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Survey of public health conditions in three incorporated communities in Douglas County, Nebraska

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A SURVEY OF PUBLIC HEALTH CONDITIONS IN THREE
INCORPORATED COMMUNITIES IN DOUGLAS COUNTY, NEBRASKA

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SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE DEGREE

OF DOCTOR OF MEDICINE

COLLEGE OF MEDICINE, UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA

FEBRUARY 1, 1967

OMAHA, NEBRASKA

OUTLINE

I. A SURVEY OF PUBLIC HEALTH CONDITIONS IN MILLARD, NEBRASKA

- 1.) Original survey, August 1965
- 2.) Summary of recommendations
- 3.) Data from general survey
- 4.) Follow-up report, August 1966

II. A SURVEY OF PUBLIC HEALTH CONDITIONS IN ELKHORN, NEBRASKA

- 1.) Original survey, August 1965
- 2.) Summary of recommendations
- 3.) Data from general survey
- 4.) Follow-up report, August 1966

III. A SURVEY OF PUBLIC HEALTH CONDITIONS IN VALLEY, NEBRASKA

- 1.) Original survey, August 1965
- 2.) Summary of recommendations
- 3.) Data from general survey
- 4.) Follow-up report, August 1966

A SURVEY OF
PUBLIC HEALTH CONDITIONS
IN
MILLARD, NEBRASKA
AUGUST 1965

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This study was made possible through the Traineeship Program of the United States Public Health Service in cooperation with the Department of Preventive Medicine of the University of Nebraska College of Medicine and the Omaha-Douglas County Health Department.

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INTRODUCTION TO PROJECT

The purpose of the attached report is two-fold. The first is to ascertain from the people, the mayor, the doctor(s) and the school superintendent in the six incorporated and one unincorporated villages of Douglas County, Nebraska, their views concerning local public health conditions. Second, this survey's purpose is to provide the medical students who conducted it with a broader perspective of communities' views, wants and needs. From these findings and the observations of the students, all facts found are set forth along with important, constructive suggestions.

It is the hope that this report will enable the community to be more aware of public health, how it can better their lives, and the services that are at their disposal from the Omaha-Douglas County Health Department. This report will not have served its purpose unless it is viewed with the same seriousness and sincerity in which it was made.

MILLARD, NEBRASKA

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

The incorporated Town of Millard is located on the old line of the Union Pacific Railroad, twenty miles by rail from Omaha. It was laid out by Ezra Millard in 1870 and received his name. George F. and Cyrus Stevens were the first settlers. In 1876 a school house was built. Millard was incorporated on September 26, 1885, with Christ Kaelber, John Lempke, Charles Stitzner, Henry Lomans, and Julius Schroeder as the first board of trustees.

In 1916 Millard had a bank, a weekly edition of the Waterloo Gazette, two hotels, grist mill, grain elevators, electric light, an auditorium, and was the center of a prosperous farming community. The population was 260, down 73 from the census of 1900.

DESCRIPTION OF COMMUNITY AND POPULATION:

Regardless of the route by which one enters Millard, it is apparent that it is rapidly growing, inviting to industry, and progressive in nature. One finds industrial giants such as OPPD and Western Electric, new and modern housing such as the Oaks, Westchester, and parts of the city itself. Yet the serene setting of the village gives evidence to the fact that here one is able to mix the benefits of rural living and profits of proximity to a large metropolis.

Because the parent of Millard was the railroad, the population is not traced to a single nationality or ethnic background, but it was a melting pot for those with a love of the land and those concerned with the task of building the railroad in the 1800's. The population has become even more heterogeneous with the establishment of new and prosperous industries.

GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE:

The governing body of Millard is the City Council. These elected officials give freely of their time for the advancement of their community. There is a mayor and six members. There is also a City Administrator.

Millard has an energetic police force which supplies round-the-clock protection. It takes the form of three city policemen. There is also a volunteer auxiliary force which has been trained. There is also an elected Justice of the Peace.

Fire protection is provided by a very vigorous volunteer fire department for which one hears nothing but praise. There are two rescue units, a tank truck, and four other pieces. The pieces are garaged in the community building.

There is a library board appointed by the council. This board is responsible for maintaining and supplementing the new library located in the community building.

The pride, interest, and vitality of a community are nowhere more evident than in the community's organizations and clubs. These are often the true vehicles for progress, for it is here that this "knocking-on-doors," "baking-of-cookies," and "writing-of-checks" takes place. Millard has an abundance of such clubs, too numerous to enumerate.

OBJECTIVE FINDINGS:

The method of inquiry into the public health situation of Millard was to devise several questionnaires. The first questionnaire was to obtain objective information about the physical means for protecting the health of the community and plans for future improvements. Objective questionnaires were also written and given to the school superintendent and the doctors concerned with community health.

After defining the means and procedures used for protecting the community health by using the objective questionnaires, interest in identifying what the man-in-the-street felt were the communities' health problems, if any, was the next goal. This was accomplished by writing a subjective questionnaire which was administered to those who were kind enough to admit us as we went from door-to-door in Millard.

Thus, one can see if what the citizens identify as problems is what the agencies responsible for correcting problems are working on.

Water

Millard's water supply is provided by three wells. It is not filtered or treated, but chlorination can be effected if needed. A trained person is in charge of water supply and the Omaha-Douglas County Health Department tests and inspects the facilities monthly.

Sewage

The disposal and treatment of sewage is by means of a city sewer system and treatment plant. Ordinances controlling private disposal of sewage are in existence and all sewers are connected to the treatment facilities. A trained individual oversees the operation of the treatment plant.

Trash and Garbage

There is no community trash hauling service; however, there is nearly 100 percent participation in private pickup systems in the community. There are no local ordinances or officials controlling collection and disposal of trash and garbage.

Milk and Food

Concerning milk and food sources, there is no local legislation controlling sanitation and purity of milk nor are there ordinances

regarding food handler permits, inspection or sanitation in grocery stores, restaurants, bars, or food processing plants.

Insects and Pests

Isolated complaints have been received concerning rat problems; however, inspection and control is a local individual effort. Other than this pest problem, no problems with other vermin or insects exist in the community.

Recreation

Recreation facilities include two swimming pools in the area, three school sponsored baseball diamonds, one tennis court, three school playgrounds, and a golf course under construction. There is organized supervision at the baseball diamonds. Future plans for expansion include the purchase of land for the establishment of a public park.

Animal Control

Vaccination, licensing, kennels, and keeping of livestock are controlled by local legislation by the community.

Housing and Neighborhood

In the area of housing, the community has legislation concerning minimum housing standards (facilities and crowding) with means of enforcement in the form of inspections and issuance of permits. Zoning ordinances are also part of local legislation. A few isolated areas of the community are in need of improvement; however, planned zoning changes may correct the sub-standard housing. In addition to these, local legislation has been expanded to cover building standards, including structure, heat and ventilation, and plumbing.

Industrial Hazards

Apparently none of the businesses or industries cause health or safety problems.

Miscellaneous

The community's financial resources to cope with new and existing health problems is good at the present time.

Future plans for construction of facilities for care of the aged are now being studied.

Schools

There are four elementary schools and one junior-senior high school in the Millard Public School System. The census in 1964 was 1,884 for district 17 and the enrollment was 1,493.

Immunization on admission and physical examinations (pre-school and periodic) are recommended, and a considerable percentage of children participate in this program. Screening examinations for vision, hearing, and dental progress are made periodically by the full-time school nurse who also keeps individual health records.

Health instruction is part of the curriculum in kindergarten through the sixth grade, but from the sixth through twelfth grades, health education is integrated with science and physical education programs.

Emergency first aid is handled by the school nurse, and in her absence the secretaries are trained to administer this care.

The custodians and dieticians are responsible for the cleanliness of the schools.

Periodic health examinations are made of food preparation facilities in the schools by the Department of Agriculture. Food handlers in the four hot lunch programs in the schools have yearly physical examina-

tions and attend a three-day workshop in Lincoln each year concerning proper food handling.

Teachers, administrators, and secretaries are not required to undergo yearly physical exams, chest X-rays, or tuberculin skin testing, nor are they required to have their immunization status current.

SUBJECTIVE FINDINGS:

Of the people interviewed, 6.5 percent felt that Millard had some health problems. These included such things as rats in an open ditch on Maple Street, poor trash and garbage disposal, inadequate restaurant inspection, and an unattractive business area.

Food and Sanitation

The large majority of people interviewed felt that there was an active program of restaurant and grocery store inspection. They were not aware that the only inspection currently being done is by the State Agriculture Department, which, from the size of its task, is very inadequate. To correct this situation, all that is required of Millard is that it enact food-handling legislation to permit licensing, inspection, and enforcement of proper food-handling practices. This could be done without cost to Millard. Excellent model legislation is available at the Omaha-Douglas County Health Department, along with learned advice of men experienced in this field. With the proper legislation, the Omaha-Douglas County Health Department would be able to inspect and enforce proper food-handling practices.

