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MAKING VILLAGES MORE ATTRACTIVE

MANY APPEAR VERY UGLY

Interesting Report of Survey
By Government Depart-
ment; Offer Plans For
Improvement

Nearly 90,000,000 people in the United States, or about one-fifth of the population, live in villages, and 30,000,000 farming people use these villages for purposes of business, education, religion, health, and social well-being. Yet these centers of rural population are usually unattractive and often very ugly. Villages in other countries are generally much superior to those of the United States in design, in the character of their streets and public buildings, and in their approaches and recreation spots. A start, however, has been made toward beautifying the American village.

Examples of Leadership
Some examples of leadership in this respect are recorded by the department of agriculture, which has been studying the problem of village planning from the standpoint of its importance to the rural community and particularly to the farmer.

It is more as a buying than as a selling place that the farmer makes use of the village. In marketing his principal products he generally deals with some large distributing center. But he purchases his household supplies in the village. He goes there for amusement and for social purposes generally. His children often go to school there. An attractive village, says the department, is an important influence in stabilizing farm life and in counteracting the attractions which cities have for the young people of the farms. As the farmer's chief point of contact with outside interests, the village can make a big contribution to the happiness of farm life, even if it be considered from no other standpoint than the fact that it is the place where the farmer spends a large part of his income.

Local Initiative
Where villages are being made more beautiful, the impetus has come in nearly every case from local initiative. Villages that have well-planned streets, attractive recreation spots, and pleasing approaches are nearly always indebted for these advantages to the energy and public spirit of some small group of citizens. Under such inspiration dump heaps have been turned into garden spots, unsightly shacks and dilapidated stores have been torn down and replaced by smart, substantial business buildings, and extensive programs of landscape gardening and tree planting have been undertaken. Villages that have embarked on this path are finding that beauty pays. It improves local business and attracts tourist business. It enhances real estate values, and has a powerful influence in raising individual standards of efficiency and enterprise.

A Sample
One good example of a village that was not well planned originally but that now has been transformed into an extremely pleasing place, is Weston, Mass. Weston formerly had a large swamp area in its center. This has been drained, graded, seeded to grass, and planted to pine, fir and chestnut trees. A new town hall and a fire station have been built opposite the entrance to the common. Public buildings are now centrally grouped. Old, unsightly structures have been torn down. The improvements were planned by a landscape architect. It took 25 years to put the plan through, but everyone in Weston now believes that the enterprise was worth the time and money it cost.

A village that has realized it is Patterson, Calif. This village and a colony of irrigated farms, occupying 18,000 acres, were planned in 1910. Roads leading to the village were strategically located and planted with trees and shrubs. The village itself has eight streets radiating from a civic-center where the public buildings are located. In the last four years the residents of the village have built a public library, a community club house, a concrete swimming pool, and a grammar school, and have provided an automobile camp park.

Dump Made Scenic
A town dump at Lewisburg, Pa., has become a scenic asset, through the activities of women, who formed a civic club, launched civic improvement propaganda, and accumulated funds for an improvement program. Formerly the first impression a visitor got on arriving and the last one he took away with him on leaving was one of squalor, because the town dump lay across the main approach to the village. Today the land where the dump stood is the property of the civic club. Old shacks have been removed from it and refuse cleared away. It has been leveled and planted to grass, flowers and trees. It is spanned by gravel walks and surrounded by ornamental lighting standards. Now the visitor enters the village through a green and smiling park.

Growth of Plan
Many other examples of effective village planning have been noted by the department's investigators. Yet the idea that village planning is as necessary as city planning has taken root in comparatively few places. It has not the pressure behind it that

brings results in crowded cities where congestion makes radical changes compulsory. The government points out, however, that village planning often means great savings to the community; that it is never too early nor too late to begin it; and that the expense is almost never prohibitive and is seldom a serious handicap.

**WHERE IMMIGRANTS
COME FROM TO U. S.**
Italy and Russia are now chief sources, instead of Ireland, England

Italy and Russia have supplanted Ireland and England among leading contributors to the foreign-born population of the United States in the last 25 years, according to A. W. Frye, supreme commander of the

Maccabees, in an address at Detroit. Germany, he said, has maintained first place.

