

A SURVEY OF THE COOPERATIVE HOUSING PLAN AT THE  
AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL COLLEGE OF TEXAS

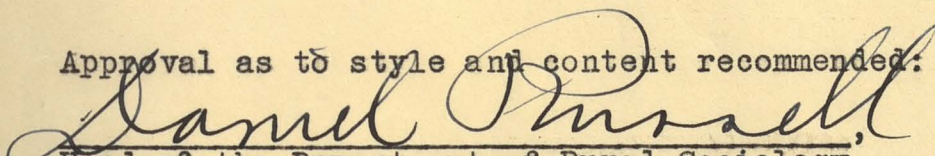
A Thesis

By

James Eads Miller

June 1936

Approval as to style and content recommended:

  
Samuel Russell

Head of the Department of Rural Sociology



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A SURVEY OF THE COOPERATIVE HOUSING PLAN AT THE  
AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL COLLEGE OF TEXAS

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of the Agricultural  
and Mechanical College of Texas

in

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of Master of Science

Major Subject: Rural Sociology

By

James Eads Miller

June 1936



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A SURVEY OF THE COOPERATIVE HOUSING  
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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to present data concerning the origin, development, present status, and probable future of the cooperative project housing plan now in existence at the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas.

The project house plan was organized to meet a student need among the lower salaried group and the farming class of people in Texas. This study shows that very few, if any, of the students could attend college at the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas if it were not for this cooperative plan.

The student cooperative housing plan is a movement that is rapidly gaining favor throughout the United States.<sup>1</sup>

Cooperative associations are in no way a new movement. The Rochdale principles of cooperation have been in operation more than ninety years.<sup>2</sup> Cooperation and self-help, and the possibilities of cooperative buying, receive special treatment in this study at the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas.

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<sup>1</sup>The Cooperative Venture, Vol. 1, No. 3, Seattle, Washington.

<sup>2</sup>Mears and Tobriner: Principles and Practices of Cooperative Marketing, pp. 14-15, 1926.



It is only in the past four years that student housing cooperatives have become of any significant importance. No doubt there have always been student cooperatives, but until recently they have been unorganized and have not amounted to more than a few scattered students in a widely scattered number of institutions. These cooperatives are now being rapidly organized and are making their presence felt in nearly every institution of higher learning.<sup>1</sup>

This study is based on two years personal observation of the movement at the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, and on material obtained through correspondence with student cooperatives in other institutions. Data were also collected from the forty-three cooperative project houses in operation during the school year 1935-1936. Questionnaires, personal interviews, records of the Registrar, and the account books of the cooperatives were used in the collection of these data.

Answers to the following questions were sought in this study:

1. How does the cooperative housing plan at the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas operate?

2. Does this plan make college training available to a type of student heretofore not reached by institutions of higher learning?

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<sup>1</sup> The Cooperative Venture, Vol. 1, No. 2, Seattle, Washington.



3. How does the scholastic record of students in the cooperative houses compare with the scholastic record of dormitory students and other day students?

4. What is the cost of obtaining an education under this plan?



## CHAPTER I

History and Present Status

The first cooperative student project house at the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas was established in the school year 1932-1933.



Figure 1. A Picture of Russell Hall, the First Cooperative Project House at A. & M.

Twelve students, all from Moody, Texas, banded themselves together, at the suggestion of one of the boy's parents, when they found that they could not continue their college training unless some way could be found to cut expenses.

Professor Daniel Russell, Head of Department of Rural Sociology, was called upon to advise and counsel this group. It was he who obtained permission from the College authorities for the students to carry out their enterprise. This cooperative project was watched very carefully and by the end of



the year the plan had proven itself feasible. Those watching it saw a means whereby untold numbers of boys with limited means, heretofore unable to attend college, could now take advantage of our institutions of higher learning.

Let it be said in all fairness that this type of student was not altogether disregarded before because various funds, jobs, and agencies were already operating to aid the boy of limited means, but these agencies could only reach a limited number. The cooperative project housing plan, however, bids fair to be the solution to a multitude of problems.

The twelve students who formed the nucleus of the present cooperative organizations, were encouraged to spend their spare time during the summer organizing individual projects of their own. The next school year, 1933-1934, there were ten cooperative project houses in operation with a membership of 119. The same principles of operation were applied to these houses as were used in the first cooperative project house. The experience gained from the first venture in 1932-1933 was also used. The map, Figure 2, shows the distribution of these projects for the year 1933-1934.

More experience was gained from contacts with these groups, and the students were again encouraged to go out and organize cooperative housing projects of their own. By this time, a few people out in the State were beginning to find out about the movement and were asking for information. At this point it was realized that some outside help would be needed in the organization of projects. The enterprise had grown so large that one person could not attend to the innumerable







details bound to arise in the organization of a number of people. A group of young boys, immature and inexperienced, but ambitious, are likely to need a great deal of advice. The County Agents, the Home Demonstration Agents, and the Vocational Agricultural Teachers were chosen as guiding sponsors, because by this time some of them had already taken an active part. It was realized that they were the most logical leaders in a movement of this sort. Their connection with the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas and the nature of their work aid greatly in the type of organizational work needed to make a cooperative housing project a success.

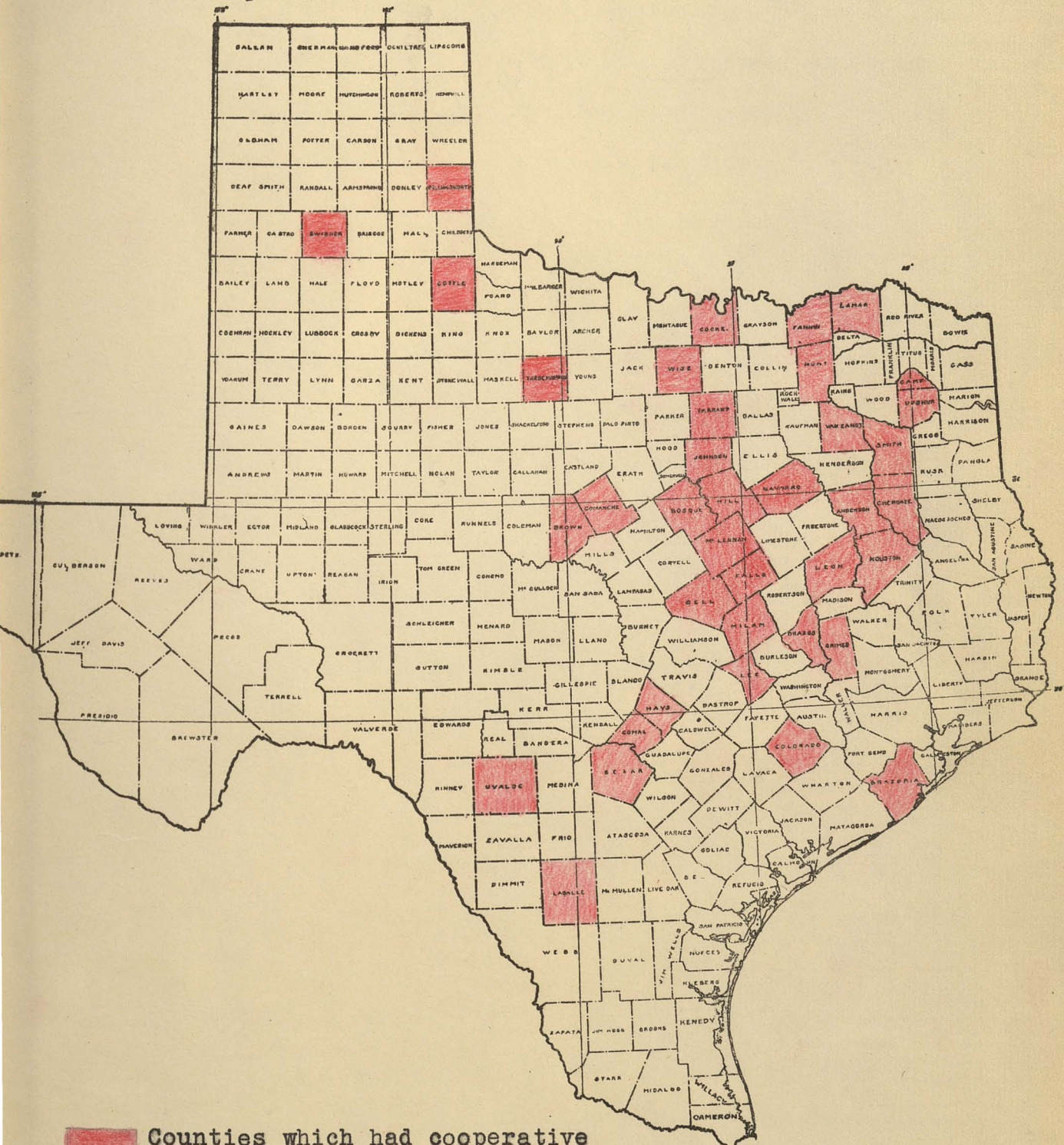
Through combined efforts of the former cooperative project students, the County Agents, the Home Demonstration Agents, and the Vocational Agricultural Teachers, the movement grew to twenty-two cooperative houses and 238 students in 1934-1935. The map, Figure 3, shows the distribution of these cooperative projects and their gradual spread into other parts of the State.

The present school year, 1935-1936, the movement has nearly doubled in the number of houses and has more than doubled in the number of students. There are at the present time forty-two cooperative project houses in operation with a total membership of 550. The map in Figure 4 shows the distribution for this year and the further expansion. There are only 37 counties shown here, but some counties have more than one project house.









Counties which had cooperative project houses at A. and M. in 1935-1936.