Trash and Garbage

Of considerable interest to this community would be improved trash and garbage disposal. Many problems--garbage piling behind the res-

taurant, generalized litter, etc.--would be solved by acquiring a community trash hauling service. By taxing each member for this, while making it well known that one is being taxed for this service, complete participation is insured. This is not squelching private enterprise, for the city contract would be let to the bidder who offers the best service for the most reasonable cost.

Schools

Millard has taken the initiative in establishing a school health program through the use of a full-time school health nurse. From a precursory examination of the nurse's program, it appeared to be vigorous and well directed. To insure its future success, however, contact with other professionals in this field must be maintained. Discussion and coordination of the school health program should be realized through the local doctors, Preventive Medicine Department, University of Nebraska, College of Medicine, and the Omaha-Douglas County Health Department.

Immunization

Second only to parents, teachers have the most intimate and continuous contact with the children of one's community. The children represent the most susceptible group to communicable disease. Thus to insure disease-free children, one must have disease-free teachers. To this end, one should insist on regular periodic physical examinations, chest X-rays, and tuberculin skin testing of every teacher, administrator, and secretary. This requires only a policy ruling on the part of the school board.

Of life-saving importance to every member is the immunization status of that community. Diseases which one now considers rare, as smallpox and diphtheria, are lying in wait to strike out again in their

devastating epidemics, and they always strike hardest at the most vulnerable population--the children. Thus, simply to send immunization cards home with the child is inadequate. Education of the child to the purpose of immunization and constant reinforcement of these ideas must be undertaken, for nowhere is the old adage of "the weakest link" more true than the immunization status of our nation. Effective ideas for in-depth immunization programs can be obtained from the Division of Health Education of the Omaha-Douglas County Health Department.

Insects and Pests

Of concern to every resident of the State of Nebraska is the control of insects and pests. Mosquitoes and flies, aside from being an obstinate nuisance, are the vectors for many diseases. Local control of these pests has been shown many times to be ineffectual. Control must be exercised over a large area--several cities or counties. State statutes numbers 71-2917 and 71-2918 allow counties or cities of the primary class extremely broad powers to seek out and destroy these pests. This would be an excellent project for the Little League of Municipalities to consider. More information can be obtained from the statutes or by contacting the Omaha-Douglas County Health Department.

Fluoridation

In deference to one of the ablest men in preventive medicine--our professor of Preventive Medicine--the need to prevent tooth decay in our young children by fluoridating the water supply is suggested for Millard's consideration. Fluoride decreases tooth decay in children with actively-forming teeth. Tooth decay has been decreased by 60 to 80 percent in members of this age group. If one gets cavities in fluoride-treated teeth, the cavities are usually on the surface of the tooth and not deep and between the teeth; the latter are more dif-

ficult and expensive to repair. Millard has a natural fluoride level of 0.4 ppm. The amount necessary for prophylaxis is 1 ppm. Unless all water for the city passes a common point, the addition and maintenance of proper fluoride levels usually presents an insurmountable mechanical problem. Therefore, unless moderate changes could permit Millard's water to have a common origin, fluoridation may have to be deferred until the future mechanical innovations make it feasible. The individual may, however, effect the same result by religious use of fluoride pills.

Miscellaneous

One of the most difficult tasks a community can face is to stand back and objectively look at itself. The Division of Nebraska Resources now has a program through which it will do this for a community. The first step on the program is an attitude survey of the members of the community to see how they look at it. Following this, if the community shows interest, Nebraska Resources will assist local effort toward beautification and improvement of the community. The motives of this organization are to encourage industry to settle in this state. The addition of industry to a community would more than repay the time and effort necessary to make such a program effective. For information

contact: Mr. David Osterhout, Chief
Division of Nebraska Resources
Box 4666
State Capitol
Lincoln, Nebraska

From the above discourse, one may have lost sight of the fact that we found Millard to be a very pleasant town; a town in which we would gladly raise our families, practice medicine, and share in the community's fellowship. This does not, however, excuse an attitude of "our town is no worse than any other." Millard has the potential of

leadership in community practices, but before one can take leadership and effect change, one must clearly identify one's problems. This is the spirit in which this paper was written. One can only hope that the people of Millard will not be satisfied with a community as good as any other but rather choose to be better, and then to be the leader in such endeavor.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Enact legislation, by Village Board, to provide inspection and enforcement of food-handling practices in public establishments and food stores.
- 2) Establish community follow-up on rat complaints and alleviate rat problems in ditch on Maple Street.
- 3) Coordinate school health program with professional agencies.
- 4) Require annual physical exams, chest X-rays, and tuberculin testing of all teachers, administrators, and secretaries.
- 5) Promote an in-depth program to insure 100 percent participation in immunization programs.
- 6) Unite in effort to eradicate the mosquito from the entire area.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GENERAL SURVEY OF PUBLIC HEALTH CONDITIONS
IN MILLIARD, NEBRASKA

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

1. Do you think your community has any health problems?
Yes - 2 (6.5%) No - 29 (93.5%)

2. What does the Omaha-Douglas County Health Department do for you in your community?

Aware - 13 (42%)	Visiting Nurses - 4
Unaware - 18 (58%)	Immunization - 2
	Inspection - 6
	Education - 2
	Blood bank - 1
	Speech therapy - 2

MEDICAL SERVICES AND FACILITIES:

3. Do you have a rescue squad unit? If not, what is the nearest emergency facility?
Yes - 31 (100%)

4. Do you have any first aid services other than your doctor?

Red Cross - 6 (19.4%)	Rescue squad - 22 (71%)
Firemen - 1 (3.25%)	Local nurses - 2 (6.5%)

5. Do you have need for or use the home nursing services as sponsored by the county?

Yes - 3 (9.7%)	Used by others - 2 (6.5%)
No - 28 (91%)	Needed - 28 (91%)

6. Are you familiar with the following county sponsored services:

	YES	NO
a. Dental Clinics?	10 (32%)	21 (68%)
b. Immunization Clinics?	14 (45%)	17 (55%)
c. Well Child Conferences and Clinics?	4 (13%)	27 (87%)
d. Animal Immunization Clinics?	5 (16%)	26 (84%)

7. Where is the hospital you would go to if you needed hospitalization?
Omaha - 29 (94%) Where doctor goes - 2 (6.5%)

8. Do you have any facilities for the care of the aged in your community?
31 - No.
If not, do you feel that such facilities are needed?
Yes - 14 (45%) No - 14 (45%) Don't know - 3 (10%)

9. Do you have a family doctor?
Yes - 31 (100%)

10. How many doctors are in your community? If none, how far is the nearest doctor?
3 doctors 2 dentists

11. Do you find it a problem to reach your doctor when you need him?
Yes - 3 (9.7%) No - 28 (90%)

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GENERAL SURVEY OF PUBLIC HEALTH CONDITIONS IN
MILLARD, NEBRASKA, continued

12. Do you have hospitalization insurance?
Yes - 26 (84%) No - 5 (16%)

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH:

13. Is your water clear and odorless during the entire year? If not,
when do you notice changes in its character? (e.g., spring, winter)
Yes - 31 (100%)

14. Is there any time in the year when you do not have enough water?
No - 31 (100%)

15. Do you always have sufficient water pressure in your home?
Yes - 29 (94%) No - 2 (6%)

16. Is your water supply chlorinated?
Yes - 3 (9.7%) No - 18 (50%) Don't know - 10 (32%)

17. Are you in favor of fluoridation of your water? If not, why?
Yes - 21 (68%) No - 7 (23%) Don't know - 3 (9%)

18. How do you dispose of your sewage?
City sewage treatment - 30 (97%)
Septic tank - 1 (3%)

19. Is disposal of sewage a city responsibility?
Yes - 31 (100%)

20. Do you feel that the method used is satisfactory?
Yes - 31 (100%)

21. Do you have any trouble with your sewer backing up?
Yes - 4 (13%) No - 27 (87%)

22. How do you dispose of your trash and garbage?
Commercial pick-up - 28 (91%) Personal hauling - 3 (10%)

23. Are you satisfied with the present method of disposal?
Yes - 28 (90%) No - 3 (10%)

24. Is any of the following a health hazard in your community?
- | | YES | NO |
|---|----------|-----------|
| a. flies | 0 | 31 (100%) |
| b. mosquitoes | 4 (13%) | 27 (87%) |
| c. rats | 2 (6.5%) | 29 (94%) |
| d. miscellaneous
(exposed gas lines) | 5 (16%) | 26 (84%) |

25. Are there structures in your community that you think need
improvement?
Yes - 12 (39%) No - 19 (61%)

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GENERAL SURVEY OF PUBLIC HEALTH CONDITIONS IN
MILLARD, NEBRASKA, continued