"In 1900 the ten European countries contributing most of the immigrants to America were: Germany, Ireland, England, Canada, Sweden, Russia, Austria, Italy, Norway and Scotland," said Mr. Frye, whose society is conducting a campaign of Americanization. "In 1920 the order stood: Germany, Italy, Russia, Poland, Canada, Ireland, England, Sweden, Austria and Mexico."

"In forty years the number of Russians in the United States multiplied 39 times, while that of the Italians grew 36 times. Most of the Russians were Jews. Foreign-born mothers are much more prolific than native-born, according to vital statistics.

"How the introduction of all these foreigners will affect future generations is a vital question. Education of foreigners to an appreciation of American institutions and traditions and to ideals of citizenship is a national duty. The Americanization program of the Maccabees, of which the automobile caravan to Washington next summer is a part, is doing important work in this direction."

Mr. Frye declared census figures showed that there are 13,700,000 foreign born whites in the United States.

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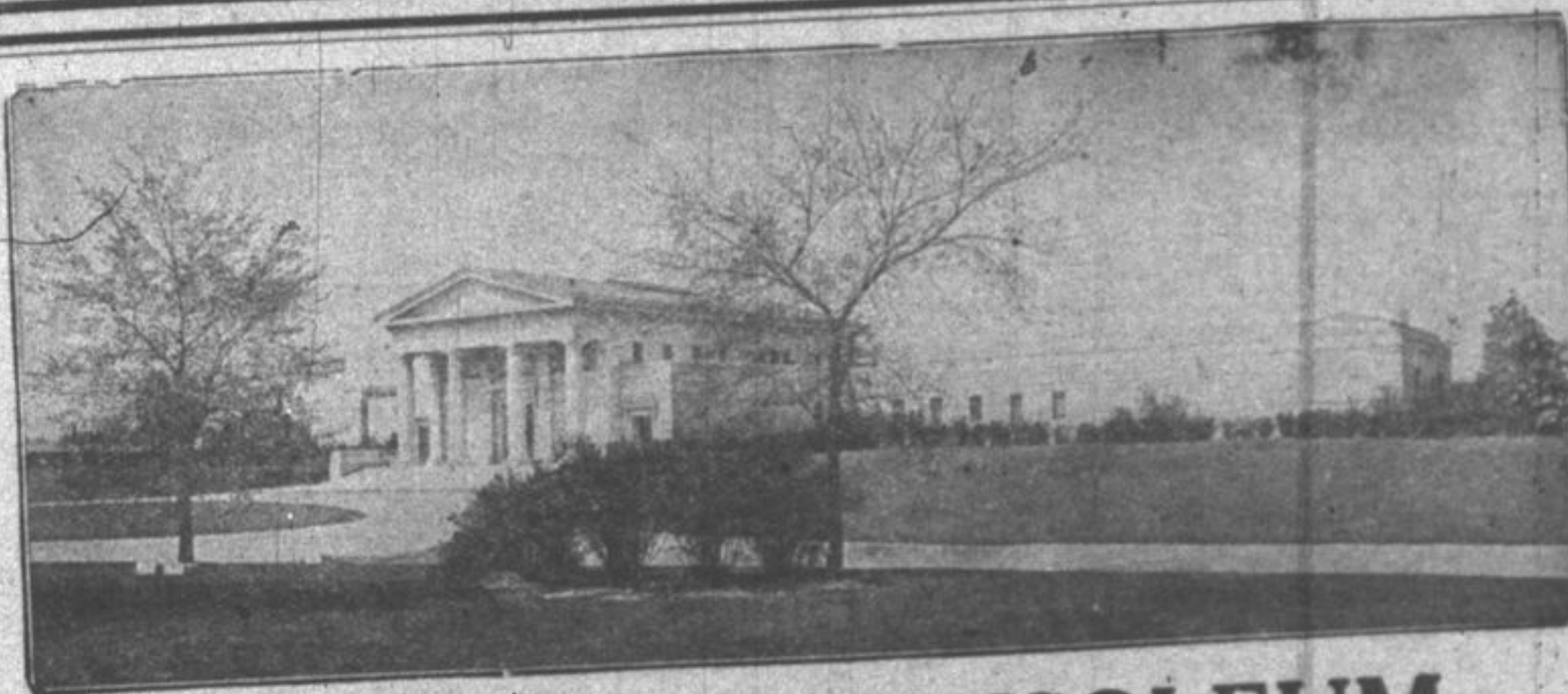
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