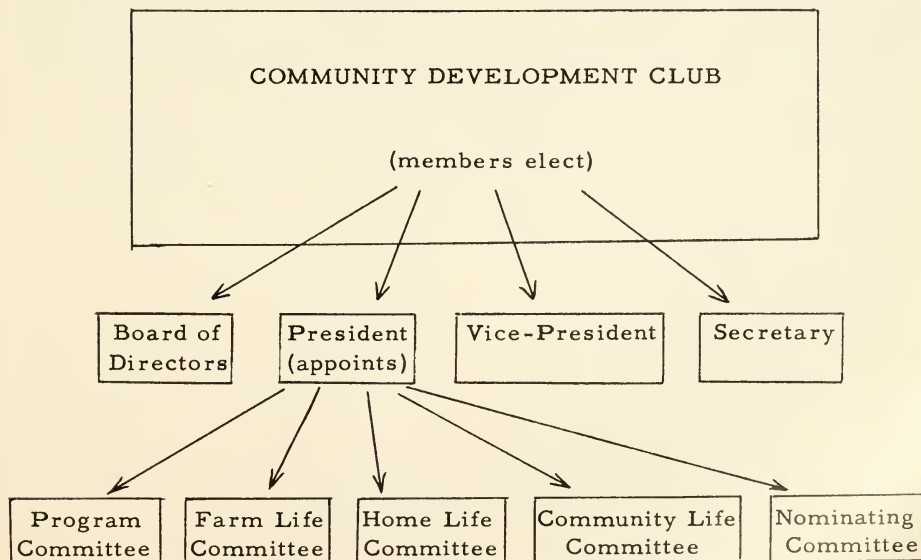


Figure 2. Organization of Community Development Clubs in Alcorn County, Mississippi.

officers consisted of a president, a vice president, secretary, and committee chairman. In addition there were several committees, the primary ones being a program committee, farm life committee, home life committee, community life committee, and nominating committee.

The president, vice president, and secretary were elected by club members. The president usually appointed the committee chairman and committee members. Sometimes, however, the president appointed a committee chairman and the chairman selected his own committee members.

The purpose of the home life, farm life and community life committees was to assume leadership in the determination of the club goals, and to initiate and assist in carrying out the projects and activities designed to realize the attainment of these goals. The program committee was responsible for planning the programs for all regular meetings of the club. It was the responsibility of the nominating committee to select a set of officers for election by the club members.

Programs and Meetings

Outline of a Typical Regular Club Meeting

All community clubs in the county followed a similar pattern as to the order of procedure of regular club meetings. The order of procedure was broken down into four major categories. These were (1) opening of the meeting, (2) business meeting, (3) club program, and (4) closing of the meeting. The average length of the club meetings studied was approximately one hour and forty-five minutes.

The president called the meeting to order. The next few minutes were devoted to group singing, followed by a short devotional. The songs were usually either religious or patriotic. The devotional consisted of a passage of scripture read from the Bible, followed by a few remarks. Someone then lead the group in a short prayer.

The second portion of the meeting consisted of the business session. At

this time the minutes of the previous meeting were read and adopted, and problems and any other club business that needed attention were discussed. The types of problems generally discussed were (1) problems related to the internal functioning of the club, (2) problems of the club in relation to the Alcorn Community Development Council, (3) club goals, and (4) problems of the club in relation to other communities and agencies.

The third major portion of the meeting was the presentation of the program. This was one of the most important parts of a club meeting, because one of the surest ways of keeping a community development club alive and active was to have a well planned and properly carried out program. The interest and enthusiasm of the club members began to dwindle after a few dull programs. Community clubs were a family type organization made up of mothers, fathers, sons, and daughters. Some of the members were farmers; some part-time farmers; and some, non-farmers. Some of the farmers were dairy farmers, and some, cotton farmers. Therefore, programs were varied to interest all members.

Club programs were planned that were appropriate to the seasons of the year and to special events or holidays. A program on home gardens was more appropriate in March than in November.

Inspirational and entertainment features consisted of songs, piano music, string band music furnished by FFA boys, devotionals, comedy films, and plays and skits which were both educational and entertaining.

The closing portion of the meetings consisted of any other business that came up before the meeting adjourned, announcements, and awarding of the door prize given by the Alcorn County Development Council to boost attendance. Some clubs had a recreational period immediately after the meeting adjourned. Refreshments were sometimes served at this time.

Programs and Activities

Community development club meetings were classified into two types,

regular and special. Each club in the county held regularly scheduled monthly meetings. In addition, special called meetings were held from time to time as the need arose.⁵

Although educational programs were presented at the majority of regular club meetings, this was not always the case. Therefore, regularly scheduled monthly meetings were classified into four types according to the focus of the meeting: (1) educational, (2) social, (3) organizational, (4) entertainment.

Seventy-seven percent of all regularly scheduled meetings for which information was available had educational programs. Eleven percent were socials, 6 percent were oriented toward organizational activities, and 6 percent were entertainment meetings. (Table 1). The large percentage of educational meetings may be accounted for by the fact that special meetings were usually held for the other activities or else they were taken up at the proper time during the educational meeting. Also, the clubs were used by County Extension Agents and other leaders in the county for educational purposes.

Educational Programs

An educational program may be defined as one that has as its objective the transmission of knowledge and the introduction of a change in the patterns of behavior. There were primarily three types of educational programs presented at the monthly community club meetings in Alcorn County. These were (1) agricultural programs, (2) homemaking programs, and (3) programs oriented toward the community.

As pointed out previously, educational programs were planned and presented according to seasons of the year and special events. For example, March programs presented in some clubs explained the federal cotton acreage allotment program and the various

Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation benefits available to farmers. April programs were on recommended practices for planting and raising cotton and corn. Insect control programs for various crops were presented in June, and in November there were programs on slaughtering and curing pork.

Forty-seven percent of all educational programs included in the sample were on agricultural subjects. Thirty-five percent were oriented toward community improvement and 18 percent were on homemaking topics. (Table 2).