26. Do you think any of your local industries and businesses cause health or safety problems?
Yes - 3 (10%) No - 28 (90%)
27. Are loose animals a problem in your neighborhood? (dogs)
Yes - 10 (32%) No - 21 (68%)
28. What kind of recreation facilities do you have in your community?
See written report.
29. Are they clean, well-kept, and supervised?
Yes - 31 (100%)
30. Do you feel that there is need for expansion of these facilities?
Yes - 23 (74%) No - 8 (26%)
31. Where do you get your milk?
Commercial source - 31 (100%)
32. Are you satisfied with its quality? (Smell, taste, safety, etc.)
Yes - 31 (100%)
33. Where do you get your food?
a. Grocery stores - 31 (100%)
b. Dairy-----
c. Farmer----- some use of these for eggs and produce
d. Poultry house-----
e. Butcher
f. Restaurant
g. Other
34. Of the above mentioned sources, do you feel that any have improper food handling practices?
Yes - 3 (10%) No - 25 (80%) Don't know - 3 (10%)

SCHOOL: - Not asked of those with no child in school - 9 people

35. Is there health instruction in your schools?
Yes - 14 (65%) No - 1 (3%) Don't know - 7 (32%)
36. Are there examinations in your schools as regards your children's:
- | | YES | NO | DON'T KNOW |
|---------------------|----------|----|------------|
| a. Dental progress? | 14 (65%) | 3 | 5 |
| b. Vision? | 16 (73%) | 1 | 5 |
| c. Hearing? | 16 (73%) | 1 | 5 |
| d. Immunization? | 17 (77%) | 2 | 3 |
37. Is there a health examination required for admission to your schools?
Yes - 19 (86%) Don't know - 3
38. Are you satisfied with the health programs in your schools?
Yes - 16 (73%) No - 1 Don't know - 4

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GENERAL SURVEY OF PUBLIC HEALTH CONDITIONS IN
MILLARD, NEBRASKA, continued

39. Are there any people trained in first aid in your schools?
Yes - 19 (86%) No - 3

WELFARE:

40. Are there programs in your community for financial assistance to the needy? Can you name these programs?
Yes - 19 (61%) Community fund - 3 (10%)
No - 4 (13%) Red Cross - 2 (7%)
Don't know - 8 (26%) Churches -11 (36%)
 Salvation Army - 4 (13%)
 Clubs - 8 (26%)
41. How many people in your community take advantage of welfare funds?
Few - 20 (65%) None - 5 (16%)
Some - 0 Don't know - 6 (19%)
Many - 0

MISCELLANEOUS:

42. To whom would you look in your community to organize a health improvement program?
Prominent individuals - 2 (7%) Mayor - 3 (10%)
Rescue squad - 1 (3%) Doctor - 11 (35%)
Council -13 (42%) Local nurse - 1 (3%)
Women's club - 3 (10%) Don't know - 1 (3%)
43. By what financial means do you think your community should support a health program?
Taxes - 21 (65%) Drives - 10 (35%)
44. Do you think that funds for health and welfare agencies should be raised by United or Multiple drives?
United - 24 (77%) Multiple - 4 (13%) Don't know - 3 (10%)
45. Do you think you should have more health inspection in your community?
Yes - 15 (47%) No - 12 (40%) Don't know - 4 (13%)

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GENERAL SURVEY OF PUBLIC HEALTH CONDITIONS IN
MILLARD, NEBRASKA, continued

GENERAL OPINIONS AND SUGGESTIONS:

46. Do you have any specific suggestions for improvements of your community health practices?
- | | | |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|-----|
| Yes - 13 (42%) | Increased immunization programs | - 2 |
| No - 18 (58%) | Rat control | - 2 |
| | City trash and burning codes | - 2 |
| | Restaurant inspection | - 2 |
| | Trailer court clean-up | - 2 |
| | Clean-up downtown | - 2 |
| | Dog control | - 1 |
| | School health follow-up | - 1 |
| | Group of doctors for emergency care | - 1 |
| | Papio Creek clean-up | - 1 |
47. Is this questionnaire in your opinion, complete in evaluating public health situations?
- Yes - 31 (100%)

FOLLOW-UP REPORT: MILLARD

The following report represents the results of a follow-up interview with the mayor of Millard, Nebraska regarding the community's acceptance of and actions consequent to the recommendations set forth and supplied to community in a health survey conducted in July and August of 1965.

The mayor reported that each town council member and the school superintendent received a copy of the health survey report and that it was reviewed by the council page by page and was recorded in the minutes of a council meeting. He noted that the report served as "a good yardstick to measure our needs by."

The village board took the recommendations under advisement and as a result enacted legislation late in 1965, providing for the inspection and enforcement by Douglas County Health Department of foodhandling practices in public establishments and food stores. An open meeting was advertised and held concerning this ordinance before passage was made and no opposition was met.

Concerning the recommendation for follow-up of rat complaints, the mayor noted that the people living around the area where rats have been sighted were warned to desist from dumping garbage in a ditch which runs nearby. Those who continued to complain were invited to initiate a petition for area participation. This would be essential before the community would supply its aid because the area under question was private property and community funds could not be used to alleviate this problem without the petition.

The recommendations regarding school health were also taken under advisement and the school superintendent was informed of the areas thought to be deficit in the health program of the schools. To date, according to the mayor, there has been no attempt to coordinate the school health program with professional agencies. The other recommendation made to the schools of periodic physical examinations, chest x-rays, and tuberculin testing of school personnel is under the jurisdiction of county and state educational groups and the town council was only able to relay the recommendations to the local schools.

Regarding the recommendation to promote increased participation of the community in immunization programs, no advances have been made to date.

The mayor noted that the problem of mosquitos in their community has been passed over rather lightly, but that few complaints have been received regarding this problem.

All in all, this community seemed to review the recommendations of the health survey conducted in their community in 1965 with the sincerity with which the report was made. They have indeed initiated several good public health programs. Whether these were consequent to or incidental to the health survey is irrelevant to the fact that the community as a whole is truly interested in the health of it's individuals.

Tom White
Jerry Adler

A SURVEY OF
PUBLIC HEALTH CONDITIONS

IN

ELKHORN, NEBRASKA

AUGUST 1965

Prepared by:
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Department of Preventive Medicine
University of Nebraska

This study was made possible through the Traineeship Program of the United States Public Health Service in cooperation with the Department of Preventive Medicine of the University of Nebraska College of Medicine and the Omaha-Douglas County Health Department.

Inquiries relative to it should be directed to:

E. D. Lyman, M.D., M.P.H.
Health Director
Omaha-Douglas County Health Department
1201 South 42nd Street
Omaha, Nebraska 68105

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ELKHORN, NEBRASKA

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

The town of Elkhorn is situated in Chicago precinct on the Union Pacific railroad, nineteen miles west of Omaha. It is one of the old towns of the county, being platted in 1867 and incorporated by an act of the legislature December 30, 1886, with H. A. Nolte, William Korner, Daniel W. Canon and H. Bierbach as trustees.

In 1915, Elkhorn had a bank, a flour mill, two grain elevators, a public school, a hotel, Catholic and Methodist churches, two general stores and several minor business enterprises.

DESCRIPTION OF COMMUNITY:

The Elkhorn of today is a rapidly growing village of approximately 900 population, situated in a rich farming area in the Elkhorn River valley. The town is agriculturally oriented, as evidenced by the number of businesses serving the farmers' needs.

The downtown area brings together the old and new, exemplifying the durability of the structures witnessed by the founding fathers, as well as the progressive attitudes of those in following generations.

The population, as a whole, cannot be confined to a specific ethnic background, but rather is characterized by descendants of pioneer stock and those who migrated here as a result of expansion of the Union Pacific railroad.

Community expansion is evident to the north and west in the form of many new and well kept homes. Also, the new community building, under construction, and the nearly new grade school attest to the growing pains of the town. This growth apparently mirrors the foresight of the people in this thriving community.

GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE:

The governing body consists of a village board of four members and a chairman, who are elected by the people of the community.

Fire protection is provided by a highly praised volunteer fire department; two appointed city marshals and a police magistrate provide excellent police protection for the community.

The school system of Elkhorn is composed of a grade school, junior high and senior high school in District 10 of Douglas County. The census for this district was 612 and the enrollment was 595 in 1964.

In addition to these foundations of community structure, one must not overlook other organizations in the village which contribute to its well being. For example, the churches, civic organizations and clubs all do their part in building and maintaining the framework of their community.

FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY:

The information to follow was gathered using two types of questionnaires. The first was an objective questionnaire which was administered to a member of the town board in order to gain factual information concerning the town's facilities, ordinances, and programs. An additional objective questionnaire was devised to determine the health situation in the schools and was given to a school official.

Secondly, information of a subjective nature was gathered from the housewives, businessmen, and the man-on-the-street concerning what they thought to be public health problems.

OBJECTIVE FINDINGS:

Water

Elkhorn's water supply is provided by three wells. The water

is not filtered, chlorinated, or fluoridated, but is tested monthly by the Omaha-Douglas County Health Department. A trained person is in charge of the water supply.

