CHAPTER 27

FEATURE STORY STYLE

A STORY is told in the Bible of how the Spirit of the Lord took the prophet Ezekiel up on a high mountain top and showed him a valley covered with dry bones. On command of the spirit, the prophet prophesied and the dry bones rattled, stirred and came together. Again he prophesied to them and they stood up and were clothed with flesh and armor. A third time he prophesied, and the breath of life came to them and they stood, a great army of living warriors.

The feature writer must take the dry bones of fact, from his notes, documents, bulletins, books, cost account sheets, tax reports, tables of experimental data, halting and disconnected phrases, bits of information gleaned here and there, and infuse them with the breath of life so that his article may become a living, organic unit.

Instead of prophesying to the dry bones of his material, he must give his story, as it assumes shape, three qualities, originality, imagination, and personality.

What is it that makes one man's poems so different from all the others—or one man's pictures, or one man's music? The answer is to be found primarily in the three qualities that we have named.

In the same way it is these qualities which give distinction—what writers call style—to feature articles.

Originality: Originality is the seeing—and the writing—of things in a new, an original, way. We say of a man that he is "an original," meaning that he is a little queer, unconventional or abnormal. Originality in writing means much the same thing. It may be carried to the point where it becomes eccentricity and abnormality, but in its measured use it lifts writing out of the humdrum, the trite, the commonplace. Most novices err in the direction of too great restraint. They are afraid to "let themselves

go." But just that quality of freshness and unrestraint gives originality to what one writes.

Originality manifests itself in writing in the use of words that are sharp-edged, apposite, undulled by use, by the insertion of the homey, colloquial phrases in which a farmer, for instance, has described his place, by the use of novel comparisons, analogies, figures of speech.

Imagination: Imagination is a first cousin of originality; in fact, originality grows out of imagination—the power to recombine the elements of experience, one's memories, into something new that he has never seen or heard.

Imagination is one of the three most potent forces in the world. The others are intelligence and passion. By means of imagination, working upon the raw materials of knowledge and driven by the motive power of passion, all new ideas are born into the world. That is where discoveries, inventions, religion, the forward jumps of science come from.

In the work of the feature writer, imagination must recombine the materials of knowledge, the data, the figures, the words, into something new and significant, vivid and alive. One takes from a bulletin a table showing the results of feeding steers three different rations. To an unimaginative and casual glance it is only a group of black figures on white paper. But look at it closely, read it over, with the mind concentrated upon it, searching its implications and significances. It becomes something quite different. One does not see a piece of paper with black figures. In their place are farms scattered over a dozen states, farmers going about their tasks, animals in paddocks and fields—this whole business of feeding livestock modified just a little, made a little more profitable, by means of those black marks on white paper.

Personality: Personality in writing is, of course, the putting of one's self into what one writes—the putting of one's trademark on the article that he has manufactured. This is an element of originality and is valuable for that reason.

How does one put personality into his writing?—largely by letting himself go, by being natural, by writing more or less as he talks and thinks. Many a beginner will stumble along awkwardly,

haltingly, unnaturally, dully as he writes his feature articles, whereas when he writes to a close friend he gives his letter all the attractiveness and interest of his personality, his unique point of view. It is well to note in this connection that a writer needs to know what kind of writing he can do best, what kind of subject matter he can handle to best effect, what kind of style he can most successfully employ.

Qualities of feature article style: Granted that all of one's writings should be permeated with originality, imagination, and personality, there are still other important characteristics of feature article style.

Perhaps the best advice that can be given to a novice is to tell him to write his story just as if he were telling it. If you are writing a story for farmer readers, imagine yourself sitting with the farmer of a winter evening, after his wife has cleared the table—talking, discussing, explaining. How will you talk under such circumstances? Not, most assuredly, as if you were giving a lecture. You will chat informally, asking and answering questions, narrating incidents, bringing up cases of other farmers that you know. And as you talk your interest will grow, you will become enthusiastic, warmth will creep into your voice, you will speak with sincerity and earnestness.