The Relationship of Occupation to Type of Education Programs

Community club member families were fairly representative of the population of the communities in which clubs were found as to the occupational distribution. (Table 3). In a survey taken of the eleven communities with clubs⁶ it was found that 53 percent of

Table 1. Types of regularly scheduled meetings, 1954-1958.

Type of meeting	Number	Percent
Educational	327	77
Social	46	11
Entertainment	28	6
Organizational	26	6
Total	427	100

Table 2. Summary of educational programs presented, 1954-1958.

Subject	Number	Percent
Agricultural	208	47
Community	158	35
Homemaking	80	18
Total	446	100

Table 3. Occupation of community residents and community club members for eleven communities and clubs, 1958.

Occupation	Community		Club	
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Full-time farmer ..	843	53	136	43
Part-time farmer ..	191	12	55	18
Public worker	334	21	101	32
Other	218	14	23	7
Total	1586	100	315	100

⁵ The information for this section was obtained from field worker's notes, transcriptions of community club meetings, clubs' secretary record books, and from newspaper clippings from the county paper, *The Daily Corinthian*. Information was available for 427 regular meetings and 202 special meetings held during the years 1954 through 1958.

⁶ Frank D. Alexander, *Rural Communities, Organized Groups, and Public Agencies in Alcorn County, Mississippi*, Preliminary Reports in Sociology and Rural Life No. 2; State College, Mississippi Agricultural Experiment Station, 1955.

the heads of households were full-time farmers, 12 percent were part-time farmers, 21 percent were public workers, and 14 percent were in the category 'other'. In contrast, 43 percent of the club member families were full-time farmers, 18 percent were part-time farmers, 32 percent were public workers, and 7 percent were in the category 'other'. In comparison to the total community residents, full-time farmers and the category 'other' were slightly under-represented in the clubs. Part-time farmers and public workers were slightly over-represented in the clubs.

It should be pointed out, however, that the community occupational data was based on a 1955 survey while the club occupational data was based on a 1958 occupational survey. There is evidence to show that between 1955 and 1958 there was a considerable loss of farmers in Alcorn County. In 1955 schedules were taken from a sample of 161 farm operators living in six communities in Alcorn County. Three years later schedules were again taken from the same group of farmers. It was found that over the three-year period 52 (32 percent) of those farming in 1954 were either no longer farming or were farming in different communities. Nine farms were taken over by new operators resulting in a net loss of 43 farm operators in the survey communities.⁷

The occupational structure of the 1958 club member families reflect the loss of farmers in Alcorn County. An occupational survey was made of club member families of seven clubs in 1955 and again in 1958. (Table 4). The results showed a loss in the number of full-time farmers and an increase in the number of part-time farmers and public workers. Full-time farmers decreased from 53 to 39 percent while part-time farmers increased from 16 to 18 percent and public workers from 24 to 36 percent.

Educational programs presented at community club meetings were fairly well balanced, if considered in terms

of total agricultural programs presented and number of club member families engaged in agriculture. Forty-seven percent of all educational programs presented at club meetings were on agricultural subjects. (Table 2). Forty-three percent of the families belonging to community clubs were full-time farmers and 18 percent part-time farmers, or a total of 61 percent engaged directly in agriculture. (Table 3). However, the programs were not so well balanced between the interests of men and women. Only 18 percent of all educational programs were on homemaking topics as compared to 47 percent for agriculture. Eighty-two percent of the programs of all types would be of interest to the men. In contrast, the women would be interested primarily in community and homemaking programs, which comprised 53 percent of all educational programs.

Agencies and Organizations Utilized in Presenting Educational Topics

Representatives of agencies and organizations presenting educational programs at regular community club meetings were divided into four major categories. These are (1) county agricultural workers, (2) representatives of public agencies, (3) business representatives, and (4) clubs and other community organizations.

A wide variety of representatives of agencies and organizations were utilized in presenting educational topics at community club meetings. However, 48 percent of all educational programs were presented by county agricultural workers. (Table 5). These workers included the county Agricultural Extension agents, the county Home Dem-

Table 4. Occupation of heads of families belonging to community clubs.*

Occupation	1955		1958	
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Full-time farmer..	116	53	77	39
Part-time farmer..	35	16	35	18
Public worker	51	24	71	36
Other	16	7	13	7
Total	218	100	196	100

*Seven clubs in program in both 1955 and 1958.

⁷ Andrew W. Baird and Wilfrid C. Bailey, **Farmers Moving Out of Agriculture**, Mississippi Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin No. 568; State College, 1958.

onstration agents, representatives of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation and Soil Conservation Service representatives, and county Vocational Agricultural teachers.

Representatives of public agencies presented 21 percent of all educational topics. These people included representatives of the County Health Department, Red Cross, area Social Security office, Area Forester, county library, and the Superintendent of Education.

Business representatives presenting educational programs were from dairy processing plants, cotton buyers, county cooperative, poultry and poultry feed dealers, banks, fertilizer dealers, and the telephone company.

Clubs and other community organizations accounted for 15 percent of all educational programs presented. These organizations included adult rural organizations, youth community organizations, sponsoring civic organizations, and Farm Bureau.

Techniques of Presentation

Techniques used in presenting educational programs included movies, slides, lectures, distribution of literature, demonstrations, panel discussions, charts, graphs, models, and plays and skits. Often several techniques were used in presenting one educational topic. Lectures and movies were used more frequently than any other technique. (Table 6).

Special Meetings

In addition to regular meetings, special meetings were held by clubs. Special meetings included (1) workdays, (2) organizational activities, (3) socials, (4) special study meetings, (5) community tours, and (6) community campaigns for such activities as raising club funds, dog vaccination, and rat eradication.

Workdays—A workday consisted of the members of a community club working together on a community project. Workdays accounted for 30 percent of all special meetings during the period 1954-1958. (Table 7).

The members of one club met at the

home of a fellow club member for a "face-lifting" of his farm. The "face-lifting" included fencing, terracing, seeding winter cover crops, seeding oats and crimson clover, filling gullies, painting and repairing the barn, applying minerals to the soil, and making minor repairs to the home. The owner paid the cost of materials. Members of the club contributed their labor and equipment, while other supplies and equipment were contributed by agencies and business establishments.

