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Study of the education program of the Montana farmers union

William A. Coe

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A STUDY OF THE
EDUCATION PROGRAM OF THE MONTANA FARMERS UNION

by

WILLIAM A. COE
B. A., Great Falls College of Education, 1948

Presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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This thesis has been approved by the Board of Examiners in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

W.R. Jones  
Chairman of the Board of Examiners

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Dean of the Graduate School

Date _____________________________
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OBJECTIVES
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM
OF THE FARMERS UNION

To teach the farm children of America the principles, ideals and philosophy of co-operation that they may be a more enlightened and a happier class of society than their fathers have been.

To educate the farmers of America so that they may fully understand the necessity of belonging to the Farmers Union, and thus, through organization, accomplish what they, as individuals have failed to do.

To create an interest in, and a consciousness of, the social and economic forces at work in the world, against which rural people must pit their brains and energy and understanding.

To preserve the family-type farm, the foundation stone of democracy and the basis of a true rural culture.

To develop, through contact with their neighbors, a sense of social responsibility among farmers toward one another and the rest of society.

To build, through the contacts and idealism of its educational program, a higher rural culture in America, in which our boys and girls may find a fuller, more abundant, and more satisfying life.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Among the major problems recognized by educators in the area of community-school relations today, perhaps none is more important than that of community indifference and apathy towards the school; the tendency of society to relinquish more and more of its child-raising responsibilities to the school. One obvious outcome of this situation could be the almost complete autonomy of the school system, arrived at by the same path as the autonomy of governmental units, to whom society has turned over, through apathy, its traditional rights to govern itself.

Another outcome, not so obvious, which would be in the nature of a solution, could be the rejuvenation of society in such a way that it came to realize its responsibilities in directing its own institutions and future.

If educators wish this kind of solution, it would seem that they should be interested in studying and encouraging any forces in society which are working towards such an objective. The purpose of this paper is to study one of these forces that is at work in many Montana communities. Its name is Montana Division, Farmers Educational and Co-operative Union of America, or in short, the Montana Farmers Union. To avoid unnecessary repetition it will be called hereafter, whenever possible, simply "The Union".
Two of the major characteristics of this organization are its championing of the "forgotten man" in our society and its belief that a different kind of education, over and above that provided by our schools and colleges, is necessary if we are to save our way of life. Regarding this latter characteristic, the Union position is probably midway between that of the Catholic Church, which has almost exclusive educational control of its young people, and that of the Protestant public, who generally delegates that exclusive control to the public schools. The Farmers Union position is one of support and improvement for our schools, while supplementing its young people's schooling with its own brand of education.

This farm group has inherited or acquired, along with the traditions of such people's organizations as the Populists, Grangers, Farmers Alliance, and Farm Holiday Association, the indifference or hostility shown toward such groups by major economic institutions such as railroads, banks, power companies, mining interests, chambers of commerce, elevator and milling interests, grain exchanges, and others. As might be expected, this hostility or indifference results in various degrees of what is known as "poor press" for the Union and consequently, it is either unknown or misunderstood by most Montanans. Labor unions have had, perhaps, more contact with the Union than has any other organized group but, even here, the probability is that any real understanding is pretty well limited to union
officers and others who have worked closely with Farmers Union people on problems of local importance.

In the state legislature and among the state's politicians the Union has some of its members and many friends. In the legislative field its opinions are often sought, its voting and lobbying strength respected, and sometimes its co-operation is asked in preparation of legislation or by proponents or opponents of certain pending legislation. The Union is interested in all phases of governmental activity, both within and without the state, and takes an active part in the functions of various governmental and quasi-governmental bodies whenever there is an occasion for it. Examples could be testifying before government boards of legislatures, and direct participation in such organizations as the Citizen's Committee on Re-organization of Montana Schools.

The official device or symbol of the organization is a triangle in which is the Farmers Union seal, with the name, and three traditional tools of the farmer; the rake, the hoe, and the plow. The base of the triangle is labeled as Education and the other sides are Co-operation and Legislation. This seems logical, for Union people consider that education is the foundation of their program and everything they have built. Indeed, the Union is primarily educational and is termed 'the educational organization' in conversation and in its literature. Co-operation and Legislation arise from the educational base to form the perfect triangle.
"Co-operation", here, means both the co-operative businesses the Union has established and the general philosophy of people working together for the good of all. By "Legislation", Union philosophy means that we are living in a legislated economy, and that the people have the votes with which to determine the kind of laws and legislators they get, and that the only way to bring about desirable change in our way of life is to use legal means.

With all of these points in mind, it is now possible to examine the organization concerned and the program it advocates.
CHAPTER II

THE EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION

I. THE LOCAL UNION

The Montana Farmers Union, a state division of the Farmers Educational and Co-operative Union of America (National Farmers Union), is a statewide, fraternal farm organization composed of locals, county units, and state organization. The local unions, organized on a community basis, are chartered by the state union and are self-governed. There are no restrictions placed on their conduct except through a provision of the national by-laws which authorizes the state organization to revoke the charter of any of its locals.¹

According to the state by-laws the local members shall elect a president, vice-president, secretary-treasurer, conductor, doorkeeper, and the chairmen of three committees: Organization, Co-operatives, and Legislation. These officers, in turn, are to choose a director of education for the local from a list of names submitted by the Juniors and Reserves. In other words, the children choose their own teacher or leader. This Director might be the only class teacher or, in the case of large, well organized

¹Constitution and By-Laws, Farmers Educational and Co-operative Union of America, Section 3, Article IV, p. 5.
locales, might co-ordinate and direct the activities of a number of teachers and leaders. In any case the Director of Education also works with the other local officers in conducting educational activities for the adult members of the local.

Except for the three committee chairmen, the other local officers perform duties in a similar manner to respective officers of other fraternal organizations. However, special mention might be made of the Chairmen of Organization, Co-operatives and Legislation. The first committee, Organization, is charged with the building of local membership and the formulation of rules for eligibility. The committee on Co-operatives co-ordinates the activities and programs of the local with those of the co-operative business activities, while the Legislative committee, as in some other organizations, has for its special sphere of activity the study of legislation and the presentation of such study to the local members.

II. MEMBERSHIP

As stated above the local organization committee is the agency that determines a person's eligibility for membership in the Farmers Union but it has rather wide independence of action within the bounds that have been set. According to the national constitution,

Any person may be admitted to membership if of sound mind, over the age of 16 years, of industrious habits, believes in a
Supreme Being, is of good moral character, and if a farmer, regular employee of a State Union, National Union or Farmers Union Cooperative, country mechanic, school teacher, physician or minister of the gospel, and not engaged in any of the following occupations, to-wit: Banking, Merchandising, Practicing Law, or belonging to any trust or combine that is for the purpose of speculating in any kind of agricultural products or the necessities of life, or anything injuriously affecting agricultural interests; provided, that ownership of bank stock by any actual farmer shall not be construed as making him ineligible to membership. 2

This has been abbreviated and simplified in the state by-laws as follows:

Persons sixteen years of age or over deriving their principle income from farming and others who do not receive substantial financial benefit from any trust or combine dealing or speculating in any kind of agricultural products or other necessities of life, or any type or kind of business or activity exploiting or injuriously affecting agriculture and its related interests shall be eligible to membership. 3

In Montana the more prohibitive national restrictions do not seem to be as closely adhered to as those of the state, for more importance is placed on an applicant's philosophy and beliefs than on his occupation. Generally, if he is sympathetic to Farmers Union principles he is eligible to membership. This explains why there are numbers of teachers, ministers, small-business people and working people in the Union, and no bankers or big business men.

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2Ibid., pp. 4-5.

3By-Laws Montana Farmers Union, Section I, Article 4, p. 3.
Several lawyers are members, including the ex-mayor of one of the largest cities in the state, despite the provision above of the national constitution relating to lawyers. Their agreement in principles with the Union would seem to provide sufficient justification for membership, and a farm background or any present farm ownership would only be further justification. Quite a large number of labor union people are members, some because of prior connections, or family connections with the Union, but mostly because of a community of interests with Farmers Union people and programs. There are provisions for expelling undesirable members but this is not known to have ever happened. Back in the early days of the organization, however, the "blackball" method of voting was employed and there were instances where individuals were prevented from joining.

Recently some new By-Law provisions have changed the membership status of many people who were previously ineligible. These people were non-members who carried any of the Farmers Union insurances. They had to pay the membership fee in the insurance companies, to be sure, but this alone did not make them eligible for membership in the Farmers Union, an organization separate from the insurance companies. At the National Convention of March, 1952, at

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4Ibid., Section 4, Article 4, p. 5.

5Correspondence from Secretary-Treasurer, Montana Farmers Union, May 27, 1952.
Dallas, Texas, the delegates adopted new national by-laws which admitted to social membership in the Union such persons described above, this meaning that they can take part in all activities of the Union except voting.

Membership in the Union is on a family basis. That is, the head of the household pays dues for himself, while all women and minor children who are part of the household automatically attain membership. Those sixteen years of age or over have all the privileges of dues-paying members, while children between the ages of six and sixteen are non-voting members. Other adult members of the family or any other single adult must pay the regular membership dues for himself. Many children of non-member families are attracted to, and engage in, the youth activities of the Union, but they can have no official status in the organization until their parents can be persuaded to take membership in the organization. Around summer-camp time, as can well be imagined, these ineligible children can be very persuasive, indeed!

III. THE COUNTY FARMERS UNION

In any county containing three or more locals the members can organize a county union, made up in the same manner as are the locals, except that business is conducted by delegates elected by these locals. People are elected to the same offices and committees as outlined previously in the section on locals and the organization conducts itself
as an independent unit within the Farmers Union framework. However, the locals are now co-ordinated and bound by the decisions made by the county union, of which they are a part.

**IV. THE STATE ORGANIZATION**

Every year in late fall the Montana Farmers Union has a state convention in Great Falls with about a thousand delegates and members from locals and county unions all over the state in attendance. In this four day meeting, state officers are elected for the ensuing year, policies and program are formulated and voted upon, and other business of the Union is discussed and acted upon. Many activities of educational and recreational nature are conducted, including talks by national officials of the Union and affiliated co-operatives and by government officials, panel discussions, programs by the young people, movies, plays, skits, group singing and square and modern dancing.

Union people consider that the "grass roots" of the Farmers Union movement are farm families on the land and the locals that they organize but it is also true that without the centralizing force of this state convention little could be accomplished. More explicitly, the state officers elected here, with the permanent office staff provided for them, become the motivating force that makes the whole apparatus function. These elected officers include a full time, salaried President and an unpaid basis, a
Vice-President and five Directors. This body, known as the Executive Board, carries out the directives of the state convention and conducts the business of the state union during the year.