Now these are just the qualities that make a feature article interesting, a simple, clear, warm, enthusiastic statement of what you have to say. If it is a process story you are writing, you will do it just as you would tell a farmer out in his barn, working over a recalcitrant tractor, how to repair the machine.

The style or tone of any particular article, then, should conform, as we have seen in the case of the beginning, with the nature of the subject matter. A matter of fact story should be told in a matter of fact way. An experience, or personality story, and often times a news-feature and information story, should be told with greater effort to make the telling interesting and attractive in its own right.

As was hinted in an earlier chapter, the best recipe for interesting writing is the employment of the specific, the concrete, as opposed to the general. This is true because of the way our minds work.

We read with our eyes and our ears much more easily than with our minds. We can "grasp" an incident or an anecdote, illustrative of an idea, much more readily than we can grasp the idea itself. Many people's minds are almost wholly untrained for the assimilation of abstractions, and for anyone, no matter how well trained his mind, the illustration is more easily assimilated than the generality.

Practically, this means that feature articles should be full of concrete instances, illustrative matter, anecdotes, analogies, just as in conversation one stops the thread of his argument or exposition with a "take the case of," or "that reminds me."

Feature story diction: The diction of the feature article should be simple, easy, natural, colloquial. Especially must one watch the quoted material to give it the ring of reality and sincerity. When you are quoting someone, quote him as he talked. For example, we use contractions in our speech—"isn't," "aren't," "I'll," and so forth—and these should be used in the reproduction.

Colloquialisms and slang have their place, especially in quotations, for we are trying to write as people talk and think, and not a large percentage of people are rhetoricians. This does not mean that one should cultivate a style that is slouchy and undignified, but that one should cultivate with all of his powers of application a style that is natural, easy—and real.

Suspense and drama: Two further elements of interest in feature article style are suspense and drama, both of which have been discussed in other connections in earlier chapters. How was Nick Bjorka, who came to Minnesota twenty years ago with $50 in his pocket and went on a rented farm, able to become the owner of 240 acres of good land and a prize-winning herd of purebreds? If that question is posed at the beginning of the story about Nick Bjorka, you have created in the reader's mind a suspense—and an eagerness to learn the answer. And more or less that suspense can be maintained throughout the story, and, if it is, the reader's interest will probably be maintained for the same length of time.

Drama is struggle. It so pervades all life that a writer could scarcely avoid employing it if he tried. But that does not make any less important the conscious use and heightening in one's

writing of this element of interest. It is well to tell what Nick Bjorka accomplished, but it is equally important to tell what obstacles were met and overcome, for the accomplishment is in part at least measured by the difficulties that had to be surmounted. There is drama in the laboratory, in the affairs of the home and community, on the farm. And if the writer is alert to them, these struggles will furnish him with an infallible bait for his reader's interest.

How one writes any particular story is suggested by the standards and preferences of the magazine for which he is writing. Some editors are very catholic in their tastes, others enforce fairly rigid restrictions as to style. Some farm and engineering journals, for instance, prefer articles which are practical and straightforward and give scant consideration to stories which are too "popularly" written. These facts indicate the importance, in this connection as well as in others, of making a thorough, persistent study of magazines, to see how they are made, what policies guide the editor, what subjects he is most interested in, how he wants them written and other aspects of the magazine.

If, however, you are writing for a magazine which does permit the dramatic telling of facts, especially if you are drawing upon technical material, scientific research, stories from the field of engineering and industry—then go ahead and do your best. Some of the most effective material in the world is that from science, engineering, and industry. Imagination is the greatest asset the scientists and the engineer have. There are dramatic possibilities of the highest order in the work and lives of the men and women of the technical and scientific world. Make use of them.

Some practical hints: In writing an article for a particular magazine, follow the style of that publication with regard to the mechanical details of writing. This applies to spelling, use of capitals, use of figures, statistics, technical terms and symbols, drawings and graphs, and the like. As an illustration, if a magazine of large circulation does not include statistical tables you should not submit an article which includes them. It will then be necessary for you to put into sentences and paragraphs the essential information contained in the tables. Not many magazines

of today, except those published for technical readers, use drawings or graphs.