Figure 4. Map of Texas Showing Counties with Cooperative Projects at A. and M. in 1935-1936



Accurate statistics for the school year 1933-1934 are not available, but in 1934-1935 sixteen per cent of the total school enrollment, cooperative students, dormitory students, and day students, dropped out of schools. The project house students experienced a loss of only 5.1 per cent of their total.

Also, in this group of 283 students in 1934-1935, comprising only 10 per cent of the total school enrollment, were found about 40 per cent of the highest scholastic ratings. There were five perfect scholastic records--that is, A's in all subjects--and of this five, two were students living in the cooperative project houses. Both of these students were freshmen, one taking a chemical engineering course and the other an architectural course.

According to questionnaires sent out, only five per cent of the 550 students now attending school through the cooperative project plan could attend college if it were not for this plan. The cooperative housing plan is a factor in the increased enrollment of the college as shown by Figure 5. This is a graph of the total student enrollment from 1928 to 1935.

The increase in enrollment of the college from 1932 to 1936 was, roughly, 1400 students. Thirty-seven per cent of this increased enrollment may be attributed to the establishment of the cooperative housing plan since ninety-five per cent of 550 students, or 522 students, could not have attended college if it were not for this plan. Institution of the



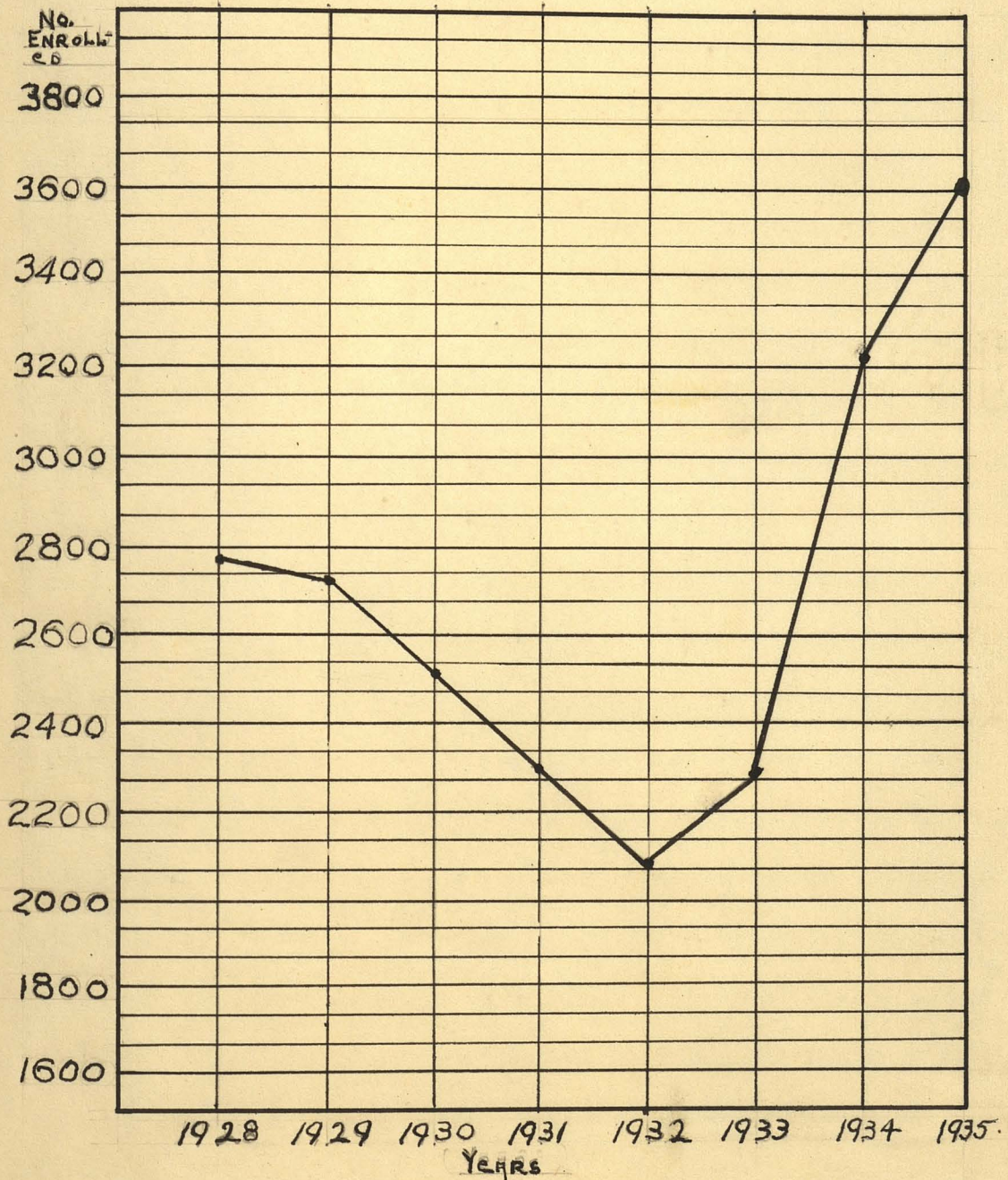


Figure 5. Enrollment of Students for Years 1928-1935



TABLE I

A COMPARISON OF THE FIRST SEMESTER GRADE POINT RATIOS BY CLASSES AND LOCAL RESIDENCE AS MADE BY THE OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR, FEBRUARY 19, 1936

GRADE POINT RATIO	FRESHMAN		SOPHOMORE		JUNIOR		SENIOR	
	Dorm.	Day	Dorm.	Day	Dorm.	Day	Dorm.	Day
2.75 to 3.00	9	2	11	1	1	-	3	1
2.50 to 2.74	12	1	10	-	4	2	6	3
2.25 to 2.49	12	2	16	5	3	2	15	6
2.00 to 2.24	37	3	33	7	3	2	26	10
1.75 to 1.99	32	4	32	8	5	7	36	3
1.50 to 1.74	56	5	31	10	11	5	53	13
1.25 to 1.49	52	9	58	11	6	3	40	8
1.00 to 1.24	62	11	58	24	13	8	56	5
.75 to .99	71	8	53	18	7	7	24	8
.50 to .74	90	9	62	16	9	2	18	4
.25 to .49	71	9	66	5	3	4	12	-
0 to .24	92	15	61	11	6	-	13	2
-.25 to -.51	60	8	51	7	4	-	6	1
-.50 to -.75	71	7	53	5	18	4	5	2
-.75 to -1.01	53	10	10	6	3	1	4	1
-1.00 to -1.26	53	10	24	2	3	1	1	-
-1.25 to -1.51	43	3	6	2	2	-	-	-
-1.50 to -1.76	37	5	10	2	1	-	1	-
-2.00 to -2.24	17	2	2	2	-	-	-	-
-2.25 to -2.49	9	4	3	-	-	-	-	-
Total	943	127	698	142	393	80	299	70
1 quartile	-.43	-.51	-.01	.22	.46	.56	.90	.95
2 quartile	.36	.24	.64	.93	1.13	1.12	1.43	1.56
3 quartile	1.15	1.12	1.36	1.40	1.62	1.66	1.83	2.06
Per Cent B Ave. or Better	7.4	6.3	10.6	9.2	8.4	13.7	16.7	28.6
	4.4	4.4	5.3	5.3	12.5	12.5	47.0	47.0