By directive, the President and Board must appoint five committees as follows:

1. Credentials Committee
2. Resolutions and Legislative Committee
3. By-Laws and Rules Committee
4. Committee on Co-operatives
5. Education Committee

The first four are concerned wholly with preparations for, and conduct of, the state convention, while the fifth committee operates during the entire year. Its members are concerned with educational activities throughout the state, working as teachers and advisors, co-ordinating and organizing educational programs, and working with the State Director of Education in carrying out the wishes of the membership and the Executive Board. As in the case of the State Board members, the people on all these committees have volunteered their time and energy, although they may at times be furnished with transportation or mileage, and expense accounts.

Two of the most important people of the state staff are the full time salaried Secretary-Treasurer and the Director of Education, both appointed by the Board. The

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6By-Laws, Montana Farmers Union, op. cit., Section 1, Article 10, as amended 1947, p. 17.
Board also appoints the editor of the Montana Farmers Union News, the official newspaper organ, and hires the necessary bookkeepers, secretaries, clerks, and workers to staff the various offices.

The State Office itself is a large, modern building on the outskirts of Great Falls. In addition to the business offices, it contains two large auditoriums and a well-equipped kitchen. It was built in 1950 with funds partially contributed by members and part borrowed from some co-operative insurance agencies.

V. THE INSURANCE ORGANIZATION

One of the integral parts of the state Farmers Union is the Montana Farmers Union Insurance Agency, a wholly owned, co-operative auto, casualty, life, and health insurance company that writes insurance for members and social members of the state union. It will be more fully explained later in the section on Co-operatives, but as a department of the state office, it must be mentioned in this chapter with the other elements of the state organization.

The Agency is the Montana representative of the National Farmers Union Service Corporation, of Denver, and as such, is governed by the rules established at the national stockholders meetings held annually at the National Farmers Union convention or conference. However, each state division is managed by the State Executive Board through the Director of Insurance in
much the same manner as any other department of the State Office. With its suite of offices, its Director, agents, and office workers this department has become larger than any of the others. In the same suite, but not connected with the operations of the Insurance department, is the office of an insurance adjuster hired by the parent company in Denver to represent its interests when accident claims are filed against its policy holders in Montana.
CHAPTER III

CO-OPERATIVES

One of the most prevalent popular misconceptions concerning the Farmers Union involves the relation between that organization and co-operatives. Union people say that they answer more questions on this subject than any other when in conversation with curious members of the general public. An author of Farmers Union books has said,
"...this relationship is the key to the building of a farm movement that is unique in the United States for its size in proportion to the total number of farmers, for its progressiveness, and for its militancy..."

It is impossible to travel in Montana without seeing grain elevators labeled "Farmers Union G.T.A." or gas stations marked "Farmers Union Oil Co."; and, for many people, this is their only contact with the Farmers Union. Probably, too, in most cases these enterprises will not be identified in the public mind as co-operatives without further contact such as conversation with employees or other Union people. When this does happen, the informant must try in a few well chosen words to explain the meaning of both "Farmers Union" and "co-operatives", which institutions

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1Harold V. Knight, Grass Roots, (Jamestown, North Dakota: North Dakota Farmers Union, 1947), Author's Preface.
are the subject of many books and pamphlets and are constantly under study by Union people through their educational system. Thus it is not remarkable that many people have little or no understanding of the two terms.

The Farmers Union is a fraternal farm organization, while co-operatives are business enterprises. They are independent, but mutually supporting, entities, which are patronized by much the same group of people and governed by the same over all philosophy. In the past, numerous organizations of both types have appeared, flourished briefly, and then disappeared. Early co-operatives failed chiefly because there was no body of well informed, co-operative minded patrons behind them; and certain pioneer farm organizations either disintegrated or became impotent because of involvement in partisan politics.

The lessons learned in these earlier attempts were recognized by the group of men who founded the Farmers Union in 1902, and soon became a part of the constitution. The new Union believed that co-operatives were necessary, in addition to a fraternal and educational organization, if farmers were ever to attain independence and prosperity, and it sought to impress upon its members the necessity for

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2Ibid., p. 23.


4Refer to "preface to first constitution", p. 22.
these co-operatives to help support the educational organization in return.

Thus, the Montana Farmers Union encourages the growth of co-operatives through its various educational facilities; and, in turn, the co-operatives thus affected contribute moral and financial support to the Union. In fact, this principle has been recognized in the laws of the United States and of most states, whereby co-operatives may be organized according to co-operative sections of the corporate laws. In these provisions, co-operatives are required to set aside certain percentages of their net earnings, generally five per cent, for educational purposes. The state laws do not stipulate to whom these educational funds must go nor the exact use that must be made of them, but the Farmers Union expects all co-operative businesses bearing its name to remit this fund to the educational organization. It must be said that all of them do not comply; and that, among those who do, not all send in the total funds they have set aside. In the past, these funds retained by a few co-operatives have some times been used for purposes that strain considerably the meaning of the term "educational", requiring more attention by the state organization to the educating of managers, boards of directors, and stockholders of these companies. The

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5Capper-Volstad Act, United States Congress; Chapter 39, "Co-operative Associations"; Chapter 40, "Co-operative Marketing Act"; Chapter 205, "Corporation Licence Tax", Section 2296, Laws of Montana.
importance of these funds to the state organization is shown by the 1951 Financial Statement, Montana Farmers Union, wherein, of its total receipts of $123,009, three-fifths or $76,000, was sent in by affiliated co-operatives as educational funds.\(^6\)

According to this financial report, there were seventy-four local co-operatives paying educational funds in the state and five regional co-operatives. These last named are multi-state companies which act as wholesale suppliers and marketing agencies for the smaller locally owned companies. These local co-ops might be gas stations, farm stores, lumber yards, grain elevators, creameries, credit unions, or insurance companies.

True co-operatives are organized and operated according to the six principles established by the Equitable Society of Rochdale Pioneers, of Rochdale, England, organized in 1844 and the first successful co-operative. These principles are:\(^7\)

1. One man, one vote. Although one person might have any number of shares of preferred stock up to some established maximum, he may own but one share of common, or voting stock.

2. Patronage refund. All money over and above that necessary to run the business must be apportioned back to the patrons.

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\(^6\)"The '51 Story", Report of the Secretary-Treasurer, Montana Farmers Union, 1951.

\(^7\)Edwards, op. cit., p. 111.
3. Limited earning of capital. Co-operatives, unlike private businesses, were not established because someone wanted to go into business to make money; neither do they subscribe to the theory of acquiring wealth by investments. Therefore, if capital is needed in the business of the co-operative it is repaid at a fairly low rate of interest, generally in the neighborhood of three per cent. Co-operative philosophy holds that rewards for the patron come before rewards to the investor.

4. Open membership. This principle has been modified somewhat by state and national laws. For example, if a farm co-op wishes to keep its corporation income tax-exempt status it must do at least 55 per cent of its business during the year with farmers, or "agricultural producers." Except for this provision anyone can avail himself of the services of an appropriate co-operative.9

5. Cash trading to avoid the pitfalls of extending credit.

6. A reserve for expansion and education.

Inasmuch as mention has been made of the fact that co-operatives are not primarily established because farmers wanted to go into business and make money, mention should be made of the reasons why co-operatives were established. Farmers have come to consider themselves as business men, the same as the merchants on main street and they feel they should have the same advantages of operation as the merchants. No successful merchant or business man buys his commodities at retail and sells them at wholesale. Farmers know that they cannot conduct successful farming operations in that manner either. The farmer has always

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8 Laws of Montana, loc. cit.
been at the mercy of those who sold him his supplies or bought his products, for the price of his supplies and farm machinery has always been set by others, particularly the large eastern manufacturing concerns, while the price of his farm products was set by outside agricultural interests, such as commodity brokers, grain exchanges, and milling concerns. The farmer found that he was a two-time loser doing business in this manner, and determined that he would, one way or the other, enjoy the same advantages as other business men. He found that if anything was to be done in this regard he must do it himself. He was inexperienced in working with others and untrained in the art of running a business and handling commodities. Yet over the years co-operative enterprises run by the farmer himself have multiplied many fold, using business methods similar to those of private enterprise. The farmer can now buy his supplies at wholesale from his own business and can market his products with another of his companies, at a price which more nearly approaches "retail". Where before he had no control of his farming operations beyond his own fence line he now has organizations working for him which will handle his product from farm to consumer in many cases, and will produce the things he needs for his farming operations.

His co-operatives have had an influence on marketing conditions and prices; have helped to take much of the speculation and gambling out of the market places. He now feels that he has organized to protect his own interests,
just as almost every other segment of American society has organized.
CHAPTER IV

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PHILOSOPHY

One side of the Farmers Union Triangle, Co-operation, has been discussed. The second side, Legislation, should now come up for consideration. This should properly include political views, economic theories exclusive of co-operatives, and the legislative means whereby these ideas are carried into practical operation.

The method by which the Farmers Union arrives at all its programs and policies is to first evaluate and assess conditions as they exist and then arrive at conclusions through a program of study, discussion, and debate. After a program has been voted on and approved by the members, it becomes the official policy of the organization. This principle was established at the very birth of the Farmers Union, as is evidenced by the preface to the first Constitution of the organization.

The ten men who wrote this constitution looked at their near hopeless situation as farmers in 1902, and started a farm organization to correct some of the abuses that beset them. They did not know the answers to their problems at that time but they founded a farm organization that would carry on their work and go beyond into the realm of legislative study and political action. There is
perhaps no better way to show the progress that this organization has made than to see what was in the minds of those ten pioneers and then show the elaboration that has since been made in more recent programs of the Farmers Union.

First, the preface from the first constitution of the Farmers Union, in part:

To our fellow-citizens of Rains County, of Texas, and of the United States; Rains County first, because it is our home; Texas second because her's is the brightest star in the American firmament; the United States third, because it is the land of the free and the home of the brave. It is to you that this little book is dedicated, and to you this brief address is directed. We offer no word of apology for having called your attention to the institution known as the Farmers Educational and Co-operative Union of America. We, whose names are here affixed, would respectfully call attention to the fact that twenty years have been blown into eternity since the Farmers' Alliance had its beginning, and nearly ten years have elapsed since its demise. Today we stand amazed as we watch the organized world do business. It is next to an idle tale to say that every line of business, from the bootblack to the money kings, of the new and the old world, are organized, save and except the man who raises the raw material for our food and raiment. Time was when the great mass of the people owned the great mass of wealth of the nation. But today less than ten percent of our population own 90 percent of the nation's wealth. We need not have told you this—you were aware of it already. If you ask us what we are going to do about it, we answer you by the echo "WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?...."

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Perhaps the most objective way to examine the growth of the organization's philosophy since its birth, and the direction that the growth has taken, would be to report verbatim the Union position recorded in the Restatement of Farmers Union program formulated by the National Convention of 1937. This is a detailed scrutiny of national conditions of that time and a detailed recommendation of a program for the organization and possible solutions of those conditions. The restatement is as follows:

STATE OF THE UNION

1. TENANCY: Fifty-three per cent (53%) of the farms are operated by tenants or sharecroppers. A large majority of those farmers who are still classified as owners, face mortgage foreclosure under an interest structure which is in itself confiscatory. One-half million farm families existing on land whose fertility has been entirely depleted. Three-quarter million sharecropper families in the South on a subsistence basis below that of peon labor.