The members of other clubs had major face-liftings of community cemeteries. Clubs located in communities with schools held workdays at the schools for the purpose of repairing the buildings, landscaping the school grounds, and repairing and constructing playground equipment.

Organizational Activities—Each club in the county held special meetings oriented toward organizational activities of the club. This type of special

Table 5. Agencies and organizations presenting educational topics at community club meetings, 1954-1958.

Agencies and organizations	No.	Pct.
County agricultural workers...	204	48
Representatives of public agencies	88	21
Business representatives	67	16
Clubs and other community organizations	66	15
Total	425	100

Table 6. Techniques of presentation of educational topics at club meetings, 1954-1958.

Technique	No.	Pct.
Lecture	229	41
Movie	146	26
Distribution of literature	68	12
Demonstration	42	8
Slides	27	5
Charts, Graphs, models	16	3
Panel discussion	15	3
Plays, skits	11	2
Total	554	100

Table 7. Types of special meetings, 1954-1958.

Type of special meeting	No.	Pct.
Organizational activities	61	30
Workdays	60	30
Socials	25	12
Special study	23	11
Fund raising campaign	15	7
Dog vaccination campaign	7	4
Community tours	7	4
Rat eradication campaign	4	2
Total	202	100

meeting also accounted for 30 percent of all special meetings held. (Table 7).

At the beginning of a new club year each club held program planning meetings for the purpose of planning the club goals, projects, and programs for the entire year. Also, three clubs in the county held special meetings for the purpose of reorganizing their clubs. At these meetings problems of the clubs were discussed and recommendations made for the improvement of each club.

Socials—Every year each club invited the members and families of the club's sponsoring civic organization to a social. Food and entertainment were provided by the community club members. In addition, the clubs held numerous other social activities such as harvest suppers, fish fries, and ice cream suppers. Meetings of this type accounted for 12 percent of all special meetings. (Table 7).

Special Study Meetings—Special study meetings, which accounted for 11 percent of all special meetings, were meetings held by clubs for the purpose of studying some special problem or project. In some cases the meetings were county wide, with everyone in the county interested being invited to attend.

For example, leadership training meetings were conducted for all officers and other leaders in all the community development clubs. Meetings were conducted in the county Extension office by Extension specialists for the purpose of discussing the proper methods of carrying out improved farm practices. These meetings were attended by farm committeemen of all the clubs in the county. The committeemen were to carry back to their various clubs the information to be used in carrying out improved farm practices.

Fund Raising Campaigns—Community clubs held special meetings for the purpose of raising funds for the club or some other worthwhile project. Methods used by the clubs to raise funds included basketball games between the men and women of the club, basketball games between members of

two different clubs, donkey basketball games, and pie and cakewalks. Clubs also raised funds for such campaigns as the March of Dimes, Community Fund, and the Red Cross. Meetings of this type accounted for 7 percent of all special meetings.

Dog Vaccination Campaigns—Some clubs in the county sponsored community wide dog vaccination campaigns. At a specified time, everyone wishing to have their dogs vaccinated would meet at a central location in the community. Either a vocational agricultural teacher or a veterinarian would administer the vaccine. Meetings of this type accounted for 4 percent of the special meetings.

Community Tours—Community clubs in the county usually held one or two community tours during the year. Attending these tours were community club members and any other interested persons, such as members of the Alcorn County Development Council or members of the club's sponsoring civic organization. Visits were made to the club sponsored fertilizer plots, homes which had been improved, and farms whose operators had entered the various crop raising contests sponsored by the Alcorn County Development Council. These meetings also accounted for 4 percent of all special meetings.

Rat Eradication Campaigns—Each club in the county conducted a rat eradication campaign. The poison was purchased by the clubs. Special meetings were held in the communities and demonstrations were presented showing the correct procedure to place the poison to be most effective. The poison was then placed throughout the community. Meetings of this type accounted for 2 percent of the special meetings.

Goals

One of the primary objectives of community development programs was the improvement of the basic living conditions of the community, including the satisfaction of some of its non-material needs. To accomplish this objective the programs had goals. Goals represent the organizations' desire and

were the end results which the clubs were striving to reach.

Alcorn County community development goals may be grouped into four broad types. These are community versus county goals and long range versus short range goals.

County Goals

County goals differed from community goals in scope, the population to which they were directed, and the planners of the goals. The county-wide goals in Alcorn County were in the form of an individual and community score card booklet published by the Alcorn County Development Council. It was used by each community development club in the county. The first score card was used in Alcorn County in 1954. It was drawn up by the county agent of Alcorn County and the agent of an adjoining county. This score card consisted of a set of thirty-three goals in three areas. These three areas were (1) community, (2) social and spiritual, and (3) economic. Community club officers and directors evaluated the accomplishments under area one, while individuals evaluated their own accomplishments under areas two and three.

In March, 1955, a score card committee was appointed by the president of the Alcorn County Development Council for the purpose of setting up a new score card. Members of this committee were divided into three areas, (1) community, (2) home, and (3) farm.

Later the same month this committee met, along with the Extension rural sociologist from Mississippi State University and drew up a new score card. The rural sociologist was present to offer technical advice and assistance. Following are the areas the new county-wide goals were set up in:

- I. Community
- II. Individual family home life
- III. Individual family farm life
 - A. Corn
 - B. Cotton
 - C. Forestry
 - D. Hogs
 - E. Dairy

- F. Poultry
- G. Soil Conservation
- H. Beef

Each year a score card committee meets and revises the goals as new practices are recommended and emphasis is shifted to other practices. The card has been revised into four areas: community, family, home, and farm.

Community Goals

Whereas county-wide goals found in the score card applied to all community clubs in the county and to all community club members, community goals applied only to individual communities and their members.