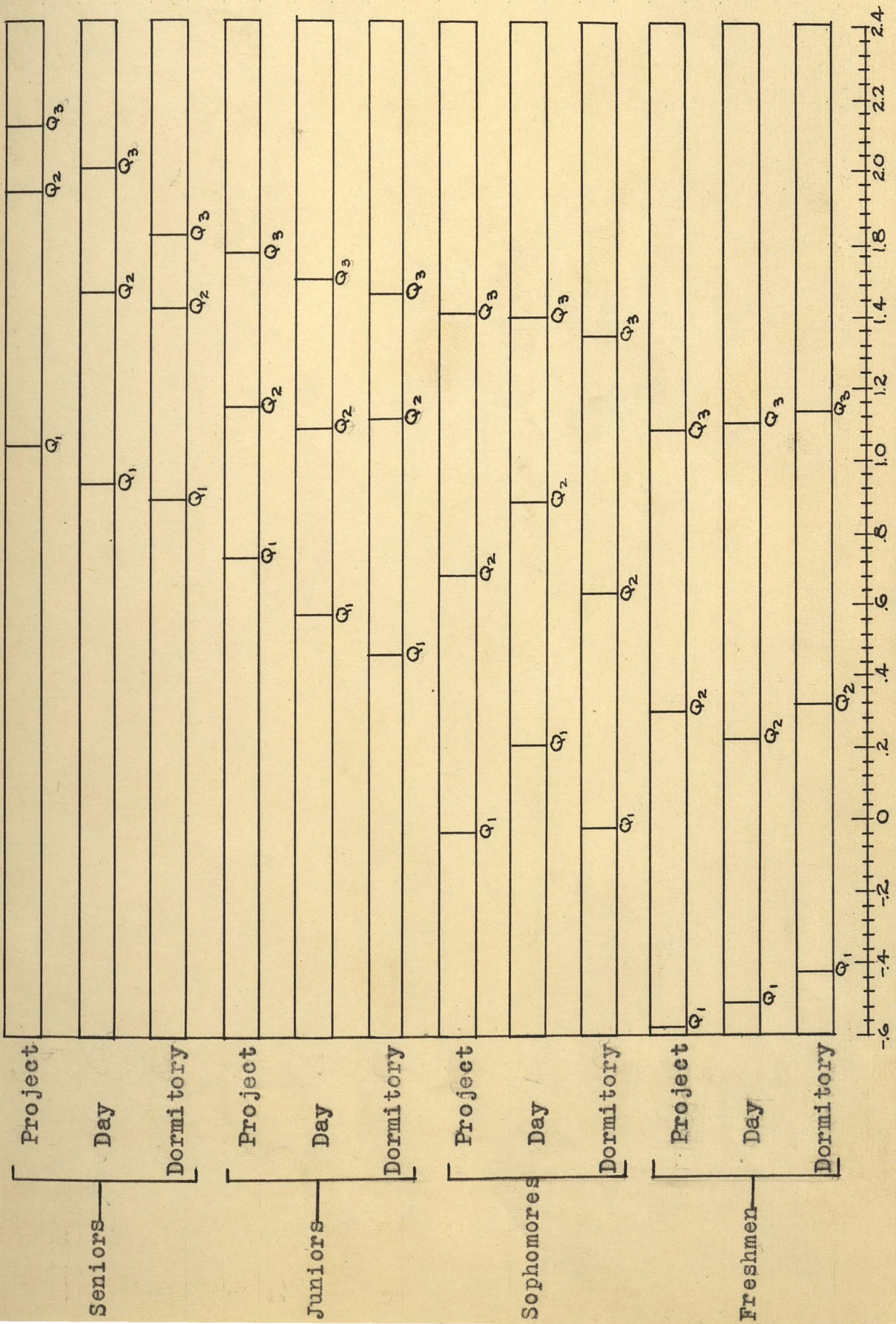


Figure 6. Comparison of Grade Point Ratios Made by Dormitory Students, Day Students, and Project House Students.



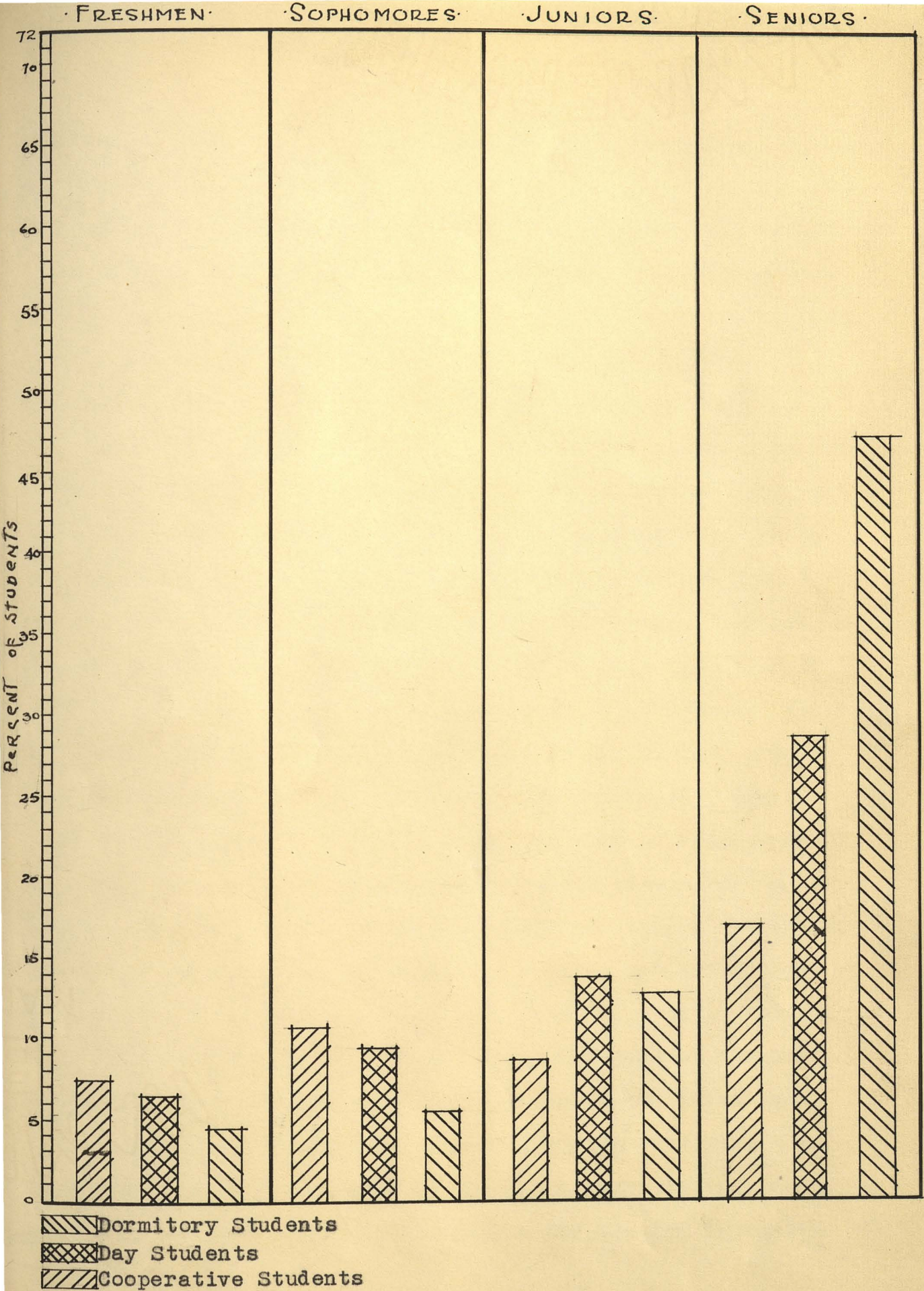


Figure 7. Comparison of the Per Cent of Students Making B Average or Better



making a grade of B or better than of any of the other classes or groups.

One would surmise from a study of the foregoing charts that the first two years are the hardest for the cooperative project students. This is true, but they are also the hardest years for the dormitory students and other day students. Adjusting himself to college life is the greatest obstacle for any student to overcome. This period of adjustment usually covers a period of two years. By the time a student decides upon his course of study, learns how to study and what he is working toward, two years of his college period have passed. Most of the cooperative houses are off the campus, thus making it harder to keep in close contact with college life. In several of the houses all of the students are freshmen. This makes it doubly hard because they have no one to help them with their work. In the dormitory a freshman needs only to step across the hall to obtain help from some upperclassman. Students living on the campus have a better access to the library facilities than those living off the campus. Students in the cooperative project houses have often entered college because the cooperative project plan made it possible for them to attend college. This may mean that some of these students should not be in school; the grades the first two years seem to bear this out. All of these factors plus the constant financial strain under which a cooperative project student labors are ample justification for the low scholastic



records of the first and second year cooperative project students. This is especially true when one realizes the exceptionally high scholastic standing made by the advanced cooperative project students. This high scholastic rating was made in spite of the conditions under which they are attending school and not because of the conditions. It may also be attributed to the fact that the cooperative students do not as a rule, take part in as many extra curricula activities as the dormitory students.

A comparison of the percentage of cooperative students and dormitory students with respect to the percentile ratings on the psychological test will also serve to emphasize the disadvantages under which the cooperative students are laboring. These percentiles are results of the psychological test given to all new students at the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas at the beginning of the school year 1935-1936. The percentile scale of Table II is so made that of the entire group of new students (freshmen and transfers), entering College in 1935-1936, exactly ten per cent would fall in each ten point intervals. The proportion of cooperative students in the lower intervals is noticeably larger than that of dormitory students. The proportion is just the opposite in the higher intervals. The type of high school which the cooperative students attended may have some bearing on these grades and the scholastic standing. The questionnaire filled out by the cooperative project house students shows that 65.6 per cent of the students attended a small high school before coming to college.<sup>1</sup> The questionnaire also shows that 53.5 per cent of the cooperative students come from the country.

<sup>1</sup> The term "small high school" was not defined in the questionnaire.



TABLE II

A COMPARISON OF THE PERCENTILE RANKINGS OF THE DORMITORY AND COOPERATIVE STUDENTS ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL TEST

Percentiles	Per Cent Dormitory Students	Per Cent Cooperative Students
90 - 100	11.5	7.0
80 - 89	10.5	7.0
70 - 79	9.6	7.7
60 - 69	9.8	9.3
50 - 59	10.0	7.7
40 - 49	10.6	12.0
30 - 39	9.6	9.7
20 - 29	8.5	14.0
10 - 19	10.4	9.9
0 - 9	8.1	15.0

A comparison of the highest and lowest average grade point ratios made by the military companies on the campus and cooperative project houses proves further that the cooperative project houses go to both extremes. They had the highest average grade point ratio and the lowest. The highest average grade point ratio for any organization on the campus was 1.14 while the highest grade point ratio of any individual house was 1.26. The lowest average grade point ratio of any organization was .22 and the lowest average grade point ratio for the lowest cooperative project house was .01.



This discussion showing the history, growth, and present status brings us to a consideration of the actual operations of the cooperative project houses which are covered in Chapter Two.



## CHAPTER II

Method of Operation

The cooperative project housing movement at the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas has not as yet been copyrighted, chartered, or incorporated. The movement is based on the true Rochdale principle of "self help" with no membership fees, on a non profit basis, and no capital.

The projects are operated so as to accomplish as fully as possible the following aims.

1. To open the field of higher learning to those boys who could not obtain a college education under the present dormitory system.
2. To develop self reliance, initiative, and leadership among the cooperative students.
3. To develop community interest and pride in the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas through the medium of students attending college by the cooperative housing plan.
4. To utilize surplus products in the homes of the students.