General magazines, especially in the farm, women's, and garden field, do not use trade names. So instead it will be necessary to use a word or phrase which will describe a product. Thus, instead of "Blackleaf-40," use the term nicotine sulfate. Do not say that it was a John Deere or a Farmall tractor but that it was a general-purpose tractor, and give horsepower if that is essential. You would not write that Mrs. Jones has a Westinghouse or a Hot Point electric range. Use phonograph, not victrola; camera rather than kodak.

Most general magazines as a rule do not make specific mention of one product or material when there are competing materials which also might be used. Thus it is better to write "shortening" rather than lard, vegetable oil, or crisco, in a cooking recipe. If, for example, you write of spraying roses with bordeaux mixture, it is well to point out that good results are also secured with dusting sulfur and with various commercial sprays and dusts.

Neither is it good policy to draw comparisons between two different things or materials, to the detriment of one. For example, do not say that Jersey cows are better than Holsteins; that gas ranges are more economical than electric. You are at liberty, however, to cite experimental evidence, but make sure you identify it as such.

Still another point to keep in mind is that it is often unwise to draw comparison between home-made products and commercially made products of the same sort. This would apply to home-mixed fertilizers and commercial complete fertilizers mixed by the manufacturer; to home-made equipment of various kinds. You can tell how the farmer made the poultry waterer but don't say that it was cheaper than one he could have bought.

When you write for trade and technical papers, however, these conditions do not apply in many cases. Most trade and technical papers do give trade names, names and addresses of manufacturers, and sometimes include prices. This is what the reader wants from his magazine. Those specific details are part of the news to him, the things which make the periodical most valuable.

Engineering periodicals might run an article, based on actual tests or experiments, which would make comparisons between materials, equipment, or methods.

Good examples of feature articles: In the earlier editions of this textbook, a good many examples of different types of feature articles and stories from magazines and newspapers were included. It is perhaps better that each succeeding class in technical journalism find its own examples in current issues of various publications and that each student find examples of special interest in his or her own field. The few examples which follow have been selected to illustrate interesting writing and they closely approximate the type of stories which college students might gather and write.

This first story, which appeared in the Columbus, Ohio, *Citizen*, was written by a staff reporter who visited Farmers' Week on a university campus, saw something unusual, and proceeded to find out what it was. It is an excellent example of a story which one writer may find but which other reporters, looking for the more obvious things, so often miss.

COLUMBUS DAY BY DAY

By Jim Fusco

ON A TABLE in Ives Hall where farm equipment is being exhibited for visitors at Farmers' Week at Ohio State University, lies an old rusty trap, pieces of fur still clinging to it, and thereby hangs a tale.

It begins with the purchase by Everett Antrim, former Furnas Ice Cream Co. executive, of a large farm south of Morral in Marion County last year.

Mr. Antrim found the farm quite wet, couldn't locate the outlets for his tile system of drainage, couldn't even locate the tile.

He learned that the tile lines had been laid more than 50 years before. So in order to find something of the system he began searching for the man who laid them, if he was still living.

He found the man, quite old, in a Marion Hospital, apparently on his deathbed. So he hastened to see the man who drew from a good memory and sketched the location of the tile on the farm.

"But," said the old man, "there was one 10-inch outlet tile which didn't work very long. About 50 years ago a trap was laid near the outlet on the banks of the Scioto River. That trap disappeared.

"I always suspected that an animal got caught in that trap and dragged it into the tile, thereby blocking it and dying."

Mr. Antrim went back to the farm, located the tile and, sure enough, he found an old trap, the skeleton of a coon visible, in the tile 150 feet away from the outlet into the Scioto.

I LISTENED TO Virgil Overholt, extension agricultural engineer at Ohio State University, tell this story and I could see then why he took so much pride in that and other drainage tile exhibits which attract the attention of farmers at Ives Hall.

"That incident, and others similar to it, prove that tile outlets should be protected with a grating so that animals can't enter," advised Mr. Overholt. "The tile will admit an animal but once they

enter they can't turn around and go back. So they go forward until they die.