2. TAXES: A taxation system so ruthless that it leads to inevitable expropriation of lands and home, even (through that most vicious of all taxes, the sales tax) to deprivation of the actual necessities of life.

3. UNEMPLOYMENT: Factories closed, and millions unemployed.

4. RELIEF: A relief program which presents but two alternatives: The annual expenditures of huge sums of money, or the actual starvation of millions of helpless Americans.

5. YOUTH: The youth of the nation—hopeless and disheartened—facing a future without the opportunity for education, employment or homes of their own, tramping the roads, or enrolled in CCC Camps.

6. AGE: The aged and infirm, after a
life-time of productive effort, a liability to society and a burden to themselves.

7. INSECURITY: Countless millions of citizens, driven by the nightmare of economic insecurity to mental and physical breakdown, with the resultant broken homes and wrecked happiness. Loss to the nation through the destruction of the morale of its people cannot be estimated.

8. MEDICINE: A major percentage of the population suffering from lack of proper medical care—from disease and malnutrition, the inevitable result of which must be a weakened and inferior race.

9. CIVIL LIBERTIES: Large numbers of Americans in imminent danger of losing the civil liberties so necessary and so precious to democracy.

10. WEALTH: The wealth of the entire nation concentrated that its control is in the hands of less than 10% of the population. The resultant loss of purchasing power upon the part of the 90% has been the major contributing factor to the ills above cited. These conditions show us the paradox of a land, containing vast natural resources and raw materials, modern productive machinery and mental genius sufficient to provide abundance for all, and within this land, countless millions underfed, inadequately housed and poorly clothed.

In view of such conditions as we have cited, we believe that there must be a re-dedication of the Farmers Union to its original aims and purposes. We believe that a more definite and aggressive policy toward changing these conditions must be made a part of our program. We believe that, unless this is done, America will become the victim of fascism and dictatorship, the prey of war lords and munition makers; a shackled and desecrated ghost of Democracy.

We believe, that the farm problem is only a part of the gigantic economic problem; and that this economic problem has been created by, and must continue to become more serious under the "Profit System" by which our business
structure is operated. A profit system must be predicated upon the theory of scarcity, which necessitates controlled production and controlled distribution for the specific purpose of fixing price.

Believing that a system of co-operative business, owned by producers and consumers is the only means by which the potential abundance of this nation may be made available to all its people and by which true Democracy may be maintained and safeguarded, we urge that the following Program, through which this system may be effectuated, be adopted.

AIMS

We are agreed that the aims of this organization are as follows:

ECONOMIC SECURITY: To bring economic security to Agriculture, always remembering that no group in an interdependent society may enjoy that security unless it is also insured to every other group within that society.

PRICE DETERMINATION: To bring to the farmer such prices for his products as will insure to him cost of production, a fair exchange with the industrial goods which he must have in order to operate his business and maintain a decent standard of living for himself and his family.

LEGISLATION: To follow a course in sponsoring and securing legislation which will protect the rights of the farmer and aid him in his struggle for equality; secure him in his right to bargain and organize; safeguard and perpetuate his co-operatives; keep the nation out of war; provide immediate aid for emergency need, and further the progress of the farmer toward the ultimate goal of a complete co-operative Democracy.

EDUCATION: To concentrate every educational effort toward building an understanding of the problems facing farmer and industrial worker alike; toward an understanding of the necessity of world peace and the fundamental philosophy of the co-operative movement.
CO-OPERATIVES: To encourage and promote the growth of co-operative business institutions, which will serve the farmer and consumer at cost, act as a deterrent to the concentration of wealth, and become the physical foundation of a true economic democracy.

ORGANIZATION: To carry the program of the Farmers Educational and Co-operative Union of America to every farmer in every state in the Union, and to conduct a campaign of Junior education which will insure a well-educated and constantly increasing membership.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Section I. INCOME

1. Basic price determination for all important agricultural commodities based on a fair exchange with industrial goods, which will effectuate cost of production for agriculture.

2. Control of imports and tariffs to protect the domestic market for American Agriculture.

3. Marketing Quotas—i.e. Controlled flow of commodities into distributive channels when necessary, to meet effective demand at fair exchange values.

4. Soil Conservation with production to provide for domestic needs; adequate reserve requirements and such world markets as will yield a profitable return.

5. Crop yield insurance actually sound on a National basis to the degree in which the commodity is produced nationally and with all expense beyond the farm nationalized.

6. A normal granary program designed to carry seasonal surpluses; ownership of the commodity to remain with the producer and all expenses beyond the farm to be nationalized. A licensed system of storage and warehousing which will attract commodity credit at low interest rates, must be a part of this program.
7. Commodity loans based on a percentage of such basic price as is determined for the purpose of effectuating minimum price.

8. Disposal of excessive supplies by Federal Government to meet social needs or to world markets when supplies endanger basic price structure.

9. Use of co-operatives where practicable.

10. That congress make definite provisions for financing this program.

11. Administration in the interest of family-sized and co-operative farms by actual farmers, democratically elected.

Section II. COSTS OF OPERATION

1. Permanent adjustment of interest rates on the indebtedness of agriculture to those rates enjoyed by private industry.

2. Adequate and effective legislation which will make possible the rapid development of the co-operative movement, and which will protect co-operatives in their infancy from large established enterprises.

CAPITAL STRUCTURE

1. We urge that all farm debts to Federal agencies be consolidated within a single agency, this agency to be empowered and instructed to compose such debts as circumstance shall require. This power of adjustment should be extended to Federal Land Banks and Federal Farm Loan Associations.

2. Expansion of the Farm Security Program to meet the needs of the bottom one-third of our farmers with particular reference to:

A. Farm Tenancy
B. Debt Adjustment
C. Land Utilization
D. Rehabilitation and Emergency Relief

TAXATION: Believing that no Government can survive where taxes are not levied against ability to pay and that continued ability to pay must be based on net income, we are
unalterably opposed to any system of taxation not based upon this principle. Since a sales tax has historically been the method used to extort revenue from those least able to pay, we reiterate our continued and consistent opposition to that tax.

PEACE: War negates the objects of civilization, therefore, we renew our efforts to educate our people toward an understanding of the economic and social conflicts causing war, the utter futility of war and the steps to be taken to prevent it. Education alone can effect the economic changes imperative in a changing world order. In view of the present world situation we support the conscientious application of this National Peace Program:

1. Strict enforcement of the present neutrality laws.
2. Ban on all commerce and traffic loans, credits and goods directly or indirectly designated and intended for aggressor warring nations.
3. Assumption of no responsibility for any citizen or citizens who reside, travel, trade or invest in war areas, nor for any individual involvement in foreign conflicts.
4. Limitation of armaments, army, navy, and air forces to domestic defense proportions, only.

We condemn and deplore the policies of imperialism, militarism, and aggression, and urge the government to be co-operative and tolerant in the settlement of the problems endangering our peace and that of the world.2

To show the change and refinement of the Farmers Union program in a time when the nation was just beginning to recover from a disastrous depression and faced the challenge of another war, reference should be made to the program adopted at the national convention of 1940.

2Ibid., p. 151
Following is the general statement of legislative aims adopted:

Farmers Union Legislative Program

Our Six Basic Aims:

1. TO PROVIDE ASSURANCE OF FULL PARITY PRICED, the Farmers Union Income Certificate Plan must be adopted for all commodities for which it is practicable, and fully adequate federal payments must be continued on other commodities until permanent, self-financing programs can be developed for them.

2. TO FURTHER PROVIDE ASSURANCE OF AN ANNUAL PARITY INCOME Federal Crop Insurance must be extended to all possible commodities, especially cotton.

3. TO PROVIDE ASSURANCE OF SECURITY IN FARM HOMES the Farmers Union Debt Adjustment Bill must be enacted into law without compromising its provisions for scaling down of debts, for credit at the cost to the government, and for keeping the farmer on his farm.

4. TO PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR OUR MILLIONS OF LOW-INCOME FARMERS TO LIVE AND REMAIN ON THE LAND, funds must be appropriated for a many-fold expansion and extension of the Farm Security Administration programs, together with necessary special aids.

5. TO PROVIDE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR FARMERS TO DEMOCRATICALLY ORGANIZE THEMSELVES FOR MORE EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN OUR NATIONAL LIFE, the declared intention of the Congress towards bona fide farmer-co-operatives must be implemented with realistic financial support where necessary, and with the emphasis and zeal equal to that which has been shown by the government in promoting soil conservation. Discrimination against such co-operatives, either in favor of private profit enterprises or of government conducted operations, must be stopped.

6. THE HEALTH AND STRENGTH OF AMERICA, including rural America, must be fortified by assuring an adequate diet to every man, woman, and child in the nation through
greatly increased funds for distributing our farm surpluses to those in need.

In addition to the above general recommendations the 1940 convention adopted twenty-two specific legislative proposals which are presented in condensed form as follows:

1. Further payments to farmers for conservation of soil and other natural resources with suggested improvements for the program.

2. Continued support for the commodity loan program, the ever-normal inventory of needed supplies, and surplus products disposal to foreign markets.

3. Milk and milk products to be made a basic commodity under AAA (Agricultural Adjustment Administration) as provided for in the Farmers Union Dairy Stabilization Bill.

4. Extension of the federal sugar program to family size growers.

5. Increased marketing information services, research for new uses for farm products and efforts to remove interstate trade barriers.

6. Oppose transfer of the Farm Credit Administration from the Department of Agriculture.

7. Appropriations from the Farm Security Administration for low income farmers to become members of co-operatives.

8. Extension of co-operative rural electrification.

9. Federal aid for rural health services especially
10. Federal funds for aiding rural young people through federal aid to education and NYA (National Youth Administration).

11. Clearance of rural slums and building of low cost rural housing by the federal government.


13. Outlawing of poll taxes.

14. Levying of taxes on the basis of ability to pay and opposition to a sales tax.

15. Restoration to Congress of the power to coin, and regulate the value of, money.

16. Administration of federal farm programs by democratically elected farmers whenever possible.

17. All farm legislation should be dedicated to the protection of the family sized farm.

18. Opposition to the Walter-Logan bill.

19. Opposition to sending American boys to fight on foreign soil.

20. Opposition to the direct government handling of surplus commodities when it was the intent of Congress to have these commodities marketed by co-operative associations.

21. Active co-operation between organized labor and organized agriculture; continued support for legislative justice to wage workers.

22. Support by the national organization for state
Farmers Unions in their state legislative programs. 3

These statements of Farmers Union philosophy and program represent the thinking up to the year 1941. To get a complete picture of this organization one should examine present policy as it has evolved during the turbulent years since that date. One effect of those years has been to present a multiplicity of problems to be solved, requiring, consequently, a Farmers Union Program that has been considerably expanded in scope and attention to detail; so expanded, in fact, that it is necessary to consider it here in outline form. In the main, it is a positive program; that is, the Union supports, or wants an increase or an improvement in, the items listed. Several recommendations of a negative nature are worded to indicate that fact.