The cooperative student houses are not in competition with the dormitories. In fact, 95 per cent of the students living in the cooperative houses express a desire to stay in the dormitories if they were financially able. Very often students in the dormitories find they cannot continue to pay their fees and therefore move to a cooperative project house. This keeps these students in school when they would otherwise have to discontinue their education entirely. Students who are



financially able to stay in the dormitory are urged to do so. A cooperative project house is a small dormitory on a lower financial scale. Matters of discipline, regulations, meals, conduct, and study hours are patterned, when applicable, after the dormitories. All of the cooperative project house students are under the same rules and regulations of the college as the dormitory students. Each house is provided with a copy of the rules and regulations of the college just as each unit in the dormitories is furnished a copy.

Another set of rules and regulations made out by Professor Daniel Russell for the group houses is given herewith:

1. Inasmuch as I realize that all the boys in this group are handicapped financially, and all must pay their part if the group is to succeed, I pledge that of all the money I get, the first call on this money shall be to pay my pro rata part of the group expense. Group expenses shall assume priority over all other expenses.

2. I pledge myself to do my assigned part of the work of the group without grumbling.

3. I shall cooperate with the woman supervisor in all things for the welfare of the group.

4. I shall endeavor to make the group as much like a home as possible, and behave around the woman supervisor as I would my mother or sister.

5. I pledge myself not to use vulgar, obscene, or abusive language in or around the group house.

6. I pledge myself not to use, manufacture, or transport into the group house intoxicating liquor, or to be seen in or near the group house under the influence of intoxicating liquor.

7. I realize that violation of article six will subject me to expulsion from the group and from the college.

8. I shall obey all rules of the College blue book that pertain to day students.



9. I shall respect the rights of neighbors, and not do anything to discredit me or my group house with others in the community.

10. I pledge myself not to appear in and around the group house indecently clothed.

11. I pledge myself not to be unduly boisterous about the house and respect the study and rest hours of all the students.

12. I pledge myself to apply myself diligently to my studies so as to make a good record for myself and for my group house.

13. I shall enter as many student activities and contests as I feel my time, finances, and interests will permit and try to make myself an integral part of the institution.

14. I shall wholeheartedly cooperate with the student manager of the group in all matters pertaining to the welfare of the group.

15. I shall at all times endeavor to make my personal interest the interest and welfare of the whole group.

16. I shall at all times endeavor to conduct myself like a gentleman.

17. I pledge myself to respect the rights of the landlord, and protect the property in charge of my group.

The wide distribution of the cooperative project houses causes a problem of supervision that does not exist in the dormitories. The Department of Rural Sociology has been assigned two graduate assistants whose duties include visiting the different houses from time to time, usually about every two weeks. These visits, or inspections, are made for the purposes of checking up on such conditions as sanitation, study conditions, and other items included in the daily inspections made in the dormitory. As would be expected, the students are more lax in such things as neatness and cleanli-



ness than students that are inspected each day and reminded of these things.

Each violation of any regulation or rule is punishable by demerits given by the supervisors, managers, or matrons. It has been the policy in the past, and will probably remain the same in the future, to let each cooperative house solve its own problems in so far as possible without outside interference. When a situation arises that calls for experienced advice, the students are always free to call on either Professor Russell or one of the supervising personnel. Most of the problems are not of a serious nature, however, and are easily solved by the students themselves.

The most expensive item of a student's education is the expense of room and board. This is also the only item that can be reduced to any great degree because of the inflexibility of such college expenses as matriculation fee, laboratory fees, and hospital fees. Happily, this expense for room and board is where the biggest saving can be made. This is one of the main purposes of the student cooperative houses. Food, being the major expense, will be discussed first in this study of the operation of the cooperative project houses.

Utilization of surplus home products was one of the aims mentioned in the beginning and through this utilization of home surplus we find a big saving being made. When the cooperative project houses were first established, only the surplus from the family cupboards was used. Since this time, a plan has been put into use whereby surplus of communities or even counties may be utilized. This, in brief, is the plan: The



cooperative project houses originate in their various communities of the State and in so far as possible their estimated needs are provided for before the students leave home. In most counties there is a community cannery that the people are most willing to let a group of prospective college students use. All of the available surplus home products are canned through the cooperation of the Home Demonstration Agent, the County Agent, the Vocational Agricultural Teacher, interested citizens, and students. In several instances commodities such as tomatoes, peas, corn, and other products that may be canned are donated to students either by individuals or civic organizations. This food is either canned individually or pooled and canned through the cooperative effort of the students concerned. These products are entered as assets on the house books. When a student cans his own products he is given credit on his board bill according to the value of the various commodities. The valuation is based on the wholesale value of the particular product at a given time. Thus the more foodstuff brought from home, the less the cash outlay for a student.

Some students have brought their own cows and chickens and in several cases have made their entire expenses by selling their produce to the cooperative house in which they live or to nearby houses. For a farm boy this offers a splendid opportunity to obtain an education at little or no cost.

In 1935 a meat circle was formed wherein four or five groups alternated in butchering a beef. This supplied fresh meat each week, necessitating a group to butcher only once a



month. Here is another opportunity for the farm boy to lower his cost because nearly any farmer can provide at least one beef every two months and this would almost pay for an education in itself.

Another project was carried on in 1935 at the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas. This was a cooperative project in meat canning. The Department of Dairy Husbandry condemned four cows from their herd because of abortion, which does not lower the food value of the animal. These cows were purchased for three cents a pound. They were killed by the Department of Animal Husbandry and through the help of the Brazos County Home Demonstration Agent were canned at the community cannery in Bryan, Brazos County, Texas. Two thousand cans of meat were canned at an average cost of sixteen cents for a three pound can of meat. This sixteen cents included all expenses incurred, such as killing, purchase of cans, and hauling. The students in the cooperative project houses did all of the labor.

This year, 1936, the Department of Rural Sociology purchases the beef outright from the cheapest sources and has it butchered at the Department of Animal Husbandry. A student employed through the National Youth Administration does the cutting. The meat is sold on a non profit basis, as are all other commodities or services rendered by the cooperatives. The meat is divided into three cuts and from the following average prices it can be seen that a part of the saving is made on meat purchased cooperatively.



	Cooperative Prices	Retail Prices
Roast per pound	12¢	20¢ to 30¢
Ground meat	10¢	18¢ to 20¢
Steak	12¢ to 14¢	24¢ to 30¢

This saving on meat is emphasized when it is found that on the average a five hundred pound carcass is consumed each week. An estimate taken from a sample carcass shows the exact amount of saving.

	Cooperative	Retail	
Roast 29 lbs. @ 12¢	\$ 3.48	\$ 7.25	(median price taken from the above table)
Ground meat 99½ lbs. @ 10¢	9.95	18.90	
Steak 68 lbs. @ 12¢	7.67	20.06	
Steak 64½ lbs. @ 14¢	<u>9.52</u>	<u>18.11</u>	
	\$30.62	\$64.32	

By figuring thirty-six weeks in the school year, it is readily seen that a saving of approximately \$1080 on this single item is realized. There remains the fact that this meat may not be of as high quality as that purchased in most meat markets, but it is clean, nourishing, and serves the same purpose that a higher priced product would serve.

The largest single saving is perhaps made on bread. This is explained by the fact that day old bread is purchased from one of the major bread companies. The processing tax when collected was deducted from the regular wholesale price. The bread company was allowed a refund on the processing tax for bread sold to charitable institutions. The cooperative project houses are by no means charitable institutions, but the agreement was made through the Federal Transient Bureau that was



in operation at the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas in 1934-1935. This agency is no longer located on the campus, but the same arrangements were made with the bread company. The bread is purchased for three cents a pound. Coupon books sold by the Department of Rural Sociology are used by the cooperative houses to purchase the bread. The coupon books come in one, two, five or six dollar denominations and are redeemable at the bread distributing point twice a day. A sample of the coupons is shown in Appendix A. A student paid from National Youth Administration funds has charge of the bread distribution. On the average, 250 loaves of bread are used each day. At three cents per loaf this amounts to \$1,862 per school year. The same amount of bread, over the same period of time, at the retail price of ten cents per loaf would amount to \$5,400. This shows a saving of \$3,538 for bread alone.

The largest volume of cooperative purchasing is perhaps in groceries. This is operated somewhat on the same system that a quartermaster commissary in the army operates. Each Wednesday is ration day and the cooperative project house managers turn in their individual orders. These are consolidated into one large order by the Department of Rural Sociology. The groceries are delivered to a central distributing point where they are divided into the individual orders. The price of each commodity is entered on the order blanks which are placed on each order to identify the order. All bills are payable at the Office of the Department of Rural Sociology and



the wholesale house is in turn paid by the Department. A price list of three major wholesale houses is compared each month and the house having the lowest prices is usually given the business, all other things being equal. There are no contracts.

The average wholesale grocery bill for all of the houses that order in this manner, is \$653.99 per month. This would amount to \$5,885.91 for the school year. Most retail grocery stores figure on a twenty per cent profit which would mean that if these groceries were purchased from retail stores, they would have cost \$7,063.09. This means a saving of \$1,177.18.

There is one opportunity that has not been exploited to the fullest extent by these project houses--that of gardens. Ten houses of the forty-three have gardens this year, 1936. In 1935 there were seven gardens out of the twenty-two cooperative houses. The reason that more houses do not have gardens is the lack of space. Most of the houses are located in the town of Bryan on ordinary sized lots. There was one cooperative project house in 1935 that overcame the lack of space by planting a garden in the flower beds around the house. Of course this is not decorative in any way, but it is practical.