"In Delaware they found a 100-pound hog imbedded in a 22-inch tile."

MR. OVERHOLT pointed to some tile exhibits more than 100 years old, especially noting a piece that came from the farm of John Johnston, believed to be the father of the drainage system in America, who laid down 16 miles of tile in about 1835.

He also showed me a piece of tile which, made in England, had carried water for more than 100 years near Philo, O. And there was an ancient piece of tile, made on a potter's wheel and molded with the fingers.

As to drainage itself in Ohio Mr. Overholt is an expert. He told me that this state has more public drainage ditches than any state in the union—25,000 miles of them built at a cost of $36,000,000.

In addition farmers have invested $72,000,000 in their own drain tile, using public ditches as outlets.

About 85 per cent of Ohio's huge drainage system, he said, will be found in the 20 counties in Northwestern Ohio which once constituted the "Black Swamp." Construction of ditches there began in 1851 when medical authorities urged measures to stop the advance of malaria and cholera in that region.

In fact, said Mr. Overholt, there is a cemetery now in Hancock County which still bears the name of Cholera Cemetery because nearly all buried in it died of a cholera epidemic in the middle of the last century.

The "Black Swamp" lands, as a result of drainage, today have the highest agricultural land values in the state, he said.

And charges that drainage system chases wild life away are absolutely false, he asserted, for the fact is that fertile lands provide food for wild life and the birds follow the ditches during their daily migrations.

"Most of the pheasant hunting is done in counties having good drainage systems," he said.

The following story, which appeared in the *Des Moines Sunday Register*, illustrates how a college or university campus can often disclose a feature of entrancing interest. That it is an abandoned campus adds to the interest. Notice how the writer has built up the human interest by the use of specific and exact details. This story was illustrated with a layout of four photographs.

A SCHOOL DIES—BUT LIFE LINGERS IN ITS MUSTY HALLS

By Louis Cook, jr.

There's a victrola in the physics laboratory at old Des Moines university. It's wound up. A fresh needle is in the tone arm.

When the lever is shifted the disc goes around and out comes "I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles," by the Columbia saxophone quartet.

In the 15,000-volume library a volume of Westermarck's "History of Human Marriage" is set out on a table, open to page 50.

The reagent bottles in the chemistry laboratory are half full of sulphuric acid. The organ on the second floor of arts hall is open, the music on the organ rack is a choral prelude by Ferdinand Saffe.

Like a ship abandoned in mid-ocean is old Des Moines university in Highland Park. The sails are all set, but she isn't going anywhere.

A student riot over dismissal of several faculty members, one of whom was charged by school officials with failure to teach anti-evolution, culminated in final closing of the school.

It had been operated by the Baptist Bible Union of North America.

That was in May of 1929.

Since then the only "long term" occupants of the school have been a squirrel who lives under an eave of one of the buildings and a partly dismembered skeleton in the pharmacy college.

The Highland Park American Legion post had quarters in the old administration building basement for a while, and church organizations and other groups have met there at times.

A custodian and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Carter, have been living in one of the dormitories since April, and they find the plaster falls faster than they can get around to sweep it up.

There are two four-story dormitories, a fieldhouse, an engineering school building, and a four-story liberal arts structure on the campus. The administration building burned a year ago.

Under receivership for many years, the property was sold a week ago for $150,000 to an attorney acting in behalf of holders of $203,000 in bonds on the property.

The bondholders hope that with the school in private hands it will be easier to convert the institution to some use.

So far, efforts to start the school up again or to convert the building to some other use have been unsuccessful.

There's money wrapped up in the school. Most of the buildings are old, but well constructed. The fieldhouse, with its basketball court and lockers, was only a few years old when the school closed.

Pianos

In the music department are four Steinway grand pianos, as well as numerous upright practice pianos.

The delicate balances in their dustproof cases in the chemistry and physics departments are as good as new; there's experimental equipment in the stock rooms which never has been unpacked.