FARMERS UNION PROGRAM FOR 1952-1953
Adopted by Delegates to

The Golden Jubilee Convention
Dallas, Texas
March 10-14, 1952

I. Long-Term Purposes

A. Inherent Human Rights

1. Freedom of Expression
2. Livelihood and Service
3. Equality of Opportunity
4. Minimum Standards

B. Family is Basic

C. Co-operation Necessary

3Ibid., pp. 153-158
1. Farmers Union
2. Co-operatives
3. Government

D. Democracy Essential
1. Equal Voice
2. Responsive
3. Citizenship

E. Family Farming Vital to Democracy
1. Family farm most efficient
2. Family farm most natural
3. Family farming reduces tension

F. The Land Belongs to All the People

G. Farm Family Living
1. Housing
2. Education
3. Health and medical care
4. Low cost electricity
5. Telephone
6. Transportation
7. Social Service

H. Farm Neighborhood and Community
1. Churches
2. Local government
3. Local forums
4. Rural libraries
5. Recreation

I. Farm Production and Farm Family Income
1. Parity income
2. Protection against risk
3. Credit
4. Abundant production

J. Economy of Abundance

The Farmers Union View of the Economic System
1. Co-operative
2. Resource development and conservation
3. Full employment
4. Anti-monopoly
5. Industrial justice
6. Social security
K. World Affairs

1. United Nations
2. World economic and social development
3. World court and world police force
4. U. S. Foreign policy
5. U. S. Security policy

II. Program of Action

A. Preservation and strengthening of family farming

1. Parity of farm income
   a. 100% parity price support for family farm production
      (1) All crops and livestock basis
      (2) Better parity price formula
      (3) Family farm 100% of parity price support
      (4) Methods of support
      (5) Advance notice of support level
      (6) Repeal sliding scale
      (7) Price insurance and other financial methods

   b. National farm production
      (1) Production goals
      (2) Acreage allotments and marketing quotas
      (3) Appropriations
      (4) Integration of production and conservation programs
      (5) Unified farm plan

   c. Other Family Farm Programs of Government
      (1) Family farm policy review
      (2) Crop insurance
      (3) Programs for low income farm families
      (4) Farmers Home Administration
      (5) Marketing services
      (6) Regulation of commodity exchanges
      (7) Agricultural information
      (8) Marketing agreements and orders

   d. Organization and administration of farm programs
      (1) Administration by farmer committees
      (2) Consolidated housing

   e. Farm Production Supplies and Costs
      (1) Farming a Defense Industry
(2) Farm supplies
(3) Farm credit
(4) Graduated land tax
(5) Rented farms
(6) Public appraisal service
(7) Boxcar situation
(8) Selective Service
(9) Farm labor
(10) Migratory farm labor
(11) Integrated transportation service
(12) Protective services

f. Research

g. Making use of agricultural abundance
   (1) Evernormal storehouse
      (a) REA type storage program
      (b) Storage for safety and use
      (c) Commodity Credit Corporation
   (2) Increasing consumption

2. Parity for farm family living

a. Education
   (1) Federal aid to education
   (2) Rural education workshops
   (3) Financial aid to students
   (4) Publicly supported occupational training
   (5) Relationships
   (6) Separate Extension from Farm Bureau Federation
   (7) Appropriations
   (8) Transfer of vocational agriculture
   (9) Farmers Union educational program

b. Health
   (1) National health insurance
   (2) Expanded medical training
   (3) Medical co-operation
   (4) Voluntary health insurance
   (5) Hospital construction
   (6) Public health
   (7) Soils and health

c. Rural housing

d. Rural electrification

e. Rural telephone program

f. Recreation and culture

g. Churches

h. Social security

i. Farm safety
3. Parity of co-operative effort
   a. Building co-operative understanding
   b. Meeting anti-co-op campaigns
   c. Farmers Union co-operatives
      (1) Award insurance
      (2) Training institute
      (3) Co-operatives
      (4) Farmers Union insurance

B. Economy of Abundance

1. Resource development and conservation
   a. Soil and forest conservation
      (1) Forest and range
      (2) Agricultural soil conservation
   b. River valley basin development
   c. Resources inventory
   d. Fertilizer

2. Expanded production capacity
3. Greater restraint on monopoly
4. Industrial justice and self-government
5. Economic stabilization
   a. Pay-as-we-go
      (1) Taxes
      (2) Federal parity savings bonds
   b. Selective credit controls
   c. Price and wage controls
   d. Parity of sacrifice
   e. Increased production
   f. Full employment

C. Civil rights

D. World affairs

1. United Nations agencies
2. International Court of Justice
3. International Wheat Agreement
4. International Federation of Agricultural Producers
5. Moral Leadership
6. International Economics and Social Development

E. Farmers Union Membership and Legislation

1. Organization
2. Political and legislative activity
3. Political information

*Farmers Union Program for 1952-1953, (Denver: National Farmers Union, 1952)*
CHAPTER V

EDUCATION AT THE LOCAL MEETING

The basic work of the Farmers Union is carried on at the community level in the meetings of the various locals. Most locals meet once a month, but some meet twice a month and almost all have special meetings at some time or other to take care of special business. The local meeting is designed to include participation by the whole family. The young people will generally have their class work separately from the adult meeting for perhaps an hour or so, then they rejoin the main group to take part in the meeting and present their own part of the program.

The local meeting is generally planned beforehand at a special meeting of the executive board of the local which includes the President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, Education Director, Chairmen of Co-operative, Legislation and Organization Committees and any other persons invited to contribute to the planning. A good local meeting is composed of four parts: Business, Education, Entertainment, and Recreation.1 In many locals the young people have representatives at these meetings to help plan both the general meeting and their own special activities.

1Handbook for Farmers Union Locals (Denver: National Farmers Union, 1961)
The executive board at this time reviews any correspondence received, plans the order of business for the meeting, and discusses any recommendations they may wish to make to the local. If outside speakers or consultants are needed for the local meeting, the board makes the necessary arrangements and the various members of the board outline their own contributions to the program.

The three chairmen of committees previously mentioned have a regular report to make, i.e. the co-operative chairman keeps the local members up to date on the condition and operation of their local co-operatives, reminds them of co-operative stockholders meetings, displays products from the co-ops, shows co-operative films, and in all ways tries to build up a better understanding and interest in the co-operative way of life. The legislative chairman in turn provides the local members with information regarding bills and laws within the state and national legislatures, names and addresses and voting records of their state and national elected officials. The organization chairman devotes his time to seeing that the local enlarges and keeps its membership. He helps to organize membership campaigns, invites new members to the local meetings and reminds delinquent members of the time to pay dues.

To show how the Farmers Union operates on a community level a representative local meeting will be described, using material drawn from experience and Union literature. The technique will be the same as that used by the secretary.
in writing up the minutes of the meeting and it will appear as a quote from the minutes book of the local.

The seventy first regular meeting of the Slow Creek Farmers Union Local No. 211, Farmers Educational and Co-operative Union of America was held this 13th day of November, 1951 at the I.O.O.F. Hall in Fenton, Montana.

The meeting was opened at 8 P.M. by President Fred McDowell with Farmers Union songs led by Mrs. Crump, Educational Director, accompanied by Jane Seeley at the piano. The Secretary-Treasurer read the minutes of the previous meeting and there being no alterations or corrections the minutes were approved as read. The financial statement showing a balance of $47.00 to the credit of the local, was also read and approved. The secretary reported on local correspondence that had been received since the last meeting, among which was a letter from the state office announcing the State Officers School to be held in Great Falls, January 6 through 12. Also received were several replies from our Congressmen to whom we had written regarding various matters.

Under old business the Good Roads committee reported that at their meeting with the County Commissioners they received assurances that the North Road would be regraded as soon as the necessary county equipment was available. The Committee had been instructed at the last meeting to make representations to the Commissioners for this project.

Mrs. Joe Doaks, chairman of the Budget Fund committee reported that $35.00 was raised at the special Budget Fund Party last month and the amount had been turned over to the Secretary-Treasurer. A check for that amount will be sent to the National Farmers Union to aid in carrying out the functions of the Education program.

The Message to the Local from National President James Patton was read by Jimmy Thumb, one of the Juniors. The message this month concerned the attempts of big business and big farm interests to do away with the local farmer committees who have for some time helped to administer the Federal Farm Programs in the
Production and Marketing Administration, Farmers Home Administration and Soil Conservation districts.\(^2\)

The President then called for Committee reports. John Swain, chairman of the Cooperative Committee reported that the stockholders of the Farmers Union Oil Company of Fenton would hold their annual meeting November 26 in this hall at 2 P.M. The conduct of the business for the past year will be reviewed, patronage dividends and stock dividends will be decided upon and company policy for the ensuing year will be formulated. A light lunch will be furnished. Mr. Swain also reported on some new products recently received by the Oil Company, including an improved type of 2-4-D spray.

Bill Cooper, chairman of the Organization Committee opened his report by introducing Patricia Wheeler, a member of the Junior class, who gave a short review of her trip to Washington, D.C. last year, which had been an award for her part in the Membership Drive for 1950. She told of meeting Farmers Union members from other states who also were awarded the trip and how they visited their respective Congressmen and discussed the farm bills and other legislation that were pertinent to Farmers Union members. Mr. Cooper then reviewed for the local the plans that have been set up for conducting the Membership Drive this year and the progress that had been made. He reminded the people of their responsibility to contact new members and called for reports from the various committee chairmen in the local who have been out working with their groups. For this early in the campaign very good results have been obtained according to these reports.

Jim Cotton, chairman of the Legislative Committee led a discussion entitled, "What Do We Want From Our Next Legislature?" It developed that members of the local wanted a Farm-To-Market Road Program, increased state aid to education, adequate state financing to meet Federal matching money for highways, increased

\(^2\)Farmers Union Action Letter (Denver: National Farmers Union, 1952)
appropriations for overcrowded state custodial institutions. They voiced opposition to a general sales tax, any increased income taxes on co-operatives and asked for the outlawing of the recent imposed tax on farm trucks and light trailers.

Jane and Jack Anderson, two members of the Junior Class presented an accordion duet followed by a short play presented by the Reserve Class. Group singing was then led by Mrs. Crump.

The President then called for new business. Discussion was held on what to do about a Christmas party. It was decided that the President appoint a committee to plan the entertainment and the refreshments. They were as follows: Mrs. Crump, Bill Cooper, Jane Seeley, Mrs. Cotton, Mrs. Anderson and Mrs. James. The Junior Class volunteered to assist the committee.

The President called for a discussion on the State Officers School. Mrs. Crump, Education Director explained why the school was held, what it has done for people who had attended in the past and described the class schedule that would be offered. After several questions and some discussion it was decided that the local would help defray the expenses of the following six people to attend the school: President McDowell, Vice President Smith, Secretary Willis, Bill Cooper and Mr. and Mrs. John Anderson.