There are forty-three cooperative project houses and only five of them are without some means of transportation. There are nine trucks furnishing transportation between the College and Bryan. In most cases the car or truck is owned by a



student who earns at least part of his expenses by this means. A dollar and a quarter a month is the usual charge between the College and Bryan. There are 475 students in the cooperative houses who live off the campus. The bus fare from College to Bryan is fifteen cents a round trip. If the buses were the only means of transportation, this would mean \$71.25 per day or \$19,237.50 per year for transportation for the entire group of 475. Figuring the cost of transportation for this same group at a flat rate of \$1.25 per month it would cost \$5,343.75 a year. This is a saving of \$13,883.75 a year. There is this fact however, not all of this 475 would ride the bus. Some of them would catch rides back and forth. The cooperative trucks provide a much more convenient arrangement because they make three trips a day, thereby enabling the students to have a hot lunch each noon.

At the end of each school year, when the students leave for the summer, all of the rooms in the dormitories are gone through and everything of any value is collected and put in the cooperative store room. The labor used for this purpose is paid out of the student welfare funds. All the various articles collected are sorted--that is clothes, shoes, campaign hats, school supplies, and miscellaneous articles. The hats are then cleaned and blocked and sold to the cooperative project house students or other students desiring them, for the cost of renovation. This charge is usually from fifty cents to a dollar. These campaign hats when purchased new, cost anywhere from five dollars to seven dollars and fifty



cents. The shoes that are in good enough condition to warrant repair, are repaired and sold in the same manner. Articles of clothing are laundered by the college laundry for the rags that are salvaged. The remaining articles that may be used are sold to cooperative students at a very small price to keep the student from thinking they are donations. Such articles as drawing boards, uniform belts, uniform caps, T-squares, and rules are all sold in the same manner. One hundred and twenty-five dollars worth of supplies were sold in 1935 from the store. This does not look to be much of a saving but the prices charged by the cooperative as compared to retail prices, show a considerable saving. Below are a few comparative prices that will give the reader a better idea as to the amount of the saving.

	Cooperative Prices	Retail Prices
Uniform hats	\$ .50 - 1.00	\$5.00 - 7.50
Uniform belts	.50	3.50 - 5.00
Uniform caps	.25 - .75	3.50 - 5.00
T-squares	.50 - .75	1.25
Drawing boards	.50	1.50

With the fact in mind that these articles are second hand, it is estimated that a saving of \$400 per year has been realized by this plan. Of course this varies from year to year.

Furniture, especially beds, are always a problem to students in the cooperative project houses because of the inconvenience of moving back and forth each school year. At



The beginning of the school year in 1935, the Department of Buildings and College Utilities gave the cooperative 250 bed springs and bedsteads. These were stored in the warehouse and furnished to those students who could not secure beds of their own. A number of mattress pads were also donated by the Department of Buildings and College Utilities. These were also furnished to the cooperative students.

A summation of these above mentioned savings, not counting the savings on furniture, is given by item and amount below.

Item	Amount
Bread	\$3,538.00
Groceries	1,177.18
Meat	1,080.00
Transportation	13,883.75
Clothing	<u>400.00</u>
Total	\$20,078.93

The total cash outlay for the cooperative project students averages \$231.00 per year per student as reported by the students in their replies to the questionnaire. This includes room and board, tuition, medical fees, laundry, transportation, books, and uniform. The cost for the same items for a dormitory student averages \$362.12 for both new and old students. In other words, it costs the cooperative project house students \$131.12 less per year to attend college than it does a student in the dormitory. The average cost for food per month for the cooperative project house students is nine dollars. The average cost for such items as rent, utilities, laundry and



transportation is four dollars. This makes the average cost per month thirteen dollars. The cost of the food item for each individual varies with the amount of canned food brought from home. There are several cases where students paid all their expenses with food brought from home. The only cash expense these students had was a matriculation fee of sixty dollars for the two school semesters. These are unusual cases but a good example of what can be done. Table III shows a comparative cost table for eight selected houses of various sizes. This shows that a house may be too small to operate inexpensively but the variation is not as great as might be expected.

TABLE III

COMPARATIVE COSTS OF FOOD, RENT, AND UTILITIES FROM EIGHT  
SELECTED HOUSES OF DIFFERENT SIZES

Project House	Food	Rent	Utilities	Total Cost
Fredericksburg - 10 boys	\$ 9.00	\$ 1.75	\$1.50	\$12.25
Tarleton - 25 boys	8.00	2.00	2.00	12.00
Groesbeck - 13 boys	6.00	2.00	2.00	10.00
Wise County - 14 boys	8.00	2.00	1.50	11.50
Ft. Worth - 14 boys	9.00	2.80	1.00	12.80
Smith County - 17 boys	8.00	2.25	2.75	13.00
Washington County - 14 boys	10.00	.80	1.75	12.55
Marquez - 7 boys	9.00	2.87	1.00	12.87



A deciding factor in the success of a cooperative project house is the matron. The matrons of the houses are usually from the same community as the students. It has been found from experience that the ideal arrangement is to have a matron who has some personal interest in the cooperative house in which she stays. Some relative among the group, such as a son or nephew, often gives this personal interest which aids materially in making a cooperative house successful. This arrangement is ideal only if the matron qualifies as to the other requirements which briefly stated are:

1. A mature woman, preferably either a widow or a married woman who has had children of her own.
2. One who understands and can manage boys.
3. One who is in sympathy with the cooperative plan and will cooperate with the school authorities.
4. One who can plan meals and provide a good simple diet for the students.

It is not essential that the matrons be related to some members of the cooperative house. Some of the most capable matrons are not only not related to any of the students but are not even from the same community. This situation is a result of the boys not being able to secure a matron themselves in their own home towns. In such cases the Department of Rural Sociology secures one for them either locally or from applicants on file. Six of the matrons this year are women from the relief rolls, each having from one to two dependents. These matrons receive their room and board both for themselves and their dependents plus a small salary paid by the students



in the project houses. The rate of pay for the matron varies with the number of students living in the cooperative house. The average salary is eight dollars a month. This may not appear to be a high enough salary, but when it is considered that room and board for two persons is added it can be seen that this is fair recompense for the services rendered. These positions are distinctly not careers. It is, however, a solution for the widow with a son whom she wishes to provide an education. By securing a matron's position she obtains room and board for herself and her son and enough money for essentials besides. If the boy can secure employment that pays as much as ten dollars a month, the problem of securing an education is practically solved.

There are four cooperative project houses that are supervised by young married students and their wives. From past experience this arrangement has been found to be not altogether satisfactory. In most of these cases the wives of these students are young and inexperienced and cannot be regarded by the boys with as much respect as some older person. The young matron cannot understand the students as well nor assert as much authority as an older matron. There are, however, exceptions to this. In two cases students who dropped out of school before finishing and got married, have come back to school and are securing their degrees in this way while supporting a family.

Only one of the matrons has had any special training in domestic science. All of them, however, have had a number of



years experience in cooking. Conferences with the matrons are held about once every two months. Problems pertaining to the operation of cooperative project houses are discussed and the meeting is an open forum. Miss Lola Blair, Food Specialist for the Extension Service, has met with the matrons and discussed the problems of meals in the cooperative project houses. One of her suggestions was that of using oleomargarine mixed with condensed milk in place of butter, thus helping cut food costs. Suggested menus were also given the cooperative houses and in any problem of nutrition the Extension Service cooperates most willingly with the matrons. It is not the purpose of this study to deal extensively with this feature of the operation of the cooperative houses. Suffice it to say that the students receive a sufficient amount of nourishing food and in the proper proportions to maintain a healthful life.

The student managers are perhaps next in importance in the success of the cooperative project houses. Student managers are usually elected by the students living in the house, or these managers may have acquired this position by reason of organizing a project. This position gives a student an excellent opportunity to prove his leadership. Of course a great deal depends upon the harmony of the group. A good student manager with the aid of the matron secures and maintains this harmony. The position of student manager also affords a student the opportunity to assert his initiative and gives him experience in a business sense that may prove valuable in later life. It is his duty to keep all records, accounts,



collect all the money, and pay the house bills. It is through the cooperative house managers that the closest contact is kept with the projects. They are urged to come into the office of the Department of Rural Sociology from time to time to report on their respective houses. This is not a formal report but a visit that often reveals some small problem that can be solved while still small.

In Chapter One, mention was made of the sponsoring of these cooperative projects by the County Agents, the Home Demonstration Agents, and the Vocational Agricultural Teachers. They are the most logical sponsors because a large number of the County Agents are former students of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas. This makes it easy to see why these men at least are anxious and willing to devote part of their time to organizing a cooperative project from their county. Many vocational teachers are also former students and they too cooperate splendidly. The Home Demonstration Agents also have been most helpful in helping the students in the canning of their food projects. They also advise the students as to what their estimated needs will be in the way of food. Counsel and advice from persons who know what the student is likely to encounter is sometimes the deciding factor in the success of a cooperative house. Each year a form letter is sent out to the County Agents, Home Demonstration Agents and Vocational Agricultural Teachers, or to anyone else asking for information explaining the procedure of organizing a cooperative project and some pertinent facts



about them. This form letter appears in Appendix B.

Sponsors of a cooperative project are not confined to the above mentioned people. Civic organizations such as the Lions Club, Rotary Club, and Kiwanis have sponsored successful cooperative project houses. Sponsorship of cooperative groups by such organizations is of great value to the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, because the interest and pride they feel in their cooperatives tend to increase their interest in the college.

All of the different phases of the cooperative project housing plan have been covered in each of their relations to the general movement. A table of organization, Figure 8, shows how the plan operates at the present time within the school.