Each community development club had at least four committees, (1) program committee, (2) community committee, (3) home committee, and (4) farm committee. At the beginning of each club year the members of these committees met and drew up goals and projects for the year for their club. Usually a representative of the Extension Service met with the committees to assist in the planning. Also, the individual clubs used the county-wide goals found in the score card as a basis for planning their community goals. As a result, all clubs had a few goals that were similar in nature, such as workdays at the community cemetery and school, mailbox improvement, soil testing, year round home gardens, and rat control campaigns. In addition, each club usually had goals that were peculiar to its own community situation. For example, one community was attempting to secure telephone service. The leaders of this movement were also leaders in the community development club. Therefore, the community club had as one of its goals to work toward obtaining phone service for the community. Another club was having to hold its meetings in a community church. One of this club's goals was to work toward building a community center.

Community goals often were more specific and directed toward the individual than were county goals. For example, a county goal read "year-

round home gardens—3 to 5 vegetables grown the year-round". A community goal read "five families have year-round home gardens in the community—3 to 5 vegetables each."

Short Range versus Long Range Goals

As has been pointed out previously, goals initiated and carried out during the early stages of a community development program are usually tangible and short range in nature. These are goals that may be completed within a period of one year or less.

An examination showed that the early goals of clubs in Alcorn County were of short range in nature. Following are examples of goals of this type. All could be completed within a period of a few weeks.

1. Have a workday at the community cemetery.
2. Have a workday at each church in the community.
3. Have a community-wide rat control campaign.
4. Repair community road signs and place new ones where needed.
5. Sponsor a workday at the school and add playground equipment.

As the community clubs became more mature and experienced, long range goals were initiated. The tangible, short range goals continued, but increasing importance was given to the long range, more intangible type of goals.

An examination of goals for five clubs in 1954 produced only one goal that could be classed as long range. In 1955 six clubs had a total of six long range goals. In 1957 five clubs had a total of three long range goals, and eleven clubs had a total of nine long range goals in 1958.

It should be pointed out that the Alcorn County Studies were begun in 1955, and at that time an extensive educational program was carried out in the clubs by sociologists from the Tennessee Valley Authority and Mississippi State University, and by the Alcorn County Extension staff. Leadership training meetings were conducted for all clubs by these outside leaders and

in some cases helped with goal formation. This probably accounts for the sudden increase in the number of long range goals in 1955. But then, after a decrease in 1957, the number of long range goals increased in 1958 as the clubs became more experienced.

Many of the community goals were economic in nature and directed toward raising family and community income. Following are examples of community goals planned by clubs in Alcorn County for the 1958 club year. These are goals to be accomplished sometime in the future, not something that is done in a matter of days or weeks.

1. Build a community center building for our community.
2. Secure telephone service for the community.
3. Work toward getting the road paved from Smith Bridge road to Mt. Carmel Church.
4. All farmers in the community with adapted land practice timber stand improvement.

Process of Goal Achievement

Goals were achieved in Alcorn County by two major processes. These two processes were contests and a series of projects. The community development program in Alcorn County was contest centered. The Alcorn County Development Council sponsored two types of contests, community and individual.

Community Contests—The community contest was centered around the individual and community score card. The goals in the score card were actually recommended farm and home practices. Community clubs competed with each other for awards in the annual community development contest. The items which were evaluated in the contest were those reflecting the progress of the club organization and community projects. Also considered in the evaluation were those activities of individual club members concerning their home life and farm life. Many club members first learned about recommended practices from the score card and some adopted the practice in order to earn points for their community club. There-

fore, the community contest was an important means of goal achievement.

Individual Contests—Individual contests sponsored by the ACDC were in the areas of home improvement, cotton, dairy, swine, forestry, and corn. Each of these areas included recommended farm and home practices. The individual family home life score cards were used as a basis of judging entries in the county individual home life contest. The corn and cotton contest was judged on the basis of the average yield per acre for the two acres entered in the contest. The other contests were judged on the basis of following the score card.

Projects—The other important process of goal achievement in Alcorn County was through a series of projects.⁸ A project was a planned under-

taking or a piece of work which pointed toward the achievement of a definite goal. Sometimes several projects were completed to achieve one goal. As an example, the following projects were undertaken by one club to work toward the achievement of the goal "all farmers in the community with adapted land practice timber stand improvement."

1. Sponsored one timber stand improvement demonstration in the community.
2. For a program at a regular meeting the Area Forester discussed recommended forestry practices.
3. Encouraged all club members with adapted land to make applications for and set out 1,000 pine seedlings.

IV. INTERACTION PATTERN

A community development club is an example of a group of people doing things together. To fully understand the club structure and functions it is necessary to examine the interaction pattern within the community clubs, between the club and community, and between the clubs and county.

Within the Club

One aspect of interaction within the club is the degree of attendance at regular community club meetings by member families. Club member families attending more than one-third of all regular club meetings were considered to be active participants, those attending from one to thirty-three percent of all meetings were considered to be low or fringe participants, and if no meetings were attended they were considered to be non-participants.

Two-thirds of the club member families of eleven clubs were active participants for the 1958 club year. (Table 8). Forty-two percent attended more than two-thirds of all regularly scheduled meetings. Thirty percent attended one-third or less of all the meetings,

while 4 percent did not attend any meetings.

A comparison was made of attendance at regular club meetings with occupations of member families of community clubs for the year 1958. (Table 9). Forty-five percent of member families at regular club meetings were full-time farmers and 19 percent part-time farmers, or a total of 64 percent were engaged directly in agriculture. Thirty-one percent of the average attendance was by public workers and 5 percent were in the category 'other'. Thirty-two percent of the club members were public workers and 7 percent were in the category 'other'.

A second aspect of interaction within the club is participation in the discussion at meetings. Tape recordings

Table 8. Percentage of club member families attending club meetings, 1958.

Percentage of meetings attended	Number attending	Percent attending
68-100	131	42
34-67	77	24
1-33	94	30
0	13	4
Total member families	315	100

⁸ Dorris W. Rivers, *Doing Things the Community Way*, (Mississippi Agricultural Extension Service Publication 367 (5M). State College, Mississippi, 1958.)

Table 9. Occupation of club member families and attendance, 1958.