Mrs. Crump then introduced Ann Torgeson, member of the Junior Class who gave a four minute talk as part of her Minute Man Project. The title of Ann's speech was "What Universal Military Training Means To Rural Youth". Mrs. Crump then explained that in order for Ann to qualify this talk in her project she had to answer at least three questions from the audience in regard to her subject material. Ann more than qualified as she answered six questions very adequately.

The suggestion was made that, inasmuch as the length of this meeting had denied any time for group recreation, we hold a square dance at the hall the next Wednesday night, November 20. After some discussion a vote was taken and the motion carrying, a committee was
appointed to make the arrangements.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned and lunch was served.

Mary Willie, Secretary-Treasurer

It must be admitted that the type of meeting described above is not common to all locals. Farmers Union people realize very well that in too many locals the meetings are dull and uninteresting, poorly planned and poorly conducted. The meeting described would appear to be that of a local which has good organization and a number of people familiar with Farmers Union philosophy and practice.

Even so the question might be asked, "Of what educational value was this meeting to these people?" Upon inspection of the minutes of that meeting, no organized education as such, is apparent; at least the type of education that school people are acquainted with. However a type of education was present that was most adaptable for influencing the type of people involved.

First of all, Union people realized that busy farmers cannot be reached by conventional educational methods. Secondly, this is a volunteer organization and if the program is not interesting and varied and suited to the needs of the people, they will not attend meetings or support the organization. Also, the peculiar characteristics of the American farmer must be taken into consideration. He has always been an independent person unused to organizing or co-operating with others, and suspicious of any attempts
to impose outside philosophies upon him. For any education program to be successful, therefore, it must come from the soil, be intimately concerned with the life of the farmer, and be above and beyond any formal, textbook type of program. With these ideas in mind a second inspection of the local meeting that was just described might raise the thought that expressed or inferred therein are a number of ideas that have had no general acceptance among farmers in the past; the suggestions

1. That he should have an organization to represent him beyond his own fence line

2. That a farmer should go to a meeting to improve his mind

3. That he should help to support lobbying representatives in Washington and in his state capital

4. That he should go out and get his neighbors to join a farm organization

5. That he should join with others in owning and managing a business enterprise for his own survival

6. That he should attend a school to increase his understanding of economics and events

7. That he should demand good legislation from the people he elects to office and complain when this is not done

8. That, like the products of his physical labor, those of his mental labor can be exported to enrich the
lives of many people

9. That a farmer can receive from a program many times that which he contributes to it

10. That deficiencies of public school programs in the areas of political science, economics, sociology, and philosophy can be rectified in an out-of-school program for children
CHAPTER VI

EDUCATION AT OTHER MEETINGS

In addition to the monthly local meeting, Union people attend the following educational meetings during the year:

Every month -- County convention and get-togethers

January -- State School for local and county officers and interested members (1 week), Great Falls

March -- National Farmers Union Conference or Convention (5 days), Denver, Colorado
Stockholders meeting of Farmers Union Central Exchange, (3 days), St. Paul, Minnesota

June -- State Council for local and county officers, Fort Assiniboine, (2 days)
Havre, Montana
Leaders' Workshop for local and county directors of education, Fort Assiniboine (3 days), Havre

July & August -- County Farmers Union picnics

October -- State Convention, (5 days)
Great Falls, Montana

November -- County or district schools (1 day)

December -- Stockholders meeting of Farmers Union Grain Terminal Association, (3 days), St. Paul, Minnesota

I. COUNTY MEETINGS

The next highest order of general educational
activity beyond the local level is available to Farmers Union members at meetings of their county unions. Every three months this meeting is called a Quarterly Convention and it is here that official business of the county union is conducted. As has been mentioned previously, the various locals are represented in this meeting by elected delegates according to the membership strength of each local. Non-delegates are encouraged to participate also and have all the privileges of their delegates except in voting. For the other two months of each quarter the meeting is called a County Get-Together; and the programs are confined to non-official functions such as discussions, outside speakers, planning and group recreation.

The county convention functions in the same manner as the locals. It co-ordinates the activities and programs of its member locals and gives added weight to various local recommendations intended for the state and national governments. The convention might take into consideration such things as the local road situation, financing for public schools, Production Marketing Association committees, Union membership drives, foreign policy and farm policy recommendations, and many others. At the end of the year the county conventions will have considered many or most of the same subjects that are discussed in state and national Union conventions, and which may become parts of the official program and policy.
II. STATE SCHOOL FOR OFFICERS

In January of each year the Montana Farmers Union conducts a week's school in Great Falls for officers and members of its locals and counties.

The school has a dual purpose: that of familiarizing Union people with the duties of the various Farmers Union officers, and that of improving the members' understanding of the organization's program and its relation to local and national affairs.

The school is held in the state office building, where all necessary services except sleeping accommodations are provided for out-of-town members attending Union functions. The organization wanted to include dormitories in the building but lack of finances made it necessary to put off such plans for a while. The school runs continuously from eight o'clock in the morning until ten o'clock at night with fifteen minute recess periods between the hour long classes.

During the 1962 school, classes in the following subjects were conducted:

Duties of County Officers
Farm Price Support
Universal Military Training
Family Farm Discussion
Resource Development in Use
Public Education
National Health Plan
Co-operative
  philosophy
  livestock marketing
  grain marketing
  insurance
  farm supply purchasing

Officers' Workshop
Taxation
Civil Rights
Political Action
Economics
Federal Aid to Education
Planning for Montana's Health
Demonstration Teaching of county planning meeting
county meeting
stockholders meeting
recreation meeting
Instructors for these classes, in addition to staff members of the Farmers Union, included Mrs. Anna Hedgeman, Sociologist from the Federal Security Agency, Washington, D. C., Drs. Carl Kraenzel and Nick Hellburn, of Montana State College, Colonel Jerome Locke, of Montana MVA Association, and Dr. John Swackhamer of Montana State University.

III. NATIONAL CONVENTION OR CONFERENCE

General policy and program of the National Farmers Union is established every even numbered year by delegates from all state and territorial Unions, meeting as a national Convention. In the odd numbered years the same delegate organization meets as a national Conference, whose function is mainly a review of Farmers Union progress during the previous year, and recommendations to the national board for conduct of the national Union during the ensuing year. The function of this Conference, therefore, is the same as that of County Get-Togethers — advisory and educational only.

The educational functions of the Conferences consists of such things as:

Talks by leaders in their fields on such subjects as Rural Electrification Administration, Universal Military Training, the Brannan Plan, and Farmers Union policy
Panel Reports by the State Presidents on the affairs of their Unions
Workshops in social legislation, foreign policy and farm policy
Report by National Director of Education on the work of her department
Demonstrations of planning a local meeting
Workshop Meetings of the State Directors of Education to discuss study units, camp programs, and awards
Stockholders Meetings of the various co-operative insurances
Tours of National Farmers Union installations.

Inasmuch as the National Conventions are devoted
almost exclusively to the election of officers and the
adoption of a program, there is very little time for the
inclusion of the educational functions that are a part of
the Conferences, except for reports by the National officers
and ceremonies conducted by the Junior delegates and Di-
rectors of Education. It should be understood, of course,
that there is much of educational value to the debate and
discussion that are attendant upon the adoption of the
various items that make up the eventual policy and program
for the ensuing two years.

IV. CO-OPERATIVE STOCKHOLDERS MEETING

Each of the two largest regional co-operatives
affiliated with the Farmers Union, the Farmers Union
Central Exchange, and the Farmers Union Grain Terminal
Association, holds a meeting for its stockholders each year
in St. Paul. Because the two meetings are so identical in
character, it is felt that a description of one of them
will be sufficient here to show the educational nature of
both. Because they are stockholders meetings, their main
purposes are to elect officers, and ascertain the financial
conditions of the companies. There are, however, ac-
tivities of a more general educative nature.

For instance, at the Grain Terminal meeting in 1950
the delegates were addressed by Luther W. Youngdahl,
V. SUMMER CONFERENCES

During the week preceding Junior camp at Fort Assiniboine there are two education meetings held at the camp for adults. Two days are devoted to the Officers Council and three days to the Leaders' Workshop. The former

1Schedule from correspondence with Education Department, Montana Farmers Union, July, 1952.
is a review and expansion of the program of the State School held in January, so materials and techniques are much the same. The state office staff conducts discussions on such matters as the membership drive, local officers responsibilities, the importance of leadership, co-operatives, farm program, and political action.2

Just as public school teachers have their summer schools at college so do the Farmers Union teachers have theirs. Three days' camp is held for local and county directors of education and class teachers in a Leaders' Workshop. The State Director of Education and staff members lead a series of class discussions designed to help in the education of the young people.

During the 1952 Workshop classes were held in the following subjects, Recreation Day, Teaching Your Juniors, Leadership Problems, Teaching Reserve Classes, Family Camp, County Camp, Public Health, National Policy and Program, and Public Schools.3

VI. STATE CONVENTION

As in the case of some of the other Farmers Union meetings already reported, the state convention is concerned primarily with business affairs such as adoption of policy and program, election of officers, and addresses by prominent Farmers Union leaders, including National President

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2Ibid.
3Ibid.
James G. Patton, State President D. W. Chapman, and the general managers of the regional co-operative associations. This all has educational value, of course, especially to new people in the organization or others who have never been to a convention. However, there is an afternoon and evening during the convention given over to educational activities.

Included in the program might be special presentations by the young people such as folk dance demonstrations, Minute Man talks, reports on camps, skits, plays and musical numbers. County and local Directors of Education usually give a panel report of their activities and special ceremonies are conducted honoring the young people who have done outstanding work. During this part of the 1951 convention a report on her research into the history of the Montana Farmers Union, was given by Mrs. Mildred K. Stoltz, former State Director of Education. In addition, Mrs. Lulu Evason, Director of Education, North Dakota Farmers Union reported on her recent visit to the new State of Israel. Her main thesis was the problems encountered in the building of a new democracy.4

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4Printed program of the 36th annual convention of Montana Farmers Union, Civic Center Arena, Great Falls, Montana, October 31 -- November 3, 1951.
CHAPTER VIII

EDUCATION FOR YOUTH

Junior Aims

To Build:
1. A better world, by building better citizens--ourselves.
2. Tolerance and understanding in ourselves and justice to all.
3. An understanding of the problems of agriculture which we must face as we grow older.
4. A strong militant organization which will help us to solve these problems.
5. Co-operatives, that the wealth of the farms may not be centralized in the hands of a few.
6. Economic democracy, that we may safeguard political democracy.
7. Love of our fellow man, whatever his race, creed or color.
8. A warless world.¹

History and Philosophy. For many years after its birth, the Farmers Union was concerned solely with matters that concerned adults. It was not until 1930 that any organized thought was given to the idea of providing special education for the younger members of the farm family. It was in that year that National Junior work began with the appointment of a Committee on Junior Work by National President G. E. Huff.² There were youth programs in operation in some locals scattered around the country before

¹Edwards, Gladys Talbott, This Is The Farmers Union, Editor, Frederic, Wisconsin, 1951, p. 97.
²Edwards, Gladys Talbott, Farmers Union Triangle, Jamestown, North Dakota, 1941, p. 65.
this time and several states had the beginnings of a co-
ordinated program, but with the creation of this committee 
the idea of an organization-wide education program for 
youth was spread out to all parts of the Union.