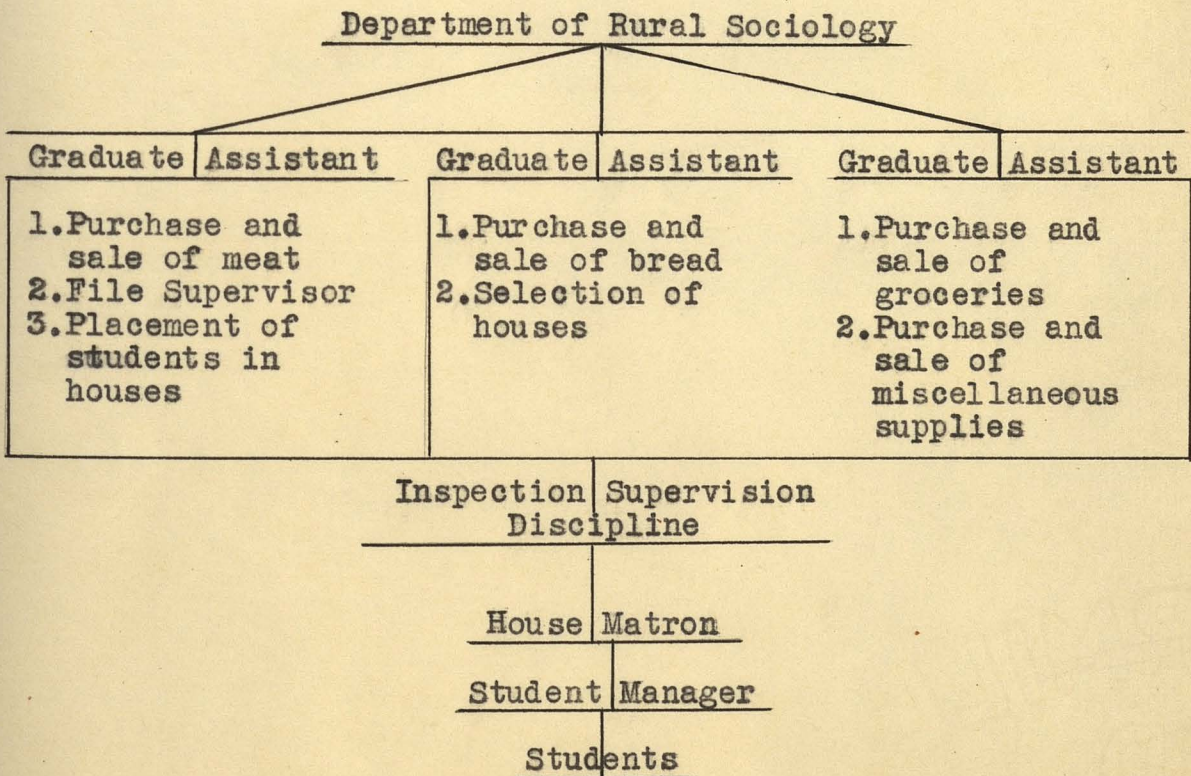


Figure 8. Operation of Cooperative Plan



The most workable sized house has been found to be in either units of twelve or twenty-four students. A sample schedule of duties, Figure 9, for a house of twelve students shows the ideal arrangement.

These duties are interchangeable and should be rotated so as not to work a hardship on any one student. If such an organization is worked out and adhered to, each person can be held responsible for his share of work.

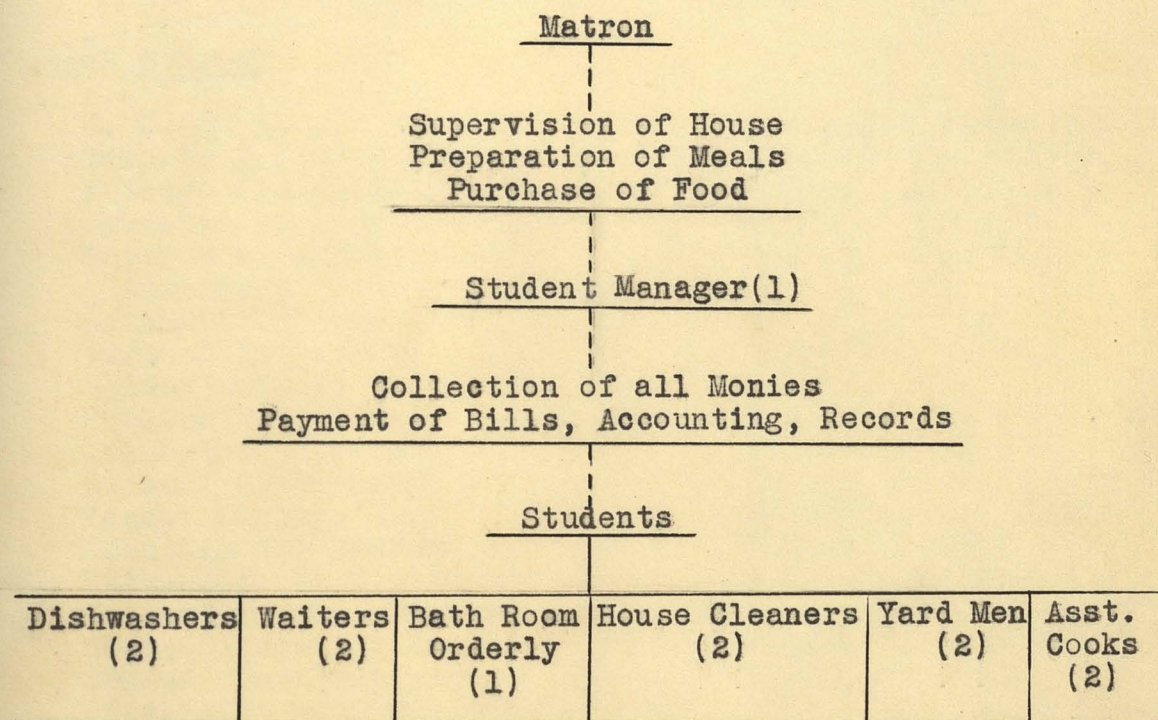


Figure 9. A Sample Schedule of Duties for a Cooperative House of Twelve Students.



## CHAPTER III

Probable Future Developments

In the introduction the statement was made that the cooperative movement at the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas was part of a large movement throughout the United States. It might be of interest to show at this point the number, type, and location of the various student cooperatives.

College Consumer's Cooperatives<sup>1</sup>Book Stores

U. C. L. A.	Los Angeles, California
Modesto Junior College	Modesto, California
Chicago Theological Seminary	Chicago, Illinois
Garrett Theological Seminary	Chicago, Illinois
Presbyterian Theological Seminary	Chicago, Illinois
Grinnell College	Grinnell, Iowa
Harvard University	Cambridge, Mass.
Olivet College	Olivet, Mich.
Hamline University	St. Paul, Minn.
Princeton University	Princeton, N. J.
Cornell University	Ithaca, N. Y.
Vassar College	Poughkeepsie, N. Y.
John Carroll University	Cleveland, Ohio
University of Cincinnati	Cincinnati, Ohio
Wilberforce University	Wilberforce, Ohio
Reed College	Portland, Oregon
Oregon State College	Corvallis, Oregon
University of South Dakota	Vermillion, S. D.

Cafeterias or Lunch Rooms

U. C. L. A.	Los Angeles, California
John Carroll University	Cleveland, Ohio
Gethary Biblical Seminary	Chicago, Illinois
Brevard College	Brevard, N. C.
Chicago Theological Seminary	Chicago, Illinois
University of Cincinnati	Cincinnati, Ohio
University of Michigan	Ann Arbor, Mich.
University of South Dakota	Vermillion, S. D.

<sup>1</sup> From a preliminary draft of a report by W. H. Moore, President of National Cooperative Association.



Cafeterias or Lunch Rooms (Continued)

Hamline College	St. Paul, Minn.
University of Wisconsin	Madison, Wis.
Concordia College	Morrehead, Minn.
Nebraska Central College	Central City, Neb.

Dormitories or Houses

University of Alabama	University, Alabama
Mt. Holyoke	South Hadley, Mass.
University of California	Berkeley, Cal.
Wellesley	Wellesley, Mass.
Illinois Wesleyan	Bloomington, Ill.
University of Minnesota	Minneapolis, Minn.
University of Illinois	Champaign, Ill.
Martin Luther College	New Ulm, Minn.
University of Chicago	Chicago, Ill.
Cornell University	Ithaca, N. Y.
Northwestern University	Evanston, Ill.
John Carroll University	Cleveland, Ohio
Iowa State College	Ames, Iowa
Ohio State University	Columbus, Ohio
Baker University	Baldwin, Mass.
Ohio Wesleyan University	Delaware, Ohio
Boston University	Boston, Mass.
University of Oregon	Eugene, Oregon
Mass. Inst. Tech.	Cambridge, Mass.
Washington State College	Pullman, Washington
Smith College	Northampton, Mass.
University of Washington	Seattle, Wash.

General

Berea College	Berea, Ky.
Eden Theological Seminary	Webster Groves, Mo.
Tuskegee Institute	Tuskegee, Ala.

Faculty Buying Clubs

University of Arizona	Tucson, Ariz.
J. C. Smith University	Charlotte, N. C.
U. C. L. A.	Los Angeles, Calif.
University of North Dakota	Grand Forks, N. D.
Mills College	Oakland, Calif.
Shaw University	Raleigh, N. C.
Grinnell College	Grinnell, Iowa

Miscellaneous and Unclassified

Pacific School of Religion	Berkeley, Calif.
Pasadena Junior College	Pasadena, Calif.
Chico St. Col.	Chico, Calif.
University of Redlands	Redlands, Calif.