Occupation	Composition of Club membership		Average composition of club meetings	Average attendance for the year
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Farm only	136	43	7	45
Part-time farmer	55	18	3	19
Public worker	101	32	5	31
Other	23	7	1	5
Total	315	100	16	100

were made of ten regular community club meetings in the county during 1955. The recordings were then transcribed and typed. Each speaker was identified by name on the typed transcriptions.

An analysis of the transcribed club meetings showed that relatively few of those in attendance actually entered into the discussion of club activities. Out of a total of 443 people in attendance at the ten meetings, only 115 (26 percent) entered into the discussion. A tabulation of each statement or comment made by people entering into the discussion showed that the club presidents account for approximately one-third, other club officers another one-third, and other club members the final one-third. Three-quarters of those in attendance did not enter into the discussions. (Table 10).

Community club meetings were conducted in a harmonious atmosphere. Approximately 75 percent of those entering into the discussions did so in a constructive manner. Less than one percent of the statements were antagonistic or in disagreement. The remainder of the comments served primarily to clarify the matter under discussion.⁹

Club and Community

What was the interaction pattern between the club and community? What percent of the community families are members of community development clubs? Why are clubs in some communities and not in others? What are the characteristics of those who belong and those who do not?

At the close of 1954 there were six community clubs in Alcorn County

with a total enrollment of 195 families. This represented 20 percent of the families in the club communities. Each year thereafter, for the years 1955 through 1958, total family membership increased due to new clubs being organized. However, for the years 1955 and 1956, there was a decrease in the percentage of families in club communities who were members of the clubs. At the end of 1955 there were seven clubs with 218 family members representing 18 percent of the eligible families. At the end of 1956 there were eight clubs with total family members increasing to 228. However, the percentage of families in the club communities who were club members remained the same. In 1957, the percentage of families in the club communities who were club members increased slightly. Three new clubs were organized, bringing the total number of clubs to eleven and total enrolled membership to 309 families representing 20 percent of the eligible families. At the end of the 1958 club year the total enrolled membership was 315 families representing 20 percent of the eligible families. Approximately 45 percent of the rural families in Alcorn County had access to a community de-

Table 10. Participation in discussion at regular club meetings, 1955.

Participation	Number of people	Percent of people	Percent of discussion
Participating in discussion	115	26	—
Club president	—	—	32
Other club officers	—	—	38
All other members	—	—	30
Not participating in discussion	328	74	—
Total	443	100	100

⁹ Andrew W. Baird, *Community Club Programs in Alcorn County, Mississippi, 1952-1955*. (Unpublished Master of Science Thesis, Division of Sociology and Rural Life, Mississippi State University, 1957.)

development club in their home community.

As has been pointed out earlier, there appears to be two cycles of growth in the life of community development clubs. This is one possible explanation for the decrease in the number of families in club communities who were members of the clubs for the years 1955 to 1956. The older clubs had passed through the organizational stage and short range goals had been reached. As a result some of the less enterprising eligible community residents lost interest and dropped from the club rolls. When some of the clubs began long range planning in 1957 and 1958 membership began increasing.

Although the community development clubs have been growing in both number and membership, the majority of the rural families in the county did not belong to a club. A comparison of communities with clubs and communities without clubs suggests several important differences existing between the two. Communities with clubs had a higher family income, higher level of participation in non-church organizations, most contact with agricultural agencies, higher socio-economic score, and a higher level of adoption of agricultural practices. (Table 11).

Some individuals were not club members because they did not have the opportunity to join. Others did not take advantage of clubs located right in their home communities. Non-participating families in communities having clubs have been compared to those families belonging to clubs.¹⁰

Thirty percent of both club and non-club families depended on farming only as their source of income. Forty-two percent of the club member families received both farm and non-farm income. Non-club families had a higher percentage receiving non-farm income and a greater percentage of unemployed. The greatest contrast between the two groups was in tenure. Eighty percent of the member families owned land whereas only 46 percent of the non-

members were land owners. Income was higher for club members than non-members. Median gross farm sales was \$1917 for club families as compared to \$1417 for non-club families, and median non-farm income was \$1850 and \$1500 respectively. Club member families had adopted 4.1 out of 5 key farm practices as compared to 2.7 for non-member families. The home practices scores were 17.4 compared to 14.9 out of a possible score of 26 on 13 practices.

There is an indication that all community groups were not represented in

Table 11. Comparison of club and non-club communities.

	Club	Non-Club
Source of family income (percent)		
Farm only	27.3	26.9
Farm and non-farm	28.2	16.5
Non-farm only	34.4	38.5
None gainfully employed	10.1	18.1
Occupation of male head (percent)		
Farm only	40.1	36.5
Farm and non-farm	15.4	7.3
Non-farm only	29.1	35.0
None gainfully employed	15.4	21.2
Tenure (percent)		
Owner	48.4	45.5
Owner-renter	13.3	14.0
Renter	31.3	22.3
Sharecropper	5.5	11.6
Laborer	1.6	6.6
Family Income		
Median gross farm income	\$1480	\$1240
Median non-farm	1770	1460
Agency contact		
Percent of male heads having contact with:		
County agricultural agencies	61.3	53.6
Welfare and health	23.0	30.9
State and regional	15.7	15.5
Percent of male heads having:		
One or more contacts	58.2	52.4
No contacts	41.8	47.6
Participation of male head (percent)		
Active in religious only	14.7	22.4
Active in religious and other	9.5	4.8
Non-members and inactive members	20.8	24.0
Socio-economic score (median)		
.....	71.9	69.4
Adoption of agricultural practices score (median)		
.....	3.5	2.2
Adoption of home practices score (median)		
.....	15.7	15.8
Age of male head of household (median)		
.....	48.1	49.2
Years of school of male head of household (median)		
.....	8.1	8.1
Take daily newspaper (percent)		
.....	49.8	41.9

¹⁰ Wilfrid C. Bailey, *Designing Education Programs for Specific Audiences*, Preliminary Reports in Community Organization No. 4; State College: Mississippi State University, Division of Sociology and Rural Life, 1957.

community development clubs. The non-club members had a lower level of participation in the community activities. For example, 32 percent of the non-club families could name none of the three top community leaders as compared to only 5 percent of the member families. On the other hand, 50 percent of the club members named two or three of the top three leaders as compared to 33 percent of the non-club members. The non-club families had two years less schooling than the club families. Seventy-six percent of the club families took a daily newspaper as compared to only 37 percent of the non-club families. (Table 12).