Everywhere on the campus are signs of suddenly-uprooted young folks. On a dormitory wall is a schedule a student made out for himself showing that he arose at 6 a.m., tidied his room between 11 a.m. and 11:30 a.m., studied medieval history from 12:45 p.m. to 2 p.m.

A picture of Mary Pickford hangs on the wall in another room; a calendar shows that New Year's came on Wednesday in 1929; bureau drawers are half opened; discarded ties hang in the closets.

Custodian Carter has his problems. Scarcely a day goes by but what he must rout out curious youngsters prying around the school. They climb the fire escapes, slip through windows, race up and down the echoing halls, when they get an opportunity.

So far the chief loss, however, has been in the theft of football equipment from the field house.

Carter admits the place gave him "the willies" when he first came there, as it does most of the infrequent visitors who are shown through the dusty, ice-cold halls.

Now, however, Carter enjoys roaming around the institution, doing what he can can to keep the place up. When he has a moment to spare he looks through a book, or glances at the paper dated May 1, 1929.

There are items there heralding a new airmail service for Des Moines, and reporting that at Sioux City, Ia., bank clearings for the first few months in 1929 were 10 million dollars ahead of those for a similar period in 1928.

Business, people said, just was getting into its stride.

It would be easy for the food editor of a daily newspaper to prepare an article of information on how to bake clams. But Dorothy Sweet, foods editor of *The Miami Herald*, of Miami, Florida, has done it in the feature article below by giving an account of how clams were baked at a party. This made it news as well as information. Further details as to how clams are baked elsewhere helps to make this a feature story. It was illustrated with a page layout of six informal, human interest pictures taken at this party by a staff photographer.

(Mrs. Sweet, the writer, is a home economics graduate from

Iowa State College, where she also took courses in technical journalism. Her article, which follows, is thus an example of a type of writing which a home economics graduate may be called on to prepare, in which she can combine her knowledge of foods with training in writing.)

OLD-STYLE CLAM BAKE

By Dorothy Sweet
Herald Food Editor

There's no party as much fun as a clam bake! With the roar of the sea in your ears, the tang of the salt air, a full moon above . . . and clams coming off the bake to be dipped in drawn butter or hot sauce, what a perfect setting and what fun!

It was a traditional clam bake, as old as our country and one of the best examples of New World cookery, that Mr. and Mrs. Millard Chase invited 25 friends he other night at Baker's Haulover.

If you're interested in history, clam bakes go back to before the War of Independence, an outgrowth of early settlers' necessity of making the most of what they found in the New World.

History tells us that it was following a clam bake that the small colony of Rhode Island attacked the British, long before Lexington and Concord.

During such a feast word was spread that an English ship had gone aground outside Providence harbor. Right then and there, with the good food to spur their courage, a party of the men was organized.

Many Varied Ideas

The ship was boarded, the British beaten and the boat burned. . . .

There are several schools of clam bake enthusiasts. For instance, the Long Islander likes chicken added as one of the frills to the essential clams. In Rhode Island this is considered heresy. There, sea food alone is considered proper.

The real essentials of a clam bake are, of course, the clams—and more clams. With these should be served potatoes (Irish or sweet) and sweet corn on the cob if possible.

And don't forget the butter. There must be pounds of that, drawn butter into which to dip the sweet, hot clams as they come from the bake. There must be butter for the potatoes, too, and the sweet corn must be dripping with it.

Chase followed the Long Island school, and the chicken steamed to a juicy tenderness in the bake had an unforgettable flavor.

Chase's Method

This is Chase's method, one which could be followed at home on a smaller scale:

Out on the terrace behind his place at Baker's Haulover, beside the inlet, a fire was built. All through and over the charcoal fire were placed flat rocks to heat red hot.

When the fire was raked down and the red hot rocks leveled off, (cooks worked very fast so as not to lose the heat) sea weed wet with sea water was thrown over the coals. Over this was spread a layer of half broilers wrapped in banana leaves. Then a layer of wet sea weed, then Florida lobsters, seasoned and wrapped in parchment style cooking paper.