Miscellaneous and Unclassified (Continued)

Compton Junior College	Compton, Calif.
Riverside Junior College	Riverside, Calif.
Fresno St. College	Fresno, Calif.
Sacramento Junior College	Riverside, Calif.
Glendale Junior College	Glendale, Calif.
Salinas Junior College	Salinas, Calif.
Marin Junior College	San Bernardino, Calif.
La Verne College	La Verne, Calif.
San Diego St. College	San Diego, Calif.
Long Beach Junior College	Long Beach, Calif.
San Francisco University	San Francisco, Calif.
Los Angeles Junior College	Los Angeles, Calif.
California Poly. Junior College	San Luis Obispo, Calif.
Occidental College	Los Angeles, Calif.
University of Kentucky	Lexington, Ky.
Marysville Un. H. S.	Marysville, Calif.
University of Missouri	Columbia, Missouri

Miscellaneous and Unclassified

Yoba Co. Junior College	Marysville, Calif.
Cornell University	Ithaca, N. Y.
Menlo Junior College	Menlo Park, Calif.
University of North Carolina (Cleaning)	Chapel Hill, N. C.
St. Mary's College	Moraga, Calif.
University of North Dakota	Grand Forks, N. D.

Fraternity Buying Pools

Stanford University	Stanford, Calif.
University of Chicago	Chicago, Ill.
Oregon State Agricultural College	Corvallis, Oregon

There are 102 student cooperatives in operation in the United States at the present time<sup>1</sup> with an annual business exceeding \$2,300,000.<sup>1</sup>

The student cooperative project house plan in this institution is the largest in operation--forty-three houses and 550 members. The next largest is found at the University of Washington with eight houses and 321 members. The growth of these other student cooperatives has been almost as phenomenal as the growth of the cooperative here which has all but

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.



doubled its membership each year since its beginning four years ago.

The services rendered by the cooperative here are much more varied than the services performed at most other institutions where they nearly all specialize in some one service such as cooperative book stores, cleaning and pressing shops, and barber shops. There is also a membership fee charged in all of these other cooperatives, but there is no fee of any kind attached to membership in the cooperative here. The only qualifications that a student needs is the desire to obtain an education and the willingness to cooperate.

There is a very definite limit to the number of cooperative project houses that may be operated at the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas because of the housing problem. The supervisors have already experienced no little difficulty in securing a sufficient number of houses suitable for a cooperative project. If the membership doubles this year, and there is every reason to believe it will since eighty-four per cent of the students plan to come back next year and fifteen per cent plan to organize new projects, there is going to be a serious shortage of houses.

There is one solution that would help lessen the problem not only for the present but for the future as well. The Officials of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas have set aside a plot of land that may be used by any groups desiring to build their own cooperative project house.



If some organization such as Former Students, Lions Club, Rotary Club, or some individual from a given locality, can be induced to build a house on this land, the housing problem for students from that particular community would be solved. There are at present two cooperative project groups that plan to build their own houses this coming year. More of them no doubt have the matter under consideration. House plans that are most suitable for a cooperative project house have been drawn and are available to anyone desirous of using them to build a house. A copy of a house plan is given in Appendix C. This plan is particularly good in that it permits additions if necessary.

There is this difficulty about building on state owned land however, no mortgage may be held on the land. This makes it difficult to finance the building of a house unless someone donates the money. It is difficult to secure the necessary money in one lump sum. If these houses were built on privately owned land however, the mortgage could be retired by rents collected from the students living in the house. After the house was paid for, the rent could be applied on other buildings or the establishment of a loan fund or any other worthy purpose. For the purpose of illustration let us assume that it would cost \$5,000 to build a house suitable for a unit of twenty-four students. If each member were charged two dollars and a half a month for rent, on a twelve months basis, this would more than amortize a \$5,000 loan at 8 per cent interest over a ten year period according to the Bryan Building and Loan Association. The sixty dollars a month could



could then be used for any of the previously suggested purposes.

Mention has been made of the various services rendered by the cooperative at the present time. However, there is yet room for expansion. Barber shops and cleaning and pressing shops are steps of importance that should be made next.

The University of North Carolina has a cooperative cleaning and pressing shop with a membership of 2,000 students and nine employees.<sup>1</sup>

There is no reason for a similar organization not being successful at the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas in as much as the students in the cooperative project houses have already had experience in savings and need any other savings offered them.

The purchase of gasoline on a wholesale basis is another step in the near future. With the knowledge of the amount of gasoline being used by the students in the cooperative projects, it would be an easy matter to secure wholesale prices on gasoline. This would result in a saving of a considerable amount of money during a school year.

One of the greatest handicaps of the cooperatives here at the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, is the lack of storage space. The lower floor of one of the cooperative houses is being used as a distributing point for the groceries. Another house is used as the bread distributing point. The meat is distributed from the meat laboratory of the Animal Industries Building and one room in an abandoned dormitory serves as a store room for miscellaneous supplies.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.



If a building were available, or if the cooperative could rent a building to house these various activities, the administration could be carried on much more efficiently than it is at the present time. However, the cooperative has no capital and operates on a non-profit basis. Hence, there is no money available for the purpose.

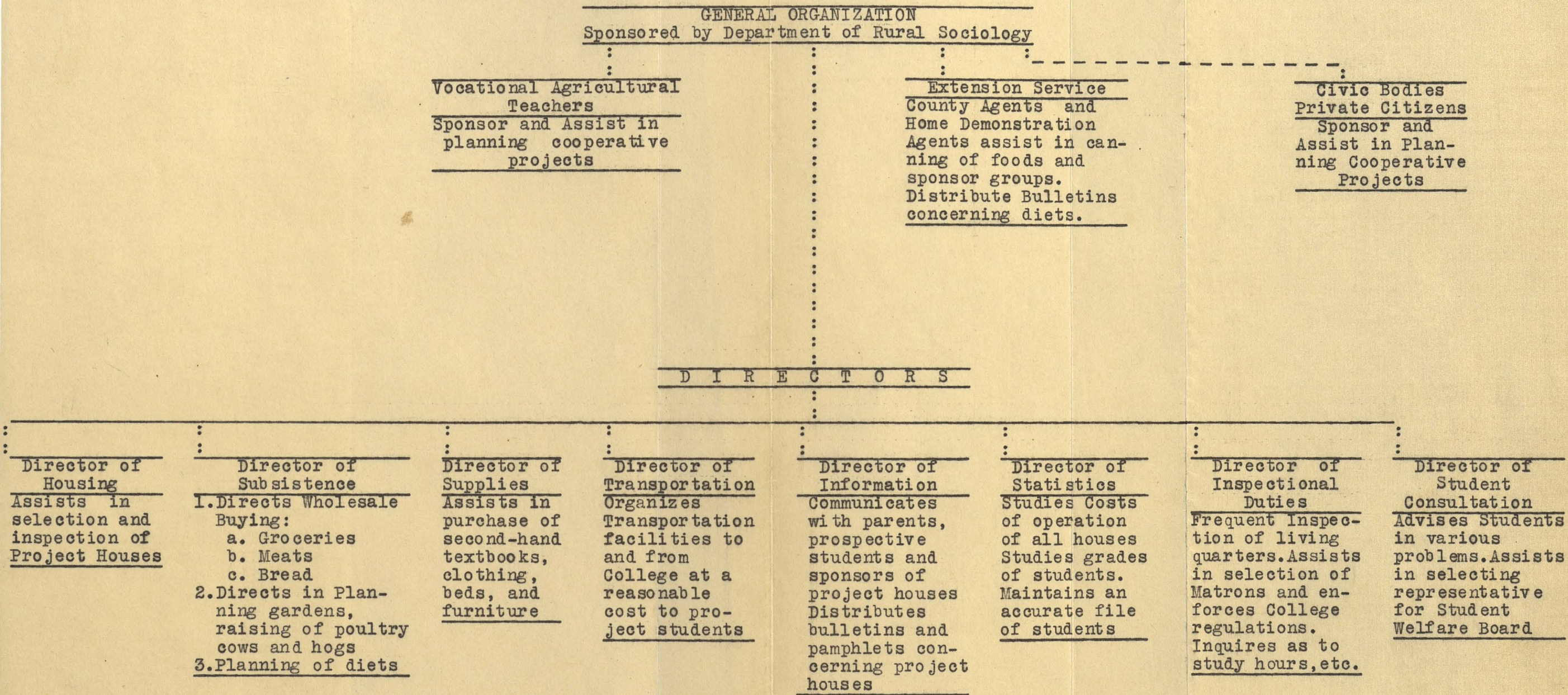
There may be a question in the mind of the readers as to why these various services, finances, and buildings mentioned have not been procured before this time since the movement has been in operation for four years. The explanation is that this organization is meant to be permanent and in an organization of this type it is far better to build slowly and solidly than to run the risk of collapse by building in a hurry. The college, the citizens of the State, and the student members must be shown the advantages and possibilities of this movement and be converted to the idea before it can be pushed very rapidly.

The next logical steps are those of expansion and more coordination. A table of organization, given in Figure 10, which merits attention was drawn up by Mr. Dan R. Davis, Instructor in the Department of Rural Sociology.