Sewage

The disposal and treatment of sewage is effected by a city sewer system to which all within the city limits must subscribe in view of the existence of ordinances prohibiting the use of privies, cesspools, and septic tanks. The same individual who oversees the water supply facilities also supervises the operation of the sewage treatment plant.

Trash and Garbage

Trash and garbage disposal is an individual effort which, at the present time, entails either contracting with private haulers or self-hauling to an open dump site. There are no ordinances or officials controlling collection and disposal of trash and garbage.

Milk and Food

Concerning milk and food sources, there is no local legislation controlling sanitation and purity of milk, nor are there ordinances regarding food handlers, inspection or sanitation in grocery stores, restaurants, bars or food processing plants.

Insects and Pests

There are apparently no problems with insects and pests in this community.

Recreation

Recreation facilities include a baseball diamond, a tennis court, school playgrounds, and park, with organized supervision at the playgrounds and baseball diamond. At the present time, there are no plans for future

expansion; a need for expansion was expressed, however, by a city official.

Animal Control

Vaccination, licensing and keeping of livestock is controlled by the community through local legislation and enforcement.

Housing and Neighborhood

In the area of housing, ordinances exist regarding zoning and building standards (presently being revised). Little need is felt, at present, for the enactment of legislation regarding minimum housing standards, and there are no plans for correcting sub-standard housing which is minimal.

Industrial Hazards

The local industries and businesses apparently cause no major health or safety problems.

Miscellaneous

There is no rescue squad in Elkhorn at the present; an ambulance service is available through a funeral home located in both Elkhorn and Valley.

There are no future plans for facilities for the care of the aged.

School (Objective)

There is a high school and elementary school in the Elkhorn school system, with an enrollment of 595 in 1964, and 609 in 1965. Immunization on admission and physical examinations (pre-school and periodic) are recommended by school officials, and a considerable percentage of children participate in this program.

Screening examinations are administered or supervised in the

schools for vision, hearing and dental progress by the Public Health Nurses employed by the Health Department, who are also responsible for keeping individual health records. No single individual is responsible for first aid care; coaches, secretaries or the superintendent assume such responsibilities.

Health instruction is offered in the elementary grades 1-6, but there is no course work in health in junior or senior high school.

A custodian is responsible for the cleanliness of the school, which appears well kept.

Periodic health examinations are made of food preparation facilities in the school's hot lunch program by the Department of Agriculture. Food handlers attend a three-day workshop in Lincoln each year concerning proper food handling.

Teachers, administrators, and secretaries are not required to undergo regular periodic physical examinations, chest X-rays or tuberculin skin testing, nor are they required to have their immunization status current.

A copy of the subjective report administered to the people is attached along with the tabulated responses. It would be well worth while to study these to determine what the people of the community think of the health conditions in their town.

After looking over the data gathered thus far, it becomes evident that the public health situation in Elkhorn is, for the most part, basically sound.

Points of excellence include the water supply, sewage system and treatment plant, commendable maintenance of the public park and school playgrounds and, above all, the personal pride of the individuals in the community to keep their town clean.

Like any other community, problems do exist which may perhaps be more readily seen by an individual new to the community than to a resident. These include:

1. Food Sanitation

Desperately needed is a system of inspection and enforcement of sanitary regulations in restaurants, grocery stores and other food handling establishments. At the present time, these establishments are being inspected periodically, on an advisory basis only, by the Department of Agriculture, with no means for preventive enforcement. The solution to this problem is quite simple and without expense to the village. All that is needed is the enactment of local ordinances allowing the Omaha-Douglas County Health Department to inspect these areas and enforce the ordinances to which the village has subscribed. To enable the village board to act on such a matter, it is suggested they contact the Omaha-Douglas County Health Department and request a model ordinance to this effect.

The inspection and enforcement of sanitary regulations in food and eating establishments is beneficial to the proprietors, patrons and community as a whole. It should be welcomed by the proprietor because it signifies that his business is adhering to sanitary regulations and this should entice more people to patronize his establishment. It is beneficial to the patron because he has the assurance that his food is being handled

properly and is kept in the most sanitary of conditions. Lastly, it helps the community by suggesting that it is striving for perfection and at all times has the welfare of its people as a major objective.

2. Animal Control

Approximately 33% of the people interviewed expressed a need in the community in the stricter enforcement of the dog ordinance. This matter could possibly be dealt with by the appointment of an individual, perhaps the city marshal, to pick up and dispose of all unlicensed or unclaimed dogs. The Douglas County Office of the Nebraska State Humane Society also can be contacted to assist in these matters. The fear in any community concerning rabid animals may be responsible for the number of complaints received. Anyone with children is justified in being fearful in matters of this kind, and this problem should be attended to to insure the health and well-being of the children of the community.

3. Full-time Physician

The people interviewed also expressed the need for a full-time physician to serve the community. No suggestions can be made on this matter, other than that the residents of a community must support a physician completely before he can devote all of his time to them. If an effort were to be made to do so by the entire community, undoubtedly a physician would be greatly encouraged to locate in such a rapidly expanding village.

4. Garbage and Trash

Eighteen per cent of those interviewed expressed a need for a more unified system of trash and garbage disposal. The advantage of having a unified or city-sponsored trash and garbage hauling service is that it eliminates the various and sometimes provocative methods of disposal. If the village were to arrange a contract with a private hauler or haulers,

and make participation compulsory, it would eliminate much of the dissatisfaction encountered with the present system. From the interviews, one can see that approximately half of the people already pay for a pick-up service and if a community effort would be made, participation in the program would surely be sufficient to support it.

5. School Health

Improvements are urgently needed in the school health program. First, there is no one person or persons responsible for first aid care in the schools. Due to the fact that the Public Health Nurse from the Omaha-Douglas County Health Department, who serves the school, cannot be at the school at all times, someone should be trained in first aid and be readily available to administer aid in case of emergencies. Such training programs are available through the Douglas County Chapter of the Red Cross, and if information would be desired concerning such a program, it is suggested that the school board or school officials contact the Department of Education of the Omaha-Douglas County Health Department for particulars.

Need exists for required periodic physicals, chest X-rays and tuberculin testing of teachers, secretaries and administrators. This again is a school problem but the community also is involved. To remedy the situation, it is suggested that the school administrators and board members draft a school policy suggesting that teachers, secretaries and administrators have regular periodic physicals, chest X-rays and tuberculin tests, as well as keep their immunization status current. The Omaha-Douglas County Health Department, again, could cooperate in such an endeavor.

Teachers are a great asset to a community and people put their unending trust in them, but for their own health and for that of their students, one can see a program of this type is needed.

According to the people:

Leadership in matters of health in the community would apparently be sought in the form of clubs and organizations (40% of those interviewed) or through the city council (33% of those interviewed).

Twenty-nine per cent of those interviewed thought that a health program should be financed by taxes, 29% thought drives were the answer, 27% didn't know the answer, and 15% thought it should be an individual effort.

Nearly 70% of all those interviewed were in favor of a United Drive for raising funds for health and welfare agencies.

Approximately 30% of all those interviewed emphatically expressed the need for more health inspection in the community.

SUMMARY:

The criticisms and recommendations in this report are intended to be helpful to the community. Although some problems may seem small, it should be noted that a community which excels in maintaining the health and well-being of its citizens, also excels in other aspects of community life.

If the officials of the community are interested in the attitudes of the people or would like to investigate further possibilities toward improving their town, particularly for the purpose of attracting industry, arrangement for special studies can be made through the Division of Nebraska Resources, Box 4666, State Capitol Offices, 1220 J Street, Lincoln, Nebraska, or from Northern Natural Gas Company, Department of Area Development, 2223 Dodge Street, Omaha, Nebraska.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Pass local ordinances for inspection and enforcement of sanitary regulations in restaurants, grocery stores and other food handling establishments.
2. Investigate the possibility of establishing a contract with a trash and garbage hauler or haulers to establish a unified system of disposal in the community.
3. Maintain stricter enforcement of dog ordinances, allowing for holding and disposal of unlicensed and unclaimed animals.
4. Establish, by working with school officials and the Douglas County Chapter of the Red Cross, a training program in first aid for a responsible person or persons in the school system.
5. Urge the school board and school officials to enact a policy providing for regular periodic physicals, chest X-rays and tuberculin skin tests for all teachers, administrators and secretaries in the school system.
6. Investigate the ability of the community to support a physician full time.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GENERAL SURVEY OF PUBLIC HEALTH CONDITIONS
IN ELKHORN, NEBRASKA
(55 Interviews)

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

1. Do you think your community has any health problems?
Need of full-time M.D. - 3
Improper handling of trash and garbage - 2
Need of clean-up of trailer court - 1
Feed lots too close to town - 1
Need of rescue squad - 1
2. What does the Omaha-Douglas County Health Department do for you in your community?
Visiting Nurses Association - 16
Immunization programs - 16
Well Child Clinics - 0
Inspection - 3
Unaware - 20