Between each layer of food must go more sea weed and in successive layers, baking potatoes, yellow bantam corn in its husk, individual yellow tails and last several layers of clams in their shells.

A topping of sea weed and a bucket of sea water for more moisture is added, then the whole covered with big tarpaulins. The canvas must be held securely to hold the steam; rocks and heavy pieces of wood will hold it to the ground.

Cooks Hour and Half

From an hour to an hour and a half is necessary for the cooking. With this method the food may be removed in courses. However, the clams are the thing. No matter how many frills are added to the "bake," clams are served and eaten before, during and after the meal.

Each item of food must be seasoned and wrapped separately before the party. The Florida lobster is split alive, seasoned and wrapped without cooking, which makes it far more tender and juicy than the method usually used of boiling beforehand.

You will need no coffee with your clam bake—beer or ale is the traditional drink. You will not really need knives and forks, either, for the food is best when eaten with the fingers.

The proper method of eating at a Cape Cod clam bake is for the guests to lie flat on the sand on their stomachs with their plates in front of them, letting the butter drip as it will.

But even with knives and forks and a table there can be no formality about a clam bake—and appetites whetted by sea air are tremendous.

There is many a method for baking clams. In Maine a pit is dug and the layers built in there. George Rector uses a wash boiler. In Charleston the "bake" is built over sheet iron.

Ideal for Florida

For Florida Chase's method seems ideal, as is his type of party. Here, where the weather is perfect for picnics and outdoor parties, a clam bake should become a part of our life.

This type of party is equally well adapted to the small group or very large. Since the food is all cooked at one time, it would be just as easy to serve 200 at a clam bake as 25.

Perhaps in our usual barbecues for large gatherings, we are missing a good bet—why not a clam bake instead?

We recommend it!

How technical stories of nation-wide and even world-wide importance can be found on a university campus is made evident by this next example, telling of a new process for making bricks developed by two scientists of the University of Wisconsin. This story appeared in the weekly *Press Bulletin* of the University of Wisconsin, as an information story from the campus to newspapers of the state. Note that it is written mainly in pyramid news structure form. Yet because it gives the history, the background, and the significance, it is also a good technical feature article.

BETTER, STRONGER BRICKS

Because they refused to quit working during their spare time on an idea they conceived almost 10 years ago, two University of Wisconsin faculty members today are the discoverers of an improved process under which many stronger and more lasting building bricks are being made in many factories scattered throughout the nation.

The process, which is technically described in the brick industry as "controlling the pH factor in clays," is more popularly known as the Barker-Truog process, because its discoverers are Prof. George J. Barker, of the State University's mining and metallurgy department, and Prof. Emil Truog, of the soils department.

The entire process was worked out by the two men on funds supplied by the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation at the University. A patent covering the use of the new process is being issued to the Foundation, which is a non-profit corporation, established and directed by a number of alumni of the University, with the primary purpose of promoting scientific research on the Wisconsin campus. Funds coming to the Foundation through use of the patent on the Barker-Truog process will go to aid further research at the University.

Control Is Important

The new process is simply built around the controlled addition of sodium carbonate—commonly called soda ash—to the clays from which building bricks are made. The soda ash is actually added to the clays at an advantageous point during the manufacturing process.

The mere addition of the sodium carbonate to certain clays is nothing new or startling in itself, but its "controlled" addition—and that word "controlled" should be underscored—is important because it is the heart and soul of the Barker-Truog process.

Clays vary considerably from one part of the country to another, even at spots

only a few miles apart, so that the amounts of soda ash which should be added to different clays to obtain the best bricks vary considerably and must be carefully checked and constantly controlled. Therein lies the valuable secret of the Barker-Truog process.

Make Thousands of Tests

Tests conducted on thousands of bricks made from hundreds of different clays from all parts of the country have revealed conclusively that those bricks made under the new process are much better and stronger; their moisture absorption is lower and therefore they withstand water better; they can withstand constant freezing and thawing much better; and in some cases their color is much improved and thus they make more attractive brick houses and other buildings.