As a long time education director for Montana has 
said,

The Farmers Union is a young organization, 
started September, 1902. It has learned many 
lessons in that short time. Chief lesson it 
learned was that too much time, money and man 
power is used "organizing" each generation 
into the Farmers Union. When the "head" of a 
family paid his dues, it did not always mean 
that the "entire" family took part in all of 
the activities of the Union, but through 
 strenuous efforts, and the educational program 
of the Farmers Union, members learned that the 
entire family is included when dues are paid 
and entire families have the opportunity of 
learning and growing through and with their 
organization.

But all of us know younger members of 
the family are not interested in, nor capable 
of understanding the same matters as the older 
members. Young people were "taken" to the 
Farmers Union Locals so the parents could go. 
They were either "kept quiet" on seats much 
too big for them, or they fell asleep on 
bunches. Whatever was done with or for the 
children was incidental to the local meeting. 
But that picture is changed now. Young people-- 
Reserves ages 8 to 14--are placed in a "Reserve 
Class" during the local meeting and in their 
own language and terms they learn about their 
organization, the Farmers Union. Juniors--ages 
14 to 21--also have their classes...3

This reference and others indicate that one reason 
for the beginning of youth education was the feeling of

3Stoltz, Mildred Kl, To Fit Your Needs, Great Falls, 
Montana, 1950.
necessity to build and carry on the organization for succeeding generations. Another reason was revealed in the report by the chairman of the first Education Committee after their first meeting. This report states,

Education there must be, before co-operation is possible. Not the education offered by high schools and colleges, based on a profit system, but that form of education which will arouse the interest of our young people in those subjects which have to do with human relationships.

Education in co-operation, of course, first and all the time, but also, since we live in an ever changing world, and are subject to the laws of our land, and since our lives are at all times affected by the existing social and economic conditions, education in the problems that confront humanity is essential.4

Mrs. Gladys Edwards, present National Director of Education, stated in one of her reports that, "There is a recognition on the part of the people in formal education of the need of something besides pamphlets from the packing industry or the public service companies (so-called) which are actually the private power institutions."5

This belief, that public school education is inadequate, has been more implied and taken for granted than stated, since that first Committee meeting, and is one of the major themes around which Farmers Union educational policy has been formulated.

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4Edwards, Farmers Union Triangle, op. cit., p. 66.

5National Union Farmer, Volume 30, No. 5, June, 1952
In the first few months of operation of the National Education Committee, a three-part program was agreed upon by the members from the various states. First, there was to be a National Project, an essay contest upon which all states could unite. It was to begin in the Locals and continue up through the county and state organization, through elimination, to the National convention. Secondly, the topic for the essay contest was to be based upon a social problem which would be of equal interest to all farm people, not a controversial political subject. Lastly, the status of Junior members was established, the ages being 16 to 21 years. These three principles were the basis of the education program until 1936 when a new type of program de-emphasizing competition was established. Later, the minimum age of Juniors was reduced to 14 and a new classification of children, between the ages of 8 and 14 called Junior Reserves, was decided upon. In 1951, this minimum age limit was dropped to include children of 6 years.

In the report of the Education Committee to the National convention of 1931 were established some philosophies and practices for local observance in addition to the essay project that had been recommended the year before. This report stated,

In these locals where there are Junior organizations, four distinct lines of work are recognized--practice in parliamentary usage, entertainment, programs of music, readings, etc., recreation, learning to play together and then, most important--serious study, outlined in the educational programs. By
means of all this playing, working and studying together, we cherish the hope that our young people of the Farmers Union, together with the young people of other nations, will get the idea that the inhabitants of the world can be lifted out of their miseries and that it is their job.\(^6\)

Today the youth education program of the Union consists basically of regular classwork based on one of the yearly study units, special projects beyond the classwork, awards for completion and excellence of work, special study at summer camps, recreation, and handicraft. It must be emphasized that most of the activities of young people and adults alike, are of an educational nature, but the official and formal education program is as outlined above.

**The Junior Program.** Every year at a National meeting of the State Directors of Education, in collaboration with the National Department of Education, a study topic is chosen for the following year's Junior work. The National Department of Education then causes a text book to be written, generally by some well known person in the field selected. Some of the study units of the past few years have been:

- **FAITH, HOPE and PARITY,** a study of the farmer's place in our economic system.
- **THE LAST FRONTIER,** building the Farmers Union.
- **SECOND HUNDRED YEARS OF CO-OPERATION,** a story of co-operatives.

\(^6\)Edwards, Farmers Union Triangle, *op. cit.* , p. 69.
CITIZEN FARMER, farm family and government.

UNITED WE STAND, the Farmers Union - a People's Movement.

LIVING BY THE WAY, a study of recreation.

THE FARMER HARVESTS HIS VOTE, the farmer and legislative action.

THIS IS THE FARMERS UNION, what the Farmers Union means to its members.

According to a recent news article,

The study unit for Juniors in 1953, which will also be the Farmers Union "Book of the Year," will be on the topic, "Farming Around the World."

The book is being written by Harold Knight, well known F.U. writer and former editor of the North Dakota Union Farmer. It will be of interest to adults as well as young people.

Farmers comprise about three-fourths of the world's population. The way they farm, the way they live, the thoughts they have of other peoples and other lands, are large factors in the problem of building world peace. It is important that farmers and farm young people in the U. S. have a better understanding of how farmers in other countries live and the problems they face. That is what the 1953 study unit will be about.7

Junior class meetings are held twice a month and almost always held at some time other than the local meeting, usually at the home of one of the members. These young people take an active role in the local, so do not wish to be excluded from the meeting. Getting the class members together if they live in town, is not usually a

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7National Union Farmer, Volume 50-No. 5, June, 1952, Denver, Colorado
very difficult thing except for conflicts with the many activities that normal high school students participate in; but, in rural communities especially in winter, many obstacles may have to be overcome. The class meetings are under the guidance of the local Director of Education who may act as advisor or class teacher.

Before the class work begins, the young people conduct a business meeting in the same manner as the local meeting is conducted. They change officers frequently so that all might have a chance to have experience in parliamentary procedures and sharing the work. They make plans for special affairs, trips and parties; they arrange for special presentations before the local and county meetings; and they carry on correspondence with their state and national legislators and the President.

After the business meeting the class work begins. Standard procedure is for the members to read one or two chapters of the study unit aloud, each person taking his turn reading a paragraph. This is followed by a general discussion of the textual material, with defining of words and terms, expansion of ideas, presenting of opinions, conclusion and summary. After this is done, the workbook provided with the text is generally filled out, consisting of answering questions on material in the text. Sample questions from the workbook on the unit, "This Is The Farmers Union" are: "Where and when was the Farmers Union organized?" "What important changes were made in the
Constitution in 1934?"; "List the six National Presidents and write a short statement about each"; "Why is the local so important in the structure of the Farmers Union?"; "What are some of the problems in your community that your local might work on?"; "Give some examples of important things accomplished by some of the State units"; "What are the duties of the Director of Education or the Junior Leader in the State?" and "What is the purpose of the Leadership Conference?" 8

Following the class work, some time will be spent on some of the following: folk dancing, handicraft, movies, sports, and lunch. The movies might be recreational or educational or something pertaining to the unit that was studied. The movies are obtained either from the film library of the Farmers Union state office or from the State Department of Education in Helena.

Juniors are eligible for yearly awards from the state organization upon completion of the following requirements.

1. Must complete the annual study topic... Whether young people are just starting Junior work in the Farmers Union, or whether they have been studying Farmers Union Junior work for a number of years, all will participate in the study of the same annual unit.

2. Must attend at least four Farmers

8Edwards, workbook, This Is The Farmers Union, p. 614.
Union meetings, (local, county, co-op, camp, convention, school, etc.)...

Choice of Following
3. Complete the workbook and at least two of the activities listed below,

or

Complete at least four of the activities listed below.

Activities related to Farmers Union work
1. Assist with recreation at Farmers Union meeting.
2. Help organize a recreation group.
3. Act as song leader at Farmers Union meeting.
4. Collect three Farmers Union dues.
5. Conduct campaign to get members to local meeting.
6. Conduct campaign to get Juniors to class meeting.
7. Publicity work--display, fair booth, meeting report, column, feature story, mimeo-magazine, poster, bulletin board, radio program.
8. Program number at Farmers Union meeting.
9. Participation in panel discussion or other discussion group.
10. Committee work.
11. Demonstration of Junior work--folk dances, class demonstration, etc.
12. Conduct a fund raiser.
13. Preparation of chart, graph or map.
14. Scrapbook on study unit or on social problems.
15. Maintain a library of books and pamphlets.
16. Teach a Junior Reserve class.
17. Book review--oral or written.
18. Introduce a speaker.
19. Serve as local or county Farmers Union officer.
20. Participate in special events such as marketing day, etc.
21. Help with play presented before Farmers Union group.
22. Help organize a co-operative.
23. Circulate petition (dealing with Farmers Union work).
24. Conduct a survey.
25. Assist at camp.
26. Report on camp, or other activity, to local.
27. Handicraft--different kinds of craft work.
28. Original projects—such as weed books, bird houses, bird quilts, posting bird refuges, weed eradication project, collecting and mounting insects, etc.  

Those young people who are unable to attend Farmers Union meetings can complete their yearly study work by correspondence by studying the annual study topic and writing a review thereof, completing the work book, and participating in two of the activities listed above.

The state award for the completion of the first year of work is a basic Farmers Union membership pin with an attached gold chain and triangular gold pin on which is the word, "Junior" and the numeral "1". For completing each succeeding year of Junior work the membership pin remains the same, but the number on the triangle attachment is changed to denote the number of years work completed. At the completion of five years of work, the young people are presented at the state convention, in a special ceremony, with the Torchbearer award pin. When financially able to do so, the state organization may send these Torchbearers to the National convention for presentation of the award.

In addition to these state awards, the National Farmers Union presents to each Junior who has completed his first year's work, a $2,500.00 life insurance policy with the premium paid for the first year. For each year

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thereafter that the young person completes the required work, two-fifths of the premium will be paid by the National Farmers Union, while the other three-fifths must be paid by the Junior.