MEDICAL SERVICES AND FACILITIES:

3. Do you have a rescue squad unit? If not, what is the nearest emergency facility?
Yes - 6
No - 47
Swanson's in Valley - 47
4. Do you have any first aid services other than your doctor?
Yes - 11
No - 43
Don't know - 1
5. Do you have need for or use the home nursing services as sponsored by the county?
Yes - 3
No - 52
6. Are you familiar with the following county sponsored services:
 - a. Dental clinics?
Yes - 6
No - 49
 - b. Immunization clinics?
Yes - 46
No - 9
 - c. Well Child Conferences and Clinics?
Yes - 11
No - 44
 - d. Animal immunization clinics?
Yes - 7
No - 48
7. Where is the hospital you would go to if you need hospitalization?
 - a. Omaha - 47
 - b. Elsewhere - 3
 - c. Don't know - 5

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GENERAL SURVEY OF PUBLIC HEALTH CONDITIONS IN
ELKHORN, NEBRASKA, continued

21. Do you have any trouble with your sewer backing up?
No - 55
22. How do you dispose of your trash and garbage?
Pick-up service - 26
Burn - 30
Self-hauling - 18
Disposal - 28
Bury - 2
23. Are you satisfied with the present method of disposal?
Yes - 45
No - 10
24. Is any of the following a health hazard in your community?
a. Flies
Yes - 5
No - 50
b. Mosquitoes
Yes - 7
No - 48
c. Rats
Yes - 2
No - 53
d. Miscellaneous
No - 55
25. Are there structures in your community that you think need improvement?
Yes - 15
No - 38
Don't know - 2
26. Do you think any of your local industries and businesses cause health or safety problems?
Yes - 0
No - 52
Don't know - 3
27. Are loose animals a problem in your neighborhood?
Yes - 18
No - 37
28. What kind of recreation facilities do you have in your community?
Park
Baseball diamond
Playgrounds
Tennis courts
29. Are they clean, well-kept, and supervised?
Yes - 52
No - 0
Don't know - 3

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GENERAL SURVEY OF PUBLIC HEALTH CONDITIONS IN
ELKHORN, NEBRASKA, continued

37. Is there a health examination required for admission to your schools?
Yes - 34
No - 20
Don't know - 1
38. Are you satisfied with the health programs in your schools?
Yes - 33
No - 19
Don't know - 3
39. Are there any people trained in first aid in your schools?
Yes - 22
No - 21
Don't know - 12

WELFARE:

40. Are there programs in your community for financial assistance to the needy? Can you name these programs?
41. How many people in your community take advantage of welfare funds?
(few, some, many)
Few - 46
Some - 0
Many - 0
Don't know - 9

MISCELLANEOUS:

42. To whom would you look in your community to organize a health improvement program?
Council - 18
M.D. - 9
Clubs and organizations - 22
Minister - 2
VNA - 1
School - 1
Don't know - 8
43. By what financial means do you think your community should support a health program?
Taxes - 16
Drives - 16
Individual effort - 8
Don't know - 15
44. Do you think that funds for health and welfare agencies should be raised by United or Multiple drives?
United - 38
Multiple - 14
Don't know - 3

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GENERAL SURVEY OF PUBLIC HEALTH CONDITIONS IN
ELKHORN, NEBRASKA, continued

45. Do you think you should have more health inspection in your community?
Yes - 16
No - 35
Don't know - 4

GENERAL OPINIONS AND SUGGESTIONS:

46. Do you have any specific suggestions for improvements of your community health practices?
More M.D.'s - 4
Trash and garbage disposal - 3
Insect problem - 1
Weeds on railroad right-of-way - 1
Enforcement of dog ordinance - 2
General clean-up - 2
Drainage ditch overflows - 1
Sidewalks - 1
Education to services available via county - 1
47. Is this questionnaire, in your opinion, complete in evaluating public health situations?
Yes - 55

FOLLOW-UP REPORT: ELKHORN

Of the communities we surveyed, Elkhorn was the most receptive. The people were amiable, candid in the expression of their opinions, and apparently aware of community activities as evidenced by the fact that many had read the local paper and knew that we were coming from the write-up describing our project.

In contrast to the small portion of the population in our sample was the leadership of the community. It was our original impression that it was very unorganized, ineffectual, and preoccupied with maintaining the status quo. There has been no evidence to the contrary in our follow-up investigation.

In all fairness to the community, I should interject the thought that perhaps this desire to maintain the status quo--and perhaps even avoid inquisitive senior medical students--is precisely why these people live so far from a demanding metropolis. And perhaps this community is lacking only if one assumes that there are certain absolute rights and wrongs of community fiscal, health, and educational requirements.

More to the point, we interviewed the mayor of Elkhorn, who was the mayor at the time of our survey, and asked him how our report was received and the disposition of it. Due to the lapse of time since the report was received, he was unable to remember and disinclined to investigate what was done with it; so he referred us to the clerk of the city council. Her reply was that the report was received by the council members and that "they read it" but it was not read into the minutes of the meeting, nor were any comments or recommendations made regarding it. She also noted that there has been no new health legislation enacted or any changes in the schools health practices.

Thus, in review of our six recommendations, the following has been done:

1. There is no legislation for sanitary inspection of grocery stores, restaurants, or other food handlers.
2. The only positive action taken--and we cannot determine whether this was pursuant to our report--was that a contract for trash and garbage disposal was negotiated by the city and an open land-fill was established.
3. No animal control ordinances have been enacted.
4. No trained person is responsible for first aid in the schools.
5. No changes in the health requirements for personnel associated with the schools have been made.
6. No community efforts have been made to entice a full-time physician to practice in Elkhorn.

Our impression then, is that there is an apparent hiatus between the members of this community and its leaders. We feel that had more members seen our report, more positive actions would have resulted.

Tom White
Jerry Adler

A SURVEY OF
PUBLIC HEALTH CONDITIONS
IN
VALLEY, NEBRASKA

AUGUST 1965

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This study was made possible through the Traineeship Program of the United States Public Health Service in cooperation with the Department of Preventive Medicine of the University of Nebraska College of Medicine and the Omaha-Douglas County Health Department.

Inquiries relative to it should be directed to:

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INTRODUCTION TO PROJECT

The purpose of the attached report is two-fold. The first is to ascertain from the people, the mayor, the doctor(s) and the school superintendent in the six incorporated and one unincorporated villages of Douglas County, Nebraska, their views concerning local public health conditions. Second, this survey's purpose is to provide the medical students who conducted it with a broader perspective of communities' views, wants and needs. From these findings and the observations of the students, all facts found are set forth along with important, constructive suggestions.

It is the hope that this report will enable the community to be more aware of public health, how it can better their lives, and the services that are at their disposal from the Omaha-Douglas County Health Department. This report will not have served its purpose unless it is viewed with the same seriousness and sincerity in which it was made.

VALLEY, NEBRASKA

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

Thirty-five miles from Omaha, by the old "Ox-bow Route" in 1864 the town of Valley was established on a tract of land owned by the Union Pacific Railroad. Richard Selson was the first resident and store-owner. In 1872 a white frame schoolhouse was built at the cost of \$1,500.

Valley was incorporated on February 28, 1890, with J. W. Hempstead, H. M. Puffer, J. J. Miller, A. Gardiner, and L. P. Byers as the first board of trustees. Valley was an important shipping point and business center for the people of the Platte and Elkhorn valleys.

In 1915 it had a bank, two elevators, a hotel, an opera house, feeding lots, four churches, public school, a weekly newspaper, and numerous merchants.

DESCRIPTION OF COMMUNITY AND POPULATION:

Located in the Platte River Valley, the rolling hills and pleasant fields bid both visitor and resident welcome to Valley. That Valley is an offspring of a railroad is felt immediately as one drives across the railroad crossing and sees the calm, stone, Valley Station to the east. The main street, Spruce Street, is a combination of new and old. From Boardman's Chevrolet (the site of the old Puffer's General Store of the 1880's) to the Valley (the old Valley Opera House), one is impressed with the solidity in history of Valley.

The population is not traced to a single nationality or ethnic background. Instead it is derived from pioneers with a love of the land (a large number of European immigrants) and others from the great

task of the railroaders in the 1850's. The growth has been continuous: 42 people in 1880, 810 in 1910, and 1,452 in 1964.

GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL STRUCTURES:

The governing body of Valley is the Town Council. These elected officials give freely of their time for the advancement of their community. The mayor is Karl C. Plettner. John Peters is the City Clerk, and the Council members are G. Brookes Moore, Francis McArdle, Larry Lewis, and Kenneth Wild.

Valley has an energetic police force which supplies round-the-clock protection. It takes the form of two marshalls, Day Marshall Hans Schultz, and Night Marshall Luie Olsen. Larry Serlt is Justice of the Peace, and H. H. Schrader is the Police Judge.