There is evidence to show that the community leadership is well represented in the community development clubs. In 1955 a one-third sample of heads of households and homemakers were interviewed in 15 of the 37 communities in the county. Both the heads of households and the homemakers were asked, "Who in this community would be the best people to go to if

you needed advice on something to do with farming?" and "Who in this community would be the best people to go to if you wanted to get folks around here together to do something about bettering your community, such as improving the school, churches, roads, etc.?" The homemakers were asked the same question as the heads of households concerning community action. Also, the homemakers were asked, "Who in this community would be the best people to go to if you needed advice on something to do with homemaking?" Community development clubs were located in five of the fifteen communities in which schedules were taken.

The top three individuals in the five club communities receiving the most mentions for each of the four questions were classified as club officer, club member, or non-club member. As is shown by Table 13, those individuals named as community leaders were actually involved in the community development clubs, with the vast majority having served as a club officer at one time or another. One hundred percent of the top three named as leaders in community action by both the heads of households and the homemakers were members of community development clubs, with 80 percent having served as a club officer. Ninety-three percent of those listed as sources of farming information were members of clubs, with 60 percent having served as a club officer. Those named by the women as sources of homemaking information had the greatest percentage who were not club members, 13 percent. However, 87 percent of this group were club members, with 47 percent having served as club officers. (Table 13).

Club and County

As has been pointed out previously, the rural community development movement in Alcorn County had its beginning under the leadership of a few men in Corinth. As the program grew, with more and more clubs being organized, the rural and urban communities were drawn closer together

Table 12. Comparison of club and non-club families in club communities.

	Club family	Non-club family
Source of family income (percent)		
Farm only	30	30
Farm and non-farm	42	24
Non-farm only	20	34
Unemployed	8	12
Tenure (percent)		
Owner	63	36
Owner-renter	17	10
Renter	21	43
Sharecropper	0	9
Laborer	0	2
Family income (median)		
Gross farm sales	\$1917	\$1417
Non-farm income	1850	1500
Leadership recognition (percent)		
Name none of top three leaders	5	32
Name 2 or 3 of top three leaders	50	33
Sewell socio-economic score (median)		
	79.1	68.2
Home practices score (median)		
	17.4	14.9
Farm practices score (median)		
	4.1	2.7
Age of head of household (median)		
	45.4	46.2
Years of school for head of household (median)		
	9.7	7.7
Take daily newspaper (percent)		
	76	37

Table 13. Percentage of named community leaders involved in community development clubs.

Leadership area	Position in community club		
	Club officer percent	Club member percent	Non-member percent
Farming information	60	33	7
Homemaking information	47	40	13
Community action: (Heads of households)	80	20	0
(Homemakers)	80	20	0

with the organization of the Alcorn County Development Council. Town and country residents were brought closer together through a variety of ways, both formally and informally.

Membership in the development council was about equally divided between the town and country residents. Those serving as officers and committee members were also about equally drawn from town and country members. The council held four regularly scheduled meetings a year. Therefore, both town and country were drawn together to discuss mutual problems and make decisions concerning the community development program.

In addition to the regular council meetings, special committee meetings were held from time to time. For example, the score card committee, composed of both town and country members, met annually to make revisions in the individual and community score card.

Each community club is sponsored by a Corinth Civic Club. Usually representatives of the sponsoring civic club attended the regular community club meetings. Also, each year, each community club usually invited members of the sponsoring civic clubs and their families to one or two socials. In addition to the socials held by the individual clubs an annual awards banquet, attended by both the community

club members and sponsoring civic club members, was held in Corinth. An award was made to the civic club doing the best job of sponsoring a community club. Town and country residents got to know and better understand the other.

There has been an attempt to coordinate the activities of the community development clubs and other organizations in the county. For example, in 1958 the County Farm Bureau started meeting jointly with a different club in the county each month. The Farm Bureau was responsible for the program at these meetings. Each organization came to know more about the other. Also the community clubs were being recognized more and more as contact agencies between the town and community. Charity organizations such as the Red Cross contacted the clubs for contributions.

Economic and friendship connections between the county seat and the rural communities were important in the development of clubs. All of the organized communities had close business connections with the county seat. The people went there to trade and to find non-farm employment. In addition, several of the organized communities have close kinship and friendship ties with the county seat. For example, the first club to be organized in the county was done so primarily because of the community's reputation of a strong local leadership and being one of the best farming communities in the county. In contrast, no effort has been made to organize the western hill section of the county. Residents of these communities have a reputation of going into the adjacent county for the majority of their goods and services. These communities have limited agency contacts with the county seat and have not expressed interest in the community development program.

V. FUNCTIONS OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CLUBS

The functions performed by community development clubs may be divided into two categories, formal functions and informal functions. The formal functions of the clubs were the specifically stated and recognized purposes of the clubs. These functions were either written in the by-laws of the organization or verbally stated by club members or people working with the clubs. The informal functions were those that were not officially recognized as purposes of the clubs but, never the less, occurred as a result of the operation of the clubs. These categories are not necessarily distinct and mutually exclusive. There is considerable overlapping.

Formal Functions

Community development—The major function of the community development clubs in Alcorn County was the improvement of conditions in the county, or community development. The Alcorn County Development Council By-Laws explicitly stated that the council was formed for the purpose of promoting the economic, spiritual and social life of every farm family in Alcorn County, and to bring about a closer relationship between the citizens living in the country and those living in the city of Corinth.

One measure of the degree to which this general objective was achieved can be obtained by examination of the scores made in the annual community club contest. (Table 14). The score card contained four sections. The individual families were scored in three

Table 14. Club contest scores, 1955, 1957, and 1958.*

	1955	1957	1958
Home score	46	59	56
Family score	**	69	62
Farm score	27	59	51
Community score	53	60	62
Total	46	61	60

*Average for seven clubs entering contest in all of these years. Score is percentage of total possible points.