Addition of the sodium carbonate to the brick clay is not very expensive, but what additional expense is incurred by the manufacturer is offset by savings at two points—in the power used to make bricks, and in the waste resulting from bricks broken in the process of manufacture. Less power is used because the raw clays when mixed with the soda ash become more plastic and flow through the machinery more easily. Less breakage occurs in the manufacturing process because the bricks are stronger and less brittle right from the start.

"The Bunk" at First

The two Wisconsin scientist-engineers conceived the idea of making better building brick by treating all kinds of clays with controlled additions of soda ash when they were working on problems with the Wisconsin Clay Products association almost 10 years ago. During the early years of the research work, ceramics (clay products) experts in the brick industry and at other universities said "it can't be done" and asserted that the whole idea was "the bunk."

But Barker and Truog continued their research relentlessly year after year. They obtained clay samples first from all parts of Wisconsin, then from all parts of the nation. Hundreds of samples were tested for their component minerals. Gradually they worked out the precious check and control system under which they could add the soda ash to the clays to make better bricks.

Then they began the job of actually producing better bricks under their process, first in the laboratory where they could control all conditions perfectly, then in the brick manufacturing plants of the state and the nation. The ceramic experts and the brick manufacturers had to agree then that building bricks were considerably improved under the new process.

Barker Is Honored

During the last few years, Prof. Barker presented a number of scientific papers before meetings of the American Ceramic Society, in Chicago, New Orleans, and Baltimore, explaining the principles of the new process and demonstrating their soundness. Members of the society were convinced, and several months ago Barker was elected a fellow of the society for his outstanding work in the field, and in recognition of his productive scholarship in ceramic science and notable contributions to the ceramic arts and industry.

In the meantime, representatives of English chemical companies became interested in the process. Just before the war started a load of clay was sent to England. Tests have been made on this clay, vastly improved bricks were produced, and now patents have also been obtained in England as well as in Canada on the process.

Someday, after the war, this new brick-making process will undoubtedly help rebuild a better England from the ruins of the island's "coventrized" towns and cities, Prof. Barker believes.

Stories of farm experience are written constantly by staff members of farm papers, by farm editors of newspapers and by free-lance contributors. The following, from the *Chicago Daily Drovers Journal*, will illustrate how this type of story is handled effectively.

It includes careful reporting, specific details, human interest, and the way of telling is made effective by direct quotation in part.

FIND FARMERS EAT GOOD MEAT

(By Staff Correspondent)

Montmorenci, Ind., Jan. 22.—According to packer figures, the bulk of good beef from the corn belt finds its way to cities along the Atlantic seaboard. The middle west, and many of those who finish out the beef, take a quality that is a little less desirable.

But in the experience of two young Indiana farmers this is not true and they have staked quite an investment to back their opinion that farm folks appreciate—and will buy—good beef as well as good pork and good sausage.

The men in question are Bob Howell, 32, and his brother, Dick, 28. Near here on highway 52 across the road from the farm which their grandfather settled a good many years back, they have put up a slaughter plant in which they do custom work as well as killing for their own meat trade. Getting supplies for the latter business is simple—they just bring some hogs across the road from the farm. Bob has been operating the farm for several years and annually feeds out around 300 hogs. A good share of these he raises. Some cattle are also handled.

Butchered for Neighbors

The start of the Howell plant was the demand on the brothers by neighbors who wanted hogs or beeves slaughtered. Going to the farms was inconvenient and doing it at home wasn't much better, especially as demands increased from year to year.

So Bob and Dick put their heads together and the result was the present plant. It is of glazed tile construction, boasts a five-ton ice machine and a boiler to provide hot water for hog scalding. Carcasses are carried on overhead rails from the killing floor, through the chilling room and into the cooler.

"We kept the investment down by doing nearly all of the work ourselves. By furnishing the labor we had more to spend on the plant and equipment. We thought we had it plenty big for a starter, but we will have to build another refrigerator room this spring to take care of the extra business. We will use the new room for handling meat in pickle, or that which has been cured.