Fire protection is provided by a very vigorous volunteer Fire Department, for which one hears nothing but praise. The Fire Chief is Edward Brokaw.

In 1957, a new fire barn was built on Church Street. It houses two 1963 pumper trucks and two other units. They are also equipped with a portable iron lung and a resuscitator.

The Library Board was established in 1955 by the City Council. The library was originally housed in the Town Hall; it is now located in the Masonic Building.

The Valley Public Schools are in District 33 in Douglas County; the District covers $7\frac{1}{2}$ square miles. The schools are Class A, Type K-12. Approximately 99% of all eighth graders finish high school. The present high school was completed in 1924. The elementary school was built in 1954. A new gymnasium was completed in 1963.

The religious roots of the community are evidenced by six

churches: (1) Bethel Baptist, (2) Baptist Presbyterian, (3) St. John's Catholic, (4) St. Mark's Lutheran, (5) First Presbyterian, (6) Methodist.

The pride, interest, and vitality of a community are nowhere more evident than in the community's organizations and clubs. These are often the true vehicles for progress, for it is here that the "knocking-on-doors," "baking-of-cakes," and "writing-of-checks" takes place. One must hope that none are overlooked in the list that follows:

(1) Valley Chamber of Commerce; (2) Jaycees; (3) Valley Woman's Club; (4) Park Board; (5) Lion's Club; (6) Town and Country promoters; (7) American Legion; (8) Last Man's Club, World War I; (9) Last Man's Club, World War II; (10) Legion Auxiliary; (11) Victor Lodge No. 310 AF and AM; (12) Order of the Eastern Star; (13) Order of Rainbow for Girls; (14) Valley Extension Clubs; (15) Parent-Teacher Association; (16) 4-H; (17) Boy Scouts 116; (18) Cub Scouts; (19) Girl Scouts; (20) Brownie Scouts; (21) Baptist Mission Circle; (22) Presbyterian Coterie; (23) Women's Society for Christian Service.

OBJECTIVE FINDINGS:

The method of inquiry into the public health situation of Valley was to devise several questionnaires. The first questionnaire was to obtain objective information about the physical means for protecting the health of the community and plans for future improvements. Objective questionnaires were also written and given to the school superintendent and the doctors concerned with community health.

After defining the means and procedures used for protecting the community health by using the objective questionnaires, interest in identifying what the man-in-the-street felt were the communities' health problems, if any, was the next goal accomplished by writing a subjective questionnaire which was administered to those who were kind

enough to admit us as we went from door-to-door in Valley.

Thus, one can see if what the citizens identify as problems is what the agencies responsible for correcting problems are working on.

Valley's water comes from three wells. It is not treated, filtered, chlorinated (except after high waters), or fluoridated. It is inspected monthly by the Omaha-Douglas County Health Department. As the terminus of a three-year plan for water improvement in which the amount and pressure of the water have been improved, the large Union Pacific well will be incorporated into the city system. There is a person responsible for the water system.

Except for a few septic tanks around the lakeside recreation areas, all residents of Valley are connected to the city sewer lines. These, in turn, are connected to a treatment facility. The sewage treatment plant is badly overloaded and quite inadequate. Bids, however, are being let for construction of a new facility. The effluent from the present plant now travels by open ditch to the Elkhorn River; this, too, is to be corrected.

There is no community-sponsored trash hauling service. There are three private haulers, one of whom is responsible for the city dump. A large majority of the community subscribes to one of these haulers. There is no ordinance concerning collection and disposal of trash. The dump, itself, is a modified landfill.

There is no legislation governing the supply and distribution of food. Neither grocery stores, restaurants, drive-ins, bars, or food processing plants are required to have food handling permits, or periodic inspection.

A community effort is made to control mosquitoes by periodic fogging. Rat complaints are investigated.

Vaccination and licensing of dogs are controlled by legislation, and there is "some legislation controlling livestock."

The recreation facilities are as follows: three baseball diamonds, two tennis courts, three playgrounds, one park, one bowling alley, and one theater. There is organized supervision at the baseball diamonds.

Shortly to be introduced to the Town Council is legislation concerning minimum housing standards -- facilities and crowding only. There is also a proposed zoning ordinance. Building standards are enforced regarding structure, heating, ventilation, and plumbing. There are no plans at present for correcting substandard housing.

A private nursing home is presently planned.

Emergency medical transportation services are available from the local fire department and from a resident mortician. There is one full-time medical doctor in Valley, and one full-time dentist. The local doctor with the cooperation of the Omaha-Douglas County Health Department sponsors a monthly well-child clinic and has sponsored an immunization clinic.

The two schools, with an enrollment of 540 children, have hot lunch programs. The food-handlers attend food preparation conferences. Periodic inspections are made of the food preparation facilities.

Health instruction is offered as a separate course in the junior and senior high classes.

Pre-school health and dental examinations are requested of all children; and it is requested that their immunizations be current, although there are no means of enforcement. Eighty-five percent of the children return their health and dental cards.

The Visiting Nurse Association keeps individual health records

and either organizes or administers periodic examinations and recording of vision, hearing, and height and weight data.

Although no one person is designated as responsible for first aid, the secretary, administration, and coaches, can administer first aid.

Custodians are responsible for the cleanliness of the schools.

Teachers are not required to obtain annual physical examinations and chest X-rays, nor are immunizations required to be current.

SUBJECTIVE FINDINGS:

A copy of the questionnaire randomly administered to members of your community follows as an addendum to this report with tabulated responses. Much can be learned by carefully studying these.

Twenty-seven percent of the people interviewed felt that the community had health problems. By far the most common complaints were mosquitoes and improper water drainage from the streets following heavy rains. One must agree that these are significant problems.

FOOD AND SANITATION:

The total lack of legislation, inspection, and control of food handling procedures such as in restaurants and grocery stores is a weak link in an otherwise very sound community. Most people interviewed felt that their grocery stores and restaurants were closely inspected. They did not realize that the only agency responsible for this inspection is the State Agriculture Department; and that this inspection, because of its vastness, is very inadequate. Nor did they realize that in order for the Omaha-Douglas County Health Department (ODCHD) to inspect and enforce proper food-handling practices, they must be given the power to do so by legislation contained in the Valley statutes; there is none at present.

Both the populace and town council of Valley are fully aware of the inadequacy of their sewage system, and the town is vigorously trying to correct this situation. Efforts to expedite this project must be encouraged.

There is a Park Board which obviously takes pride in the outward appearance of the park. The drinking fountain, however, outside the lavatory building drains through a hole in the wall to an inside floor drain; this is most conducive to growth of algae, breeding of mosquitoes, and entrance of vermin. The floors and walls of the structure on the inside have areas of algae growth and are in bad need of scrubbing with a good algacide and detergent as well as painting. The facilities are equally in need of cleaning and maintenance. The water drainage of the water fixture located to the south of the lavatory structure appears to re-enter the well.

SCHOOLS:

Of tremendous value to the safety of the children and the "security" of the parents is the establishment of one, preferably two, individuals in each school responsible for first aid to injured children. This person should be adequately trained and known to the children and teachers as the person to turn to in case of an accident. By having sole responsibility for first aid, this person will become more competent with experience, and there will be no precious time lost in seeking the person responsible for first aid. If a vigorous health program were planned, more time could be requested and justified of the Visiting Nurse Association. A nurse insures not only examination and recording of vision, hearing, dental, and immunization programs, she provides the exceptionally valuable extras such as health education, organization of health careers clubs, follow-up of any abnor-

mal findings in screening tests, and an immediate and excellent source of first aid.

Except for parents, teachers are exposed more intimately and constantly to the portion of a population more susceptible to disease than almost any age group. That teachers be free of contagious disease is thus the concern of every parent. Therefore, we recommend that physical examinations and chest X-rays be required of every teacher, secretary, and administrator every year.

IMMUNIZATION:

Of life saving importance to every community is the immunization status of its members. Diseases which one now considers rare, such as smallpox and diphtheria, are lying in wait to strike out again in their devastating epidemics, and they always strike hardest at our most susceptible population--the young. Thus to simply send immunization cards home with the child is inadequate. Education of the child to the purpose of immunization and constant reinforcement of those ideas must be undertaken, for nowhere is the old axiom of "the weakest link" more true than the immunization status of our nation.

FLUORIDATION:

In deference to one of the ablest men in preventive medicine--our professor of preventive medicine--the need to prevent tooth decay in our young children by fluoridating the water supply is suggested for Valley's consideration. Fluoride decreases tooth decay in children with actively forming teeth. Tooth decay has been decreased by 60-80 percent in members of this age group. If one gets cavities in fluoride treated teeth, the cavities are usually on the surface of the tooth and not deep and between the teeth; the latter are more difficult and expen-

sive to repair. Valley has a natural fluoride level of 0.4 ppm. The amount necessary for prophylaxis is 1 ppm. The cost of fluoridation is nowhere near commensurate with the benefits obtained. In communities much larger than Valley the cost has approximated ten cents per person per year.