**Family score not included in 1955 contest.

areas, home, family, and farm. The group activities of the club contributed to the community score. The average family score and the community score gave the total club score. A comparison of the combined scores of the seven clubs active in the period of 1955 through 1958 shows that there was considerable improvement. Actually the improvement was greater than the points indicate because the regulations and requirements for making points were tightened during the period. The index rose 14 points or nearly one-third. The community score was the only area that showed an actual improvement in 1958 over 1957. This reflects a trend in the club program from an emphasis on education to a greater concern for general community improvement or community development.

Improved relations between town and country—This was the second objective stated in the by-laws. It has been achieved through several means. The membership of the Alcorn County Development Council included people from town and each club had a Corinth civic club as a sponsor. Besides these official ties some of the informal functions discussed later in this section involved development of closer relations between the rural communities and the county seat town. Most club members and people in Corinth who are familiar with the clubs stated that this had been one of the more important effects.

An educational media—One aspect of community development through the community clubs was found in the educational programs. A general idea of the role clubs played in education of the members can be gained from improvement made on the score cards submitted by individual families in the annual contest. (Table 14). The farm life score showed the greatest improvements and reflected the agricultural emphasis of the educational programs presented at the clubs.

Special emphasis was placed on the use of clubs to promote the adoption of new and approved farm practices. The final goal of an educational pro-

gram is not just the spread of information, but utilization of the new knowledge. In order to measure the effect of the educational program in influencing the adoption of agricultural practices, a group of 161 farmers were interviewed in 1955 concerning their use of 12 practices during the 1954 crop year, the year before special educational programs began. It was found that there was a wide gap between knowing about a practice, thinking it was best, and using it.¹¹ In 1958 the same group of farmers were interviewed concerning their 1957 crop year.

Comparison of the adoption of recommended farm practices by residents of club and non-club communities for the years 1954 and 1957 points to the effectiveness of the club educational programs. (Table 15). The farmers in the non-club communities showed an increase of 26 percent, whereas, the club communities improved only 15 percent. Comparison of the club members and the non-club members in the club communities shows the same relationship. At first glance this would seem to be the reverse of what would be expected. Re-examination shows that the non-club members in club communities and the non-club communities had an average score in 1957 that was still below that of the club members in 1954.

In 1957 a number of practices were used by all or nearly all the club members for whom these practices were applicable. Thus the non-club members had more room for improvement. Considering practices not used in 1954 as the possibility for improvement, members of community club added 68 percent of the total possible compared with 37 percent for the non-club members in club communities and 40 percent for the farmers in non-club communities. (Table 16). In other words the club member improvement was 84 percent greater than non-club members in the

club communities and 70 percent greater than non-club communities.

Club members made 100 percent improvement in four practices: planting certified cotton seed, poisoning cotton four or more times, use of warfarin type rat poison, and buying fertilizer by plant food content. That is, all club members who did not use these practices in 1954 did so in 1957. These four practices were subjects of special educational programs carried out through the clubs. In order to counteract the reduction of cotton acreage, the county agent stressed adoption of practices that would increase yield on the remaining acreage. The community clubs took it upon themselves to see that warfarin type rat poisons were used. Each year the clubs purchased enough rat poison for all the members to use and in some instances the clubs held a field day in which club members supervised the placing of the poison on the farms in the community. The

Table 15. Change in the use of recommended farm practices, 1954-1957.*

	Used 1954 (Pct.)	Used 1957 (Pct.)	Change 1954-57 (Pct.)
Club communities:			
Club members	76	85	12
Non-members	49	59	20
Total community....	60	69	15
Non-Club communities	47	59	26
Total	59	68	15

*Average of 12 practices.

Table 16. Adding and dropping of farm practices: Club and non-club members, 1954-1957.*

	Practices added (percent of possible improvement)	Practices dropped (percent of possible loss)
Club members	68	9
Non-club members in club communities	37	20
Non-club communities....	40	16

*Average of 12 practices.

¹¹ The practices included in the survey were: sidedress corn with nitrogen, thick space corn on better land, plant hybrid seed corn, plant certified cotton seed, poison cotton four or more times a year, cull timber, soil test every five years, mow pastures or poison weeds, keep written records, use most fertilizer on better soil, use warfarin type rat poison, and buy fertilizer by plant food content. Herbert A. Aurbach and Harold F. Kaufman, "Knowledge and Use of Recommended Farm Practices." *Farm Research*, Vol. 19, No. 6, (June) 1956.

assistant county agent with the help of the local farmers' coop manager, and a TVA sociologist planned a 4-H Club demonstration on buying fertilizer by plant food content. This prize winning demonstration won state honors. The boys presented their demonstration before all of the community clubs and other farm groups in the county.

Comparison of the use of farm practices in both 1954 and 1957 showed that the improvements made were actually the net results of both adding and dropping of practices. The farmers surveyed picked up 18 percent and dropped 9 percent for a net gain of 9 percent. In other words the total gain was the result of picking up two practices and dropping one for a net of one gained. Thus the desired end of the education program is not just getting farmers to try a practice but securing continued use. The club members and non-club members were compared on dropping of practices. The measure used was the percentage of the practices used in 1954 not used in 1957. Club members dropped only 9 percent of the possible number, non-club members in the club communities dropped 20 percent, and residents of non-club communities dropped 16 percent. An extreme example of instability in the use of a practice was keeping records by the non-club members in the club communities. In both 1954 and 1957 the same number kept records. However, all of those who kept records in 1954 did not keep them the second survey year and none of those who kept records in 1957 had done so during the first survey period. In other words, there was complete turnover. In the case of the club members in the same communities the 60 percent gain in this practice was associated with a drop of only 11 percent. Thus, it would seem that not only did club members try more of the new practices but, in addition, they were more likely to continue their use.

Community cohesion—Another recognized function of the community clubs was the development of community cohesion. The clubs were thought to be a force to bind the community together.