This schedule is rather unmanageable as yet because the size of the organization does not warrant such extensive supervision. However, it is still useful because the various duties could be consolidated until the size warranted placing a man in each of the capacities shown. It somewhat resembles the system used by the cooperative at the University of



Figure 10. A Proposed Table of Organization for the Administration of the Cooperative Project Houses

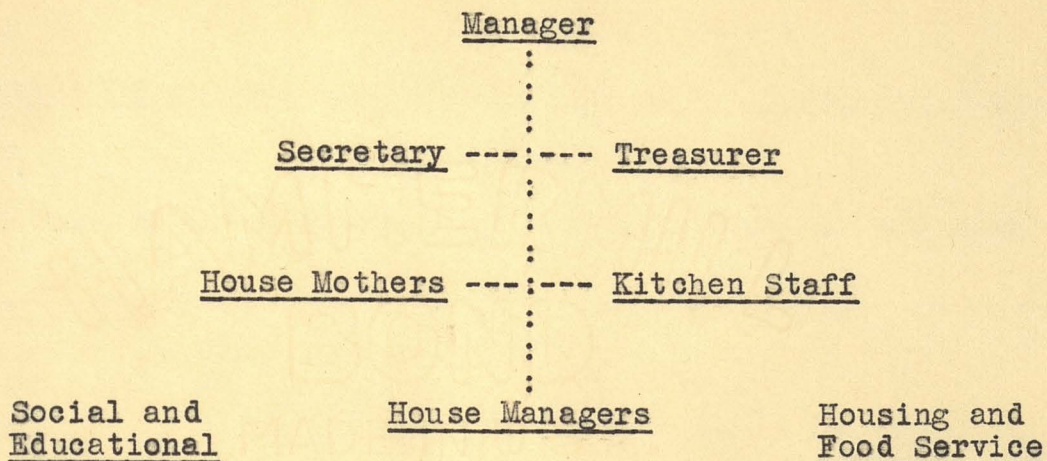




Washington, Figure 11.

It can be seen from these two examples that the administration of these enterprises is no small problem and, with the expansion which can reasonably be expected, it is going to be a much larger problem. At the present time the administration is under the supervision of Professor Daniel Russell. The various duties are performed by the Graduate Assistants assigned to his department and by five students paid from National Youth Administration funds. This personnel changes from year to year and it would be much more desirable to have permanent employees in so far as possible. They could help build and maintain this organization. This movement has become too large for mere part-time supervision and if it is to continue successfully it must be given adequate supervision.





<u>President</u>	<u>President</u>	<u>President</u>	<u>President</u>	<u>President</u>	<u>President</u>	<u>President</u>
:	:	:	:	:	:	:
:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Social	Social	Social	Social	Social	Social	Social
Educa-	Educa-	Educa-	Educa-	Educa-	Educa-	Educa-
tional	tional	tional	tional	tional	tional	tional
<u>Athletic</u>	<u>Athletic</u>	<u>Athletic</u>	<u>Athletic</u>	<u>Athletic</u>	<u>Athletic</u>	<u>Athletic</u>
15-A	16-A&B	17-A	18-R	19-A	21-A	22-A&B

Figure 11. System Used by the Cooperative at the University of Washington







## APPENDIX B

## AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL COLLEGE OF TEXAS

COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS

Department of  
Rural Sociology

April 17, 1935

To Home Demonstration Agents, County Agents, and Vocational  
Agricultural Teachers:

The A. and M. cooperative self-help student project plan is no longer an experiment, but a workable means under proper supervision, of getting a college education for boys of limited means, who would otherwise be denied such opportunity.

Three years ago we had one group with ten boys, last year 10 groups with 130 boys, and this year 22 groups with 238 boys. Most of these 22 groups will be back again next year, according to present plans. We have received many inquiries about groups from other localities. Our experience has shown us that if these groups are to succeed, they must have some direction from such agricultural leaders as I am addressing today.

For this reason I am writing you to know if you are interested in organizing a group of boys for next year. I know that many of you will not have the opportunity, but for those who are planning student groups next year, we wish you would communicate with us as soon as possible so that we may be able to look around and provide proper houses.



In order for the group to be most successful, plans should be carefully made a good while ahead of time--at least before school is out. Then the boys have the entire summer to contact one another, make and develop plans, can their food, and get ready to come to college in the fall. A group that starts its plans in May is much more likely to succeed than one that starts to planning in August or September. Maintenance, that is room, board, utilities, matron, and laundry, in the cooperative groups this year has varied from \$7.50 per month to \$15.00 per month. This has depended largely on the amount of house rent paid, amount of food brought, and the local management.

Houses are located near College and in Bryan. Most of the boys who live in Bryan arrange for an old ford or chevrolet truck for transportation. Since house rent is much cheaper in Bryan than at College, the average cost for a boy who lives in Bryan and has to pay around \$1.00 a month for transportation is no higher than for the boy who lives at College. The cost is less for the groups in Bryan than for those at College.

Rent for these houses varies from \$10.00 to \$50.00 per month. They will house anywhere from 8 to 22 boys. Some are furnished, some partially furnished, and some unfurnished. Groups that rent unfurnished or partially furnished houses should get together and pick up through a furniture shower, or some other way, odds and ends of furniture necessary. All expenses as maintenance, books, clothes, incidentals run from \$150 to \$275 per boy per year. In some instances work can be



be obtained to defray part of this expense.

A supervisor of the right type is very necessary for the success of these groups. Generally we recommend some adult widow or some adult couple. In a few instances young couples may be successful. However, managing and controlling a large group of boys is quite a task for them. Most groups are providing little more than a home and maintenance for the woman or couple who looks after them. I believe in almost any community there are a number of women or couples who would be glad to get this type of opportunity. We are now trying to get the F.E.R.A. in Austin to accept these as work projects; if they are, then the F.E.R.A. will pay a small salary over and above the maintenance the boys give to this woman or couple.

The boys in our groups this year have made good scholastic records as a whole. It has been a pleasure for us to work with the interested citizens back home trying to encourage these boys in coming to college. If you are planning to send a group to college next fall, we wish to assure you it will be a real pleasure for us to work with you and wish that you would let us know your plan as soon as possible.

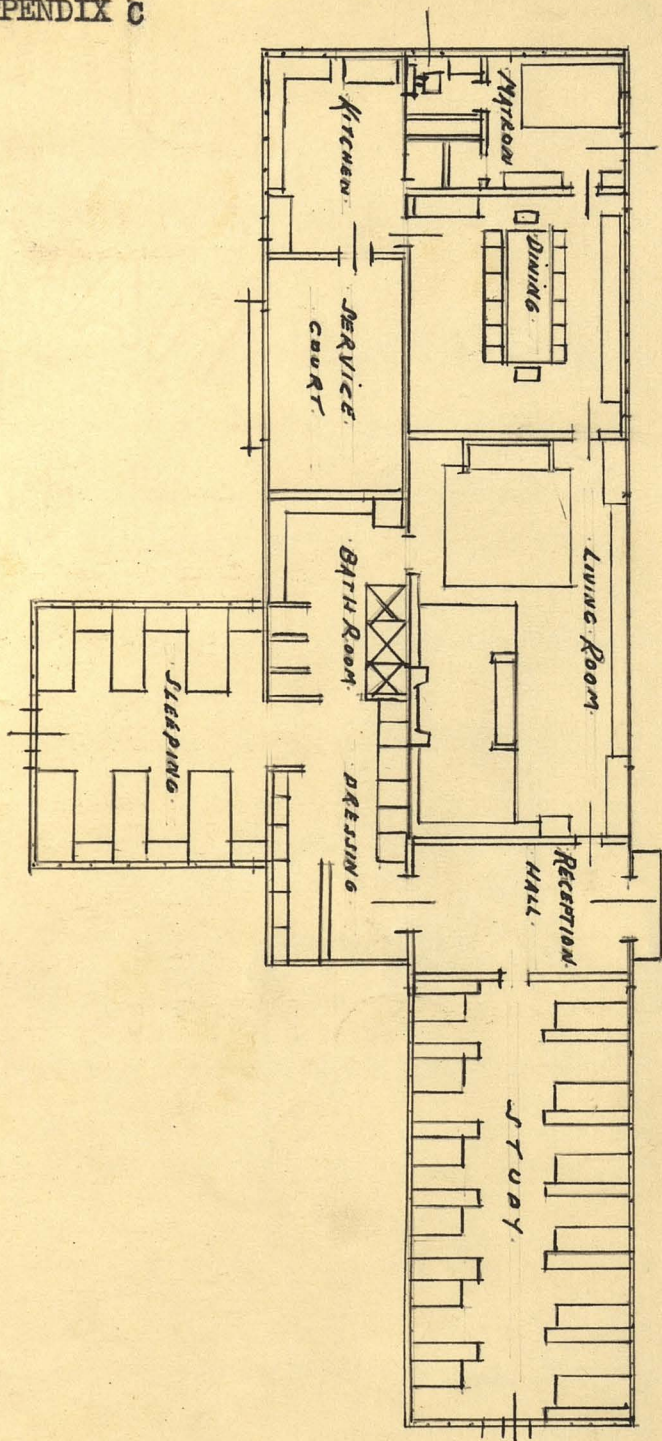
Sincerely yours,

Daniel Russell,  
Head of Department.

DR:LDR



APPENDIX C



House Plans for a 12 boy cooperative project.



## APPENDIX D

Questionnaire Used in the Collecting of Data

Name of Project House \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Name of student \_\_\_\_\_

1. Could you attend A. & M. if it were not for the project houses? Yes or No.
2. Did you attend a large high school or a small one? (Underline one)
3. Do you intend to stay in a project house next year? Yes or No.
4. Are you planning to form a project of your own next year? Yes or No.
5. How much cash money does it cost you per month for the following items: food \$\_\_\_\_\_; rent \$\_\_\_\_\_; utilities \$\_\_\_\_\_; laundry \$\_\_\_\_\_; transportation \$\_\_\_\_\_.
6. Would you stay in the dormitory if you could afford it? Yes or No.
7. Do you live in the country, small town, or city? (Underline one)
8. How many boys in your project house? \_\_\_\_\_  
How many rooms in your project house? \_\_\_\_\_
9. How much does it cost you a year at A. & M.? \$\_\_\_\_\_ (Include all expenses)



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