For Juniors who wish to go beyond the classwork already described, the Farmers Union education program includes special projects involving specialized work. The Minute Man Project is designed primarily to help young people develop their speaking ability, but also provides training in the fields of research, thinking while standing, and learning the subject under discussion. Within this project there are nine speeches which must be made by the applicant before Farmers Union or other groups. A set of rules is provided by which certain appointed judges evaluate and grade the speech based upon subject, delivery, poise, and knowledge of the subject. The award for the completion of this project is a leather billfold presented by the state organization.10

The second area of special work, called the Writers' Project, is open to both Junior and adult members of the family. It has a two-fold purpose, that of increasing writing ability and that of publicizing the Farmers Union. The work consists of the submission of published writings of the applicant in any of the following forms; news report,

feature story, editorial, reviews, verse, drama, writing a column, editing a column, writing or editing a radio script, letters to the editor, short stories, and publishing a mimeograph-magazine. Judges for evaluating the material submitted are appointed by the state organization and are usually newspaper editors, teachers or professors. Criteria by which the material is judged are: originality, publication place of the item, and the value of the subject treated. A state award of a magazine subscription or $3.00 worth of books is presented for acceptable work in each of the forms of writing. A national award pin is presented for acceptable work in not less than twelve pieces of writing representing at least three of the writing forms.11

A third special project, called Farm Family Living, is also designed for participation by the family. Its purpose is to show the beauty and culture of rural life as experienced by a co-operative living family. It is composed of six divisions, one of which an individual can complete for an award, and three of which a family must complete to receive the family award.

Division one is called, "Fun With a Camera". The contestants must submit to the state office, mounted photographs depicting Rural Scenes, Family at work and at play, Co-operative action, and Community fun. If any pictures

11Farmers Union Writers' Project Bulletin, Department of Education, National Farmers Union, Denver, Colorado, 1950
are not acceptable, others may be submitted as substitutes.

Division two is "Fun with Pen, Pencil and Brush". One entry of sketching, painting, design or pastel work must be submitted, grouped in the same categories as in division one.

Division three is "Fun With Creative Writing". Word pictures in either verse, dialogue, short feature articles, stories or vignettes, must be submitted, based on each of the same categories as in Division one.

Division four is called, "Fun With Craft". Samples of two of the following kinds of handicraft must be submitted, mounted suitable for display: Native craft, Leatherwork, Block printing, Carving, Modeling, Spatterwork, Basketry, Rugs and Needle art, Metal craft, Flower arrangement, Lustra-lace work.

Division five is "Fun With Hobbies". Samples of any acceptable hobby can be submitted with suitable mounting. However, Union literature lists a few suggestions, such as collections of stamps, stones, and models, airplane model construction, scrapbooks, and nature studies in the identification of birds, insects, weeds, and grasses.

Division six is "Fun With Music". Within this division are such activities as a family choral group, a family orchestra, song and music composition, music scrapbooks, instrument making, and individual singing or playing. Satisfactory completion of one of the above will qualify
one for an award in this division.12

The Junior Reserve Program. For children of elementary school age, six to fourteen years, the Farmers Union has an educational program, geared to each age level. Study units are determined at the National Education Conference each year in the same manner as the units for Junior work. However, there have been so many units prepared in the last ten or twelve years, including revisions, that the local Director of Education has quite a wide choice of the unit that her Junior Reserve class can study. Some of these are written for the primary and pre-school age children, others are more advanced in subject matter to appeal to the intermediate and Junior High age group.

The work of the youngest children consists of the cutting and pasting of pictures around suggested themes, class discussion about simple facts of Farmers Union activities, crayon coloring of pictures in the text, drawing of simple pictures, singing and memorization of songs, skits and poems. Inasmuch as the program for the six and seven year olds was very recently established, there has been no printed text book or reference material available at this level, so most of the states including Montana, are using a mimeographed booklet called "Farmers Union Fun" made up by the North Dakota Farmers Union. This booklet

leaves much to be desired in the matters of arrangement, printing and wording, but it is used only on an emergency basis until suitable primary grade material is prepared. Some of the study units for the older Reserves have been:

WORKING TOGETHER, a story of co-operation between people in the early history of our country.

BIRDS ARE GOOD NEIGHBORS, a study of bird life and conservation.

THE TIME HAS COME, a study of natural science in relation to earth, sun, moon, planets, heat, sound, and electricity.

OVER ALL THE LAND, an historical study of natural resources and conservation.

THE LIVE OAK TREE, a simplified history of the Farmers Union.

PEOPLE'S OF THE EARTH, a racial study.

YOU AND DEMOCRACY, a description of life in a democracy.

These text books are all well printed and illustrated and range in price from 15¢ to $2.00.

However, in the opinion of one in the trade who has examined five of the texts and analyzed them for technical arrangement,13 these texts were poorly suited to the needs

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13Mr. C. E. Lord, Superintendent, University Press, Montana State University.
of children of elementary school age. One text for primary children had three sizes of type, eighteen, fourteen and ten, all set solid when there should have been from two to four point leading. In the case of the largest type, it was large enough for primary age eyes but because of the absence of inter-linear spacing and because of the overly long lines of type, the entire effect would be to confuse the reader. The other four texts were more poorly constructed in that ten point type was used with little or no leading and the lines of type were longer in comparison to the size of type than in the first text examined. The general impression given was that of overcrowding, resulting from a desire for economy.

The theory behind the opinions stated is supported by several studies, reported in a text book in use at Montana State University\textsuperscript{14} that have recommended size of type and spacing for children's books. One study made the following recommendations:

- 24-point type for children under 7 years of age
- 18-point type for children 7 to 9 years of age
- 12-point type for children 9 to 12 years of age
- 11-point type for children 9 to 12 years of age
- 10-point type for teen agers and adults

In addition, the study recommended that lines should be short;

between 2.36 and 3.15 inches with none over three and a half inches. 15

The second study, a later and more thorough one, reported that in tests of speed and comprehension of reading for second grade children the ideal combination seemed to be twelve point type with four point leading and lines three and a half inches long. 16

Apparently there is no general agreement yet on specific sizes of type for each age level, but modern educational practice would seem to place the optimum sizes within the limits established by these two studies.

Some of the study units are combined with the workbook and others have free workbooks furnished. There are from twelve to fifteen recommended references available on each of these units from the state office for a nominal sum. Some of the study units and many of the references have become quite popular with rural school teachers for use in conjunction with their school program.

Junior Reserve meetings are held in separate rooms during the local meeting, if possible; if not, they are held in the members' homes. The conduct of their meetings


is similar to that of the older Juniors except that more
time is devoted to handicraft and recreation, and they do
not have the formal organization and parliamentary practice
of the older group. A source of much enjoyment for the
adult members is the program that is presented by these
young folks at the local meeting, of skits, readings,
songs, and stunts.

Local and county Directors of Education and class
teachers deserve some special mention. Their services are
on a voluntary, unpaid basis although they receive satis-
faction and enjoyment and an award pin from the state
organization for their work. Most of them are busy farm
mothers and some of them are Junior members of high school
or post-high school age. The organization believes that
almost anyone sixteen to one hundred and six, man or woman,
can be a good class teacher or director, but it asks for
the following qualifications: a good sense of humor; a
small house "chock-full" of patience, understanding and
interest may be "standard" equipment - or acquired; a
heart big enough to hold love for the youth with whom one
works, and determination to tackle the job to the best of
one's ability.  

17Stoltz, Mildred K., Who Can Be a Director of Edu-
cation?, Department of Education, Montana Farmers Union,
Great Falls, Montana, 1952.
CHAPTER VIII

Education at Summer Camps

Every summer the Farmers Union conducts camps for its Juniors and Junior Reserves on both a county and state level, and a National camp is held for the Juniors. According to the camp manual in use by the Montana Farmers Union, "Our purpose in holding camps is to give to young people the opportunity of receiving additional education and training not offered through the regular medium at hand." Generally speaking, camp consists of informal education, co-operative group living, and recreation.

County Camps. Almost every county Farmers Union in Montana, either conducts a camp for its young people or collaborates with one or two other counties in a joint camp. Camps are of three and four day duration and may be held in a variety of locations. One county in the eastern part of Montana uses the facilities of the county fair grounds; other counties use church and civic group camp sites. Cascade county has used the Lion's camp at Riceville for a number of years while Pondera county, which owns a number of tents, stoves and other equipment sets up its own camp site in Glacier Park. The children and equipment

1Stoltz, Mildred K., All Roads Lead To Camp, Department of Education, Montana Farmers Union, Great Falls, Montana, 1944, p. 5.
are transported in cars and trucks by various members of the locals. Ordinarily these camps will be under the direction of the county Director of Education with the help of several local Directors who act as class teachers and counselors. There might be several cooks on a paid or voluntary basis, and a handiman, either one of the fathers or an older boy. The children will live in groups of five or six in tents or cabins under the immediate supervision of a Dean of Boys and Dean of Girls. These people are older Juniors, generally of post high school age, who can handle responsibility and act as leaders.

The campers govern themselves under the supervision of the county Director, with a Student Governing Board, elected from the group. The whole group decides upon rules and regulations that are to govern the camp, and any infringement of these rules is handled by the Governing Board. By group action the campers plan their own trips, parties, camp fire outings, sports and other extra curricula activities. They invariably set up a co-operative which handles refreshments and small stores, all profits from which are either allocated to some worthwhile purpose or distributed back to the stockholders. This enterprise is conducted according to established co-operative business practices on the same basis as the larger co-operatives in their communities.

Their classes include study of the Farmers Union, the Co-operative movement, Public Speaking, and Parliamentary
Procedure. Each age group, Primary, Intermediate, and Junior High, study these topics separately, using as guides certain outlines and references prepared by the state educational staff.

For the primary age group, the class procedure consists of stories, songs, poems, and the use of a flannel graph. The older groups use round table discussion and social-drama techniques in their study of the topics. The mornings and the first hour after lunch are devoted to the class work leaving the rest of the afternoon for organized handicraft and sports.

In their handicraft classes, the children are taught basic techniques of working with tools and materials and then are encouraged to work on their own on a project of their choice. They make such things as scrapbook covers, plaques, jewelry, belts, and Christmas tree decorations. The use of local material rather than foreign or commercial is stressed in these programs, not only for economy but to build resourcefulness in finding and using native Montana materials. In common usage are such things as pine cones, rocks, wood, seeds and grasses, paper maché, tin cans, leather, beads, plaster of Paris, and copper.

In the evenings, the campers put on a short entertainment program of plays, skits, group singing and volunteer numbers, followed by several hours of folk and square dancing.

The state organization aids the county camp program
in a number of ways, chiefly by furnishing fieldworkers, when needed to assist the local people with their camp, and by furnishing a camp manual which outlines all the material and programs necessary for a successful camp, from the number of can openers needed in the kitchen to the type of philosophy used in the class work.

State Junior Camp. During the month of June, the state Farmers Union conducts a week's camp for the Juniors of the state on the site of the old army camp at Fort Assiniboine, near Havre. The property is owned by the state of Montana and is managed by the nearby State Agriculture Experiment Station. Available for use are a number of barracks buildings which have been converted into dormitories, class rooms, meeting halls, dining room, a central kitchen, and recreation hall. The facilities will handle about one hundred campers at a time, besides staff members, so the number of consecutive camps vary from one to four, depending on the number of young people who wish to attend.