In 1955, respondents in six community clubs were asked to give the purpose of their organization. Answers included such statements as: "For the betterment of the community and to get people to pull together"; "To bring the community together and overcome the split"; and "To bring the people closer together and make better neighbors and a better place to live."

In 1958 the membership of six clubs was asked for reasons for attending club meetings. A total of 62 percent of the respondents said that they attended the regular club meetings either because they felt it their duty as a citizen of the community or because they enjoyed the fellowship of their neighbors.

Informal Functions

Change agent—The overall view of the clubs in community development and associated educational programs emphasized the value of change. The clubs interested people in doing something to solve their problems, or in other words, change. Stimulation of concern for change has been found to be an important factor in community development.

Although there is evidence that the educational programs were effective in securing the adoption of new farm and home practices, there is the possibility that the clubs attracted as members people interested in change. The occupational distribution of the clubs showed an under representation of full-time farmers and an over representation of full-time non-farm workers. The county sample found that 32 percent had only non-farm employment and that 15 percent had never farmed. This would indicate that half of those employed off of the farm had changed their occupation. Thus, if the clubs attracted people interested in change it would be expected that non-farm workers would be over represented.

Another role of the club as a change agent would be to resist change. There were frequent references to the community clubs as a means to prevent the disappearance of the rural com-

munity on the face of declining population and growing cities. Thus, the club becomes an agent to foster desirable change and to resist undesirable change. It is possible that in some cases community development clubs could be a conservative movement to preserve the old community and its culture. In this respect, community development clubs could exhibit some of the characteristics of what anthropologists have called "nativistic movements." No club in Alcorn County appeared to be of the conservative type. However, although most members seemed to emphasize the change, some were more concerned with resisting change.

Action facilitation—The clubs were the basis of community action in meeting a number of problems. Community clubs in Alcorn County have been successful in providing the group action and pressure needed for road improvement, extension of telephone lines, renovation of the county courthouse, and similar improvements of services for the communities. The clubs represented the communities as the local action group.

Community identity—The open country rural communities were more or less informal entities. Although recognized and identified by name, they lacked a corporate body or an over-all governing agency. The community clubs sometimes assumed this function. Because of this, communities with development clubs were sometimes called "organized communities".

Groups from outside the community approached the community through the clubs. Various county agencies attempting to organize a watershed program began their work in the local communities through the clubs. The Alcorn County Blood Bank organized group coverage based on the club members. Fund raising groups carried out their rural campaigns through the clubs. An officer in one fund raising organization reported that by working through the clubs, each club now donated more than was formerly received from the whole rural area.

Assumption of functions—The community development clubs have assumed some functions formerly performed by other groups. The Parent-Teachers Association was, at the time of the study, weak in the rural schools. The community clubs had, as one of their community life goals, encouragement of school attendance. They also held workdays at the schools for painting, landscaping, and building of playground equipment. Thus, these clubs were doing things usually associated with the PTA. Many of the communities had a local cemetery in connection with one of the churches or controlled by community cemetery association. Each of the clubs held workdays at the cemeteries for cleaning and general improvement of the grounds. In one community the cemetery association was formally incorporated into the club program.

An intermediate or catalytic agent—The community clubs provided a base for various educational programs. For example, the manager of the Alcorn County Cooperative made important use of the clubs in his fertilizer education programs. He was one of those responsible for the organization of the first club. Outside of the county Extension staff he was one of the more active townspeople in the club movement. At meetings he gave announcements about fertilizers and he helped with the prize winning 4-H Club fertilizer demonstration.

In a similar manner the programs of the Extension Service, Soil Conservation Service, Agricultural Conservation and Stabilization, and other agencies were presented through the clubs. Besides the formal educational programs in the club meetings, public attention was called to their programs through announcements in club meetings, newspaper articles about the club meetings, tours, demonstrations, and recruitment for special enterprise meetings.

In the second adoption survey farmers were asked about their sources of agricultural information. Only two people named the club. However, they did mention the activities of the vari-

ous agricultural agencies. Thus, when the county agent presented an educational program on cotton insecticides, the county agent, not the club was considered to be the source of information. The clubs served to increase the contacts with agricultural leaders. This became increasingly important when it was realized that because of the number of non-farmers in the clubs, the educational programs had to include non-agricultural subjects.

Thus, the clubs seemed to serve as an intermediate or a catalytic agent through a process of bringing educational agencies and the people closer together. The detailed educational programs were carried on outside the club meetings. Further, agency personnel reported that they used the clubs as a springboard from which to launch their educational programs for the entire county.

Community survival—Much concern has been expressed because rural communities have been losing their identity and have been dying out. Comparison of the communities that have remained relatively strong with those that were dying out showed that the strong community carried out certain social and economic functions for its inhabitants. There was a balance between dependence on local and outside leadership.¹² With the general loss of services and organizations in the rural area, the community development club was the type of organization that could help the community meet the requirements of survival.

Leadership training—There was only a weak tradition of local action through organized activity. At the beginning of the community development program the lack of local rural leadership was a crucial problem. It was necessary to have leadership development meetings. Both town and country residents have said that one of the greatest benefits of the community clubs has been the training of leadership, not just for the clubs but for other activities.

Compulsion for conformity—One of the basic assumptions of people working with community clubs was that one of the strong forces in the educational program was the compulsion to conform. The club set the pattern and social pressures caused the members to conform. Similarly it has been assumed that even if all the families did not belong to the club, community-wide pressures and observation of the benefits from new ways of doing things would cause the spread of the club influence.

No measurement of this compulsion for conformity was made. Observation of club meetings revealed that laggards were urged to follow score card recommendations so that they would not let the club down in the county contest. The adoption score made by non-club members in club communities were more like those of residents of non-club communities than the club members. Thus, there is some question as to the influence of conformity having an effect outside of the clubs.

¹² Lucy W. Cole, **What is Happening to Rural Neighborhoods?** Mississippi Agricultural Experiment Station Information Sheet 598; State College, 1958; Lucy W. Cole, "Selected Factors Associated with the Organization of Community Development Clubs". (Unpublished Master of Arts Thesis, Department of Sociology and Rural Life, Mississippi State University, 1959).