POSSIBLE SOLUTION AND RESOURCES:

It is not enough to enumerate problems. One must follow up with an examination of the possible solutions to these problems. It is to this end the following resources are offered for help in correcting the aforementioned problems.

The problem of stagnant surface water is one in which it is easier for us to point out the hazards than to suggest remedies. The obvious solution is the installation of city storm sewers; however, the cost is probably prohibitive for a city so well settled as Valley. Many palliative measures may be undertaken, however. All roadside drainage ditches, culverts under driveways, and natural drainage areas should be cleared and maintained to facilitate the natural drainage. For more knowledgable solutions to this problem, contact the County Surveyors Office and the County Agent.

From the Elkhorn River, west, lies the mosquitoes' Garden of Eden, and to attempt to alleviate the mosquito by a local effort in Valley is a waste of time. This problem requires the united effort of vitally interested people. One finds it hard to find a better organization to initiate such a project than the Little League of Municipalities. Excellent assistance is available to this group. The state legislature has provided a vehicle for help in mosquito warfare. In statutes number 71-2917 and 71-2918 the state has provided the following powers to which the Little League would have direct

access through the county: (1) to abate as nuisances all stagnant pools of water and other breeding places for insects, etc., (2) to purchase supplies and materials and to employ labor as may be necessary to secure the objectives of 71-2917 and 71-2918, (3) to compensate the owners of land and property damaged by the exercise of these powers, (4) to exercise the power of eminent domain for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of those sections, (5) generally to do any and all things necessary or incidental to the powers granted in 71-2917 and 71-2918, (6) to appropriate the necessary funds to carry out the objectives, (7) to direct the owner of property on which such nuisance exists to abate such, and if such owner refuses, fails, or neglects to abate the nuisance, the county or primary city may acquire a lien against the property for the expense of abating this nuisance.

Local palliative measures may still be undertaken if they are recognized as such. Identify the local breeding grounds and apply an effective larvacide--the ODCHD, Division of Environmental Health, can supply names of effective ones--or oil. The fogging ritual is probably not effective in killing mosquitoes, although it may kill many complaints before they reach city hall. At least it looks as though something is being done.

Numerous complaints were received on the manner in which the U.P.R.R. maintains its right-of-ways. Should this problem remain a chronic one, we suggest contacting the President of U.P.R.R.

To correct the unkept lavatory facilities in the park requires no more than the desire to do so, a person with a scrub brush and a gallon of paint. A definitive answer to the well on the south of the lavatory shelter can be obtained by contacting the ODCHD--Division of Environmental Health.

The Health Education Division of the ODCHD can furnish much information on the organization and administration of a good health program for the schools. Many good first aid programs are available; e.g., the Red Cross. It would be up to the Valley School Board and the superintendent of schools to establish the policy of responsibility for first aid and for requiring annual health check-ups and chest X-rays of all teachers, secretaries, and administrators.

After the vigorous dissertation on fluoridation of city water, regretfully, it must be said that fluoridation may be mechanically impossible with the physical set-up of Valley's water system. Correct monitoring of city fluoride levels usually requires that there be a single source of water to which the fluoride can be precisely added. If all of Valley's water goes to the stand pipe (or any other common origin) before dissemination to the water mains, then fluoridation is practical, inexpensive, and very beneficial. If not, the mechanical problems may be insurmountable. For more precise and authoritative knowledge on this subject, contact the Division of Environmental Health, ODCHD.

Note well that the same end can be achieved by the individual by religious use of fluoride pills. The local dentist can be of invaluable assistance in organization of such a program.

The one thing that would cost Valley nothing and would result in a very great improvement in the community is the passage of legislation governing the food-handling procedures--notably restaurants and grocery stores. Excellent model legislation is available through the ODCHD which would need little or no adaptation to meet the sorely needed requirements of Valley. Once legislation is on the books, all one need do is contact the ODCHD for efficient and learned inspection and enforce-

ment of this legislation. The ultimate good of this type of legislation is often missed because the restaurateurs and food merchants forget that the few, if any, improvements that would be required would be more than repaid in the extra business that would result from serving customers secure in the knowledge that they are receiving food that has been properly handled.

One of the most difficult tasks a community can face is to stand back and objectively look at itself. The Division of Nebraska Resources now has a program through which it will do this for a community to see how they look at it. Following this, if the community shows interest, Nebraska Resources will assist local effort towards beautification and improvement of the community. The motives of this organization are to encourage industry to settle in this state. The addition of industry to a community would more than repay the time and effort necessary to make such a program effective. For informa-

tion, contact: Mr. David Osterhout, Chief
 Division of Nebraska Resources
 Box 4666
 State Capitol
 Lincoln, Nebraska

From the above discourse, one may have lost sight of the fact that we found Valley to be a very pleasant town; a town in which we would gladly raise our families, practice medicine, and share in the fellowship. This does not, however, excuse an attitude of "our town is no worse than any other." Valley has the potential of leadership in community practices, but before one can take leadership and effect change, one must clearly identify one's problems. This is the spirit in which this paper was written. One can only hope that the people of Valley will not be satisfied with a community as good as any other but rather choose to be better, and then be the leader in such endeavor.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Enact legislation by the Village Board to provide inspection and enforcement of food-handling practices.
- 2) Improve the lavatory facilities in the city park.
- 3) Establish at least one individual responsible for first aid in each school. Ascertain that he is well trained and current.
- 4) Require regular periodic physical examination and chest X-ray of every teacher, secretary, and administrator.
- 5) Promote an in-depth program to insure 100 percent participation in immunization programs.
- 6) Improve natural surface water drainage to prevent stagnant pools of water in the streets and lots.
- 7) Unite in effort to eradicate the mosquito from the entire area west of the Elkhorn River.
- 8) Persist in maintaining proper maintenance of railroad right-of-ways.
- 9) Consider the practicalities and advantages to fluoridation of city water.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GENERAL SURVEY OF PUBLIC HEALTH CONDITIONS
IN VALLEY, NEBRASKA

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

1. Do you think your community has any health problems?
- | | | | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|-----|------------|----|
| Yes - 27 (27.5%) | Mosquitoes | -14 | Dogs | -1 |
| No - 71 (72.5%) | Water drainage | - 7 | Sewage | -5 |
| | Alfalfa mills | - 2 | Weeds | -1 |
| | Insufficient doctors | - 2 | Restaurant | -1 |
| | Commercial restrooms | - 1 | Floods | -1 |
| | Poor immunization status | - 1 | | |
| | Transient families | - 1 | | |
| | Contaminated lakes | - 1 | | |

2. What does the Omaha-Douglas County Health Department do for you in your community?
- | | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|-----|--|
| Aware - 58 (59%) | Immunization clinics | -35 | |
| Unaware - 40 (41%) | Visiting Nurses | -29 | |
| | Well-Child Clinic | -20 | |
| | Blood mobile | - 2 | |
| | Chest X-ray | - 3 | |
| | Inspection | - 3 | |

MEDICAL SERVICES AND FACILITIES:

3. Do you have a rescue squad unit? If not, what is the nearest emergency facility?
- | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Aware -68 (69.5%) | Unaware -28 (29.6%) | Don't know -2 (2%) |
|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
4. Do you have any first aid services other than your doctor?
- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Yes - 77 (78.5%) | No - 21 (21.5%) |
|------------------|-----------------|
5. Do you have need for or use the home nursing services as sponsored by the county?
- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Yes - 11 (11.2%) | No - 87 (88.8%) |
|------------------|-----------------|
6. Are you familiar with the following county sponsored services?
- | | | |
|--|------------|------------|
| a. Dental clinics? | 17 (17.3%) | 81 (82.7%) |
| b. Immunization Clinics? | 78 (79.5%) | 20 (20.5%) |
| c. Well Child Conferences and Clinics? | 45 (46%) | 53 (54.0%) |
| d. Animal Immunization Clinics? | 5 (5.1%) | 93 (94.9%) |
7. Where is the hospital you would go to if you needed hospitalization?
- | | |
|------------------|----------------------|
| Omaha - 60 (61%) | Elsewhere - 38 (39%) |
|------------------|----------------------|
8. Do you have any facilities for the care of the aged in your community?
- None
- If not, do you feel that such facilities are needed?
- | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Yes - 96 (98%) | No - 12 (12.2%) | Don't know - 12 (12.2%) |
|----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
9. Do you have a family doctor?
- | | |
|----------------|-------------|
| Yes - 96 (98%) | No - 2 (2%) |
|----------------|-------------|
10. How many doctors are in your community? If none, how far is the nearest doctor?
- | | |
|------------------|-----------|
| 1 medical doctor | 1 dentist |
|------------------|-----------|