In order to attend this camp, the Junior must have completed three chapters of the year's study unit, attended two Farmers Union meetings that year, must write a letter to the state office about the work they are doing in the Farmers Union, must be a current paid-up member of the Farmers Union, and must be fourteen years of age or have
completed one year of high school.2

The State Director of Education plans and manages the camp, but as in the case of county camps, the young people govern themselves through an elected Governing Board according to rules they, themselves have established. This system has proved to be very satisfactory in producing a maximum of co-operation and a minimum of discipline problems. Class room work at these camps is on a lecture-discussion basis using teachers from the Farmers Union and other institutions, such as the Montana State University, Montana State College, University of Minnesota, University of Colorado, the office of the Rural Electrification Administrator, the State of Israel and others. Ordinarily, the college people use the lecture method of presentation, while the Farmers Union teachers conduct their classes on a question and answer and class discussion basis.

Rather typical of camp curricula is the following subject offerings and instructors at the 1952 camp:

OUR RESPONSIBILITY IN POLITICAL ACTION, by Ralph Cook, a Farmers Union Fieldworker and State Legislator;
CO-OPERATIVES, by Leonard Kenfield, Public Relations Director and Editor of the state Farmers Union newspaper;
OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO THE FARMERS UNION, by members of the State Education Committee;
HOW DO YOU SPEAK?, a study of the Minute Man Project for Juniors, by members of the staff;
HANDICRAFT, by a County Director of Education;
USE OF LEISURE TIME, by member of the staff;

CONSERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES, by D. W. Chapman, President of Montana Farmers Union;
ANALYSIS OF PROPAGANDA, by a member of Montana Farmers Union executive board;
CONSERVATION OF HUMAN RESOURCES, by N. J. Dougherty, Secretary-Treasurer of Montana Farmers Union;
HOW DO YOU WRITE?, a study of the Writers Project for Juniors, by Leonard Kenfield;
ECONOMICS, by John Swackhamer, Professor of Economics, Montana State University;
BROTHERHOOD, a racial study, by Alma Jacobs, Librarian, Great Falls Public Library;
PHOTOGRAPHY AND FARM FAMILY LIVING, by member of Montana Farmers Union executive board;
FARM FAMILY LIVING, by Frances Gallagher, a teacher in the Cut Bank school system.

Other activities at this camp included governing Board meetings, committee work, sports, planned evening programs, educational films, modern, folk and square dancing, and other forms of recreation.3

All-States Camp. The National Farmers Union sponsors a camp for Juniors each summer, for the past five years held at Red Rocks Camp, near Denver, Colorado. Young people and leaders from approximately twenty states and several foreign countries gather for almost two weeks of recreation and discussions. As stated in a recent issue of the state Union paper, the qualifications for Juniors who plan to attend the All-States Camp are as follows: they must have attended one year of state Junior camp; they must be 16 years of age or older; they must have a doctor's certificate of good health; and they must be able to pay their own way. The state organizations usually provide the

---From correspondence with Department of Education, Montana Farmers Union, July 14, 1952.
transportation for their respective young people attending the All-States Camp.4

This camp is conducted in the same manner as the state camp except on a larger scale. It provides expanded horizons for young people in that they meet representatives of other areas, races, and nationalities and that the educational program is conducted on a generally higher plane than those in extant at most state camps.

Mrs. Gladys Talbott Edwards, National Director of Education, is in charge of the camp, assisted by the National President and part of his Executive Board, and staff members. During the 1952 camp, Dr. Alisa Eskol, good-will ambassador from Israel and Dr. Arthur Katona of Colorado A. and M., specialist in socio-drama and recreation, will be guest speakers as well as others outstanding in their fields.5

Encampment for Citizenship. At a higher level than All-States Camp there is a national camp called the Encampment for Citizenship that Union young people attend. Although not a Farmers Union project, the organization has recognized its worth and recommended it to the various state Unions. The Encampment is sponsored by the American Ethical Union and held at the Fieldston School in New York City, a philanthropic effort by prominent people of means,

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4Editorial in Montana Farmers Union News, February 27, 1952

5News item in National Union Farmer, June, 1952
and various organizations such as labor unions, church groups and fraternal lodges.

Farmers Union comment on the project is that

...while at the Encampment they study cultural, social, and economic problems. They gather information on these subjects first hand when they make fieldtrips in New York through the stock market, labor groups, settlement houses, United Nations, slums, etc. They meet to plan how they can build a truer democracy and how they can become good citizens of that democracy. 6

Twenty-five Montanans have participated in the program to date, and in 1952 five more will attend. The education departments determine who shall be eligible, and help to defray some of the expenses. The School itself helps likewise through a scholarship system.

6 Feature story in Montana Farmers Union News, June 25, 1952
CHAPTER IX

EDUCATIONAL AIDS

I. LITERATURE

One of the first tasks of the Farmers Union in implementing its youth education program was to find text books and reference material suitable for the study units that had been chosen. To the people who were given this responsibility, it was soon evident that text books agreeable with Farmers Union philosophy did not exist. For this reason, the Union began writing and publishing materials it needed in its education program. They did find, however, non-Union reference material which fitted in with the study units in use in the education program and the National Department of Education has made this available for use, along with its own products. At the present time, the Montana Farmers Union uses reference material mostly acquired from outside sources.

In addition to study unit text books, the National Education Department publishes and distributes manuals and handbooks for the use of Directors of Education, class teachers, and Union officials; reference material for adult reading and discussion groups; and a great deal of literature of a miscellaneous nature. In the two years since March of 1950, this department has sold or distributed free,
about twenty million pieces of Farmers Union informational material.¹

Like the National organization, the Education Department of the Montana Farmers Union sells or distributes free material which it has prepared or purchased. It furnishes to its local and county units and individual members, camp and leaders' manuals, information dealing with organizing and building a Farmers Union local or county unit, and materials for entertainment programs, recreation, handicraft and many others.

II. VISUAL AIDS

One of the things that the state Farmers Union has done to implement its educational program has been to provide a library of 16 millimeter movie films in the state office for the use of members over the state. Of the twenty five or so films in the library at the present time, most are purchased but a few have been produced by the Montana Farmers Union, portraying activities of the Union, both within the state and on the national scene. At least two of the library films are produced by the National Farmers Union on subjects of national interest. The state office has compiled a catalogue of films including those in its library and previewed pictures from the State Film Library at Helena, which are pertinent to subjects with

which Union people deal. Films in the catalogue deal with agriculture, co-operatives, education, far away places, Farmers Union, health, interracial relations, peace and war, river development, shorts and comedies, and others. The State organization has available four movie projectors and screens, a slide projector, a movie camera, a press camera, and a collection of strip films. In the work of the Education Department, state office personnel use such visual aids as flannel graphs, large turn-over charts, shadow graphs, portable black boards, posters, displays and models.

III. LIBRARY

In the state office at Great Falls, is a lending library of approximately twelve hundred books. A list of these books, including children's material graded in three-year steps, is furnished to all local officers and is available at almost all Union gatherings or upon request. The library contains books of all types; history, fiction, economics, political science, natural science, recreation, hobbies, biographies, and children's books. The state office has established a system of traveling libraries, in which it ships boxes of twenty books to its locals around the state. New books are purchased for the library with the rental fees and with regular Education Department funds or are donated by members.
IV. NEWS PUBLICATIONS

The Montana Farmers Union publishes a monthly four to eight page, tabloid size newspaper, the Montana Farmers Union News, printed by the Co-operative Publishing Company in Helena. Its editor compiles news items of Farmers Union activity within and without the state, and writes the editorials and news items. Columns are written by the state president and state secretary-treasurer, and two pages devoted exclusively to education matters are edited by the Director of Education. The paper is sent free to all members in Montana.

In addition to the newspaper, the Montana Farmers Union produces a bimonthly mimeographed magazine called The Pioneer for the use of Local and County Directors of Education in planning their educational work. It carries reprint articles from other sources, exchange of letters by the various educational directors, rules and programs and hints concerning various parts of the educational work, ideas on handicraft, recreation, stunts, poetry, stories and news items of interest to the people in educational work.

The National organization publishes a similar monthly newspaper, the National Union Farmer, in Denver, Colorado. It publishes items of national interest to Farmers Union people and acts as a clearing house for nation wide information. This paper is sent to all Farmers
Union members.

Another monthly newspaper distributed to the national membership, the Farmers Union Herald, is published by the two largest regional co-operatives, the Farmers Union Central Exchange and the Farmers Union Grain Terminal Association. This paper emphasizes techniques in farm operations of special interest to stockholders in the two co-operatives but there are also sections of the paper devoted to legislation, economics, foreign policy, homemaking, and items of general news interest.

V. FIELDWORK

One of the established practices of the Farmers Union is the use of special fieldworkers. These traveling representatives organize new Farmers Union units, rejuvenate old ones, help to co-ordinate Farmers Union activities throughout an area by speaking at meetings, consulting with planning groups, helping with programs of a local nature, and teach classes at camps and schools. Of course, Union officials from all levels, local to national, act as fieldworkers at various times but those treated here are hired for the special purposes listed above. The Montana Farmers Union has had as many as five or six of these special fieldworkers at certain times in past years, but at present employs only two.

The National Farmers Union has a number of fieldworkers, some of whom spend most of their time organizing
new state and territorial Unions, while others help to set up and maintain state camps, schools, institutes and the like. According to Mrs. Gladys Edwards, National Director of Education,

Fieldworkers out of the National Department of Education alone have contacted, through camps, schools, conferences, conventions and institutes, in the past two years, about 30,000 people. These contacts were for the purpose of developing the Education work and the understanding of the Farmers Union program among the membership.  

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2Ibid.
CHAPTER X

SUMMARY

The subject of study for this paper has been a Montana farm organization, the Montana Farmers Union, with special attention given to its program of education.

The primary reason for the existence of the organization lies in the conditions which have beset agriculture during the last one hundred years. The voices of a number of "farm protest" movements were raised at various times over this period and have died away, generally after attaining some limited objective. However, even though the early instruments of farm policy reform achieved no lasting benefits for farmers, they created some traditions, formulated some objectives, and highlighted some object-lessons which made it possible for later farm movements to become permanent fixtures in our social and economic life.

The National Farmers Union, one of the "big three" of American agriculture, has had as its consistent purpose, the improvement of family-type farming in the United States.\footnote{A. Whitney Griswold, Farming and Democracy, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1943) pp. 190-203.} The Union has found from history that merely monetary betterment alone will not accomplish this purpose. Therefore, in addition to its establishment of
co-operatives, the Union has made of itself an educational institution dedicated to improving farmers' minds.

Education is provided through a graded school program for farm children: schools, discussion meetings, summer camps, and activity programs for young and old alike, and an Education Department that gives professional direction to all of these activities. Major subject-areas of concern to the Union are farm family living, economics, political science, self expression, and human relations.

Several questions beyond the scope of this paper have arisen during the process of writing:

1. Are Farmers Union children better educated than others?

2. If so, how could the public schools take advantage of any values in the Farmers Union program?

3. Are there fundamental schisms in the present American social order that will keep organizations like the Farmers Union in comparative isolation and prevent the program described from ever having any general acceptance?
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