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GENERAL SURVEY OF PUBLIC HEALTH CONDITIONS IN
VALLEY, NEBRASKA, continued

11. Do you find it a problem to reach your doctor when you need him?
Yes - 5 (5.1%) No - 93 (94.9%)
12. Do you have hospitalization insurance?
Yes - 92 (94%) No - 6 (6%)

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH:

13. Is your water clear and odorless during the entire year? If not, when do you notice changes in its character? (e.g., spring, winter, etc.)
Yes - 91 (92.8%) No - 7 (7.2%)
14. Is there any time in the year when you do not have enough water?
Yes - 4 (4.1%) No - 94 (95.9%)
15. Do you always have sufficient water pressure in your home?
Yes - 85 (87%) No - 13 (13%)
16. Is your water supply chlorinated?
Yes - 22 (22.4%) No - 66 (66%) Don't know - 10 (10%)
17. Are you in favor of fluoridation of your water? If not, why?
Yes - 72 (73.5%) No - 16 (16%) Don't know - 11 (11%)
18. How do you dispose of your sewage?
City sewer line - 98 (100%)
19. Is disposal of sewage a city responsibility?
Yes - 98 (100%)
20. Do you feel that the method used is satisfactory?
Yes - 92 (94%) No - 6 (6%)
21. Do you have any trouble with your sewer backing up?
Yes - 12 (12%) No - 86 (88%)
22. How do you dispose of your trash and garbage?
Commercial pick-up - 91 (93%) Private haul - 6 (7%)
Burn - 45
Disposal - 11
23. Are you satisfied with the present method of disposal?
Yes - 91 (93%) No - 7 (7%)
24. Is any of the following a health hazard in your community?
- | | YES | NO |
|------------------|-----|----|
| a. flies | 16 | 82 |
| b. mosquitoes | 60 | 38 |
| c. rats | 0 | 98 |
| d. miscellaneous | 0 | 98 |
25. Are there any structures in your community that you think need improvement?
Yes - 39 (40%) No - 59 (60%)

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GENERAL SURVEY OF PUBLIC HEALTH CONDITIONS IN VALLEY, NEBRASKA, continued

26. Do you think any of your local industries and businesses cause health or safety problems?
Yes - 11 (11%) No - 87 (89%)
27. Are loose animals a problem in your neighborhood?
Yes - 38 (39%) No - 60 (61%)
28. What kind of recreation facilities do you have in your community?
See report
29. Are they clean, well-kept, and supervised?
Yes - 94 (96%) No - 3 (3%) Don't know - 1 (1%)
30. Do you feel that there is need for expansion of these facilities?
Yes - 79 (81%) No - 16 (16%) Don't know - 3 (3%)
31. Where do you get your milk?
Commercial source - 96 (98%)
32. Are you satisfied with its quality? (smell, taste, safety, etc.)
Yes - 98 (100%)
33. Where do you get your food?
a. Grocery stores - yes - 98 (100%)
b. Dairy-----
c. Farmer----- for eggs - 52 (53%)
d. Poultry house---
e. Butcher - 11 (11%)
f. Restaurant - 1 (1%)
g. Other
34. Of the above mentioned sources, do you feel that any have improper food handling practices?
Yes - 26 (26.5%)
- SCHOOL: - Not asked of those with no child in school - 47 people
35. Is there health instruction in your schools?
Yes - 41 (80%) No - 3 (3%) Don't know - 7 (7%)
36. Are there examinations in your schools as regards your children's:
- | | YES | NO | DON'T KNOW |
|--------------------|----------|----|------------|
| a. Dental progress | 39 (77%) | 8 | 4 |
| b. Vision | 46 (90%) | 1 | 4 |
| c. Hearing | 46 (90%) | 1 | 4 |
| d. Immunization | 37 (73%) | 10 | 4 |
37. Is there a health examination required for admission to your school?
Yes - 51 (100%)
38. Are you satisfied with the health programs in your school?
Yes - 45 (88%) No - 5 Don't know - 1

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GENERAL SURVEY OF PUBLIC HEALTH CONDITIONS IN
VALLEY, NEBRASKA, continued

39. Are there any people trained in first aid in your schools?
Yes - 25 (49%) No - 4 Don't know - 22

WELFARE:

40. Are there programs in your community for financial assistance to the needy? Can you name these programs?
Yes - 54 (55%) No - 37 (45%) Don't know - 7
41. How many people in your community take advantage of welfare funds?
Few - 72 (74%) Some - 8 (8%)
Many - 0 Don't know - 18 (18%)

MISCELLANEOUS:

42. To whom would you look in your community to organize a health improvement program?
Community fund - 1 Church - 43
Salvation Army - 7 Legion - 5
Chamber of Commerce - 3 Club - 6
Restaurants - 7 Lions - 3
Red Cross - 1 Stores - 2
43. By what financial means do you think your community should support a health program?
Taxes - 53 (54%) Don't know - 17 (17%)
Drives - 28 (29%)
44. Do you think that funds for health and welfare agencies should be raised by United or Multiple drives?
United - 74 (76%) Don't know - 6 (6%)
Multiple - 18 (18%)
45. Do you think you should have more health inspection in your community?
Yes - 61 (62%) No - 37 (38%)

GENERAL OPINIONS AND SUGGESTIONS:

46. Do you have any specific suggestions for improvements of your community health practices?
- | | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|
| Yes - 20 | Litter barrel downtown - 1 |
| No - 78 | Pet immunization - 1 |
| | Children out of street - 1 |
| Mosquitoes - 4 | Housing inspection - 8 |
| Restaurants - 12 | Alfalfa-air pollution - 2 |
| Fluoridation - 1 | Right-of-ways - 1 |
| Education - 1 | First aid course of firemen - 1 |
| Grocery - 3 | More doctors and dentists - 2 |
| Weed Control - 2 | Sewage and drainage - 1 |
| Dog Control - 2 | Storm sewers - 3 |

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GENERAL SURVEY OF PUBLIC HEALTH CONDITIONS IN
VALLEY, NEBRASKA, continued

47. Is this questionnaire in your opinion, complete in evaluating
public health situations?
Yes - 98 (100%)

FOLLOW-UP REPORT: VALLEY

In August of 1965, a report of a health survey conducted in Valley, Nebraska was submitted to the mayor and city officials along with recommendations for improving public health conditions. The following report represents information gathered in a follow-up interview with the mayor of the village.

The mayor noted that the report was read at a village board meeting late in August of 1965, and adopted as part of the minutes of that meeting.

Apparently the recommendations that were submitted were considered with little of the sincerity with which they were submitted because there has been little improvement in the areas thought to be lacking.

For example, it was recommended that the village board enact legislation providing for inspection and enforcement of food handling practices in restaurants and grocery stores. Although twenty-six per cent of those interviewed in the community plus personal inspection revealed this legislation was needed, nothing has been done to correct this situation.

Likewise, it was suggested that improvements were needed in the city park lavatory facilities. These facilities instead of being improved have seemingly further deteriorated, as evidenced by personal inspection.

Concerning first aid care in the schools, and the recommendation for regular periodic physical examinations for school personnel, the mayor knew of no recent advancements; but pointed out that this is

mainly a function and responsibility of county and state school officials and that the village board has no jurisdiction in these matters.

To date, the community has made no effort to initiate a program in influence the effectiveness of immunization programs provided by the Omaha Douglas County Health Department.

In regard to the recommendation concerning improvement of natural surface water drainage, the community has apparently ignored the suggestions because by personal inspection and by their own admission nothing has been done in this area.

The mosquito problem in the Elkhorn Valley which existed at the time of the survey, still exists. Although the community was "fogged" several times during the past summer it was pointed out in the survey that this may "kill complaints" but remains only an ineffective ritual. A plan of attack for this problem was outlined explicitly in the report, but like the other recommendations was seemingly passed over as being insignificant. It seems that personal danger is often the father of initiative. Perhaps a tragedy such as an encephalitis outbreak would be the only thing that would make this community realize that the real problem with mosquito infestation is not that these pests spoil one's barbecue or outing.

The community apparently has asserted itself in demanding the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-ways be properly maintained because they have been quite well maintained since a personal call to the president of the railroad at the time of the survey was made.

Finally, it was recommended that the community consider the

advantages of fluoridation of their water supply. No community action has been noted in this area at the present time.

At the time of the survey, Valley was in the process of planning a new sewage disposal plant due to the inadequacies of the old one. This plant has now been completed and has a functional capacity capable of providing for a village of approximately three thousand population. The foresight connected with the construction of this plant is one of the few improvements this village has made in protecting the health of its individuals.

From the results of this follow-up report, it seems apparent that this village is deficit in many areas of public health and perhaps in the leaders in these areas. Although the recommendations given this community as a result of the survey were submitted with the utmost sincerity, it appears that this village was not willing to accept criticism from outsiders who were merely trying to help them help themselves.

Tom White
Jerry Adler