"No, we haven't any visions of becoming second Swifts or Armours. We don't want the business too big but just large enough to provide enough work to keep us busy and a steady trade."

100 Hogs a Week

So far it would seem that they have done pretty well. Each week this fall and winter they have been killing around 100 hogs and 10 beeves. About 75 per cent of the work, sometimes more, runs custom slaughtering. They charge $2 per head for hogs in the medium weight classification and $3 for hog over the 300-pound mark. Cattle are killed for the hides. Their cattle kill is mostly yearlings ranging from 700 to 950 pounds.

Seven men are working in the plant—the two brothers and five neighbors. Greatest demand in the meat that they themselves kill and sell is for ham, bacon and smoked sausage. "We can't keep up with the demand," they say. No short-cut methods are used. Meat is kept in the pickle for three weeks. Smoking takes 48 hours, usually, but depends quite a bit on temperature. All ham and bacon is hickory smoked. Getting the hickory isn't much of a job as there is plenty of it around here. The smokehouse also is of tile construction and is located a short distance from the new tile slaughter house.

Neither Bob nor Dick ever thought that they would eventually be butchers—at least part-time butchers. Neither has had experience in the line outside of what they have picked up in recent months and what knowledge they acquired in their first butchering work for neighbors. However, watching them presiding at the block, or splitting a hog or steer carcass, one would think they had been in the business for many years.

Taught and Coached

Prior to their present jobs Bob ran the home place across the road and raised and fed hogs—and still does. Dick was active in 4-H club work and after college taught in high school and coached athletics. But he says he much prefers his present job and the chance to build up a business.

The work may be harder but it is also more interesting, he says.

One might think that a locker plant might work well in connection with the present plant, but the brothers think otherwise. For there are a number of successful locker plants in adjoining towns and another one might be one too many. But as it is, much of the meat that they kill finds its way into lockers in nearby communities.

"It isn't often that a new business exceeds expectations as much as ours has," said Bob as he cut off some steaks. "We didn't have a chance to advertise or to do promotional work. Business came in so fast that it has been all we could do—and more, to take care of it. Rural people appreciate good meat, and will pay for it, if they know where they can get it.

Worth the Difference

"On some of that which we sell we naturally have to charge more than the chain stores. Take fresh pork, for example. We charge 20 cents a pound—the chains 13 cents. But we tell our customers to try a pound of ours against two pounds of the 13-cent product. After it is fried down it isn't hard to tell which is actually the cheaper—and the better tasting."

Probably the biggest quality difference is in beef, he says. Good beef is fed around here, but little had been finding its way onto local tables prior to the opening of the local plant. But the Howells have found that farm folks want good beef. Not only are they killing good steers for their own needs, but they also buy good beef. The biggest trouble, they find, is to keep a beef quarter around long enough to get the proper aging.

From the broad field of engineering come many feature articles which make good copy for newspapers and general magazines as well as for strictly engineering periodicals. The following story was written by an Associated Press man and appeared in the Rochester, N. Y., *Times-Union*. It is based on the news that because of war needs, an old mountain ore mine has been reopened. The reporter has dug into the history and tradition of the mine to get the facts for his feature account.

ADIRONDACKS IRON MINES REOPENED

Tahawus.—(AP)—Towering, timber-cloaked Mt. Marcy looks down on a startling scene of hurrying men and machines now conquering virgin forests of the Adirondacks to get something that makes white paint whiter.

These hard-fisted men, with machines that mock the rugged rock of the wilderness, are bringing into the resources of this nation's production a fabulously rich iron ore bed discovered 115 years ago by an Indian—and abandoned 31 years later to hikers.

In the primitive fastness of Essex County—where Theodore Roosevelt became President of the United States on the night of Sept. 13, 1901, when President McKinley died of an assassin's bullet 275 miles away in Buffalo—the famous Tahawus Iron Mines are being reopened for the precious titanium in their ore.

Clear 75-acre Site

It is titanium, one of the biggest reasons the Tahawus vein closed in 1857, that makes white paint whiter—and does other national defense chores that the National Lead Company of New York City does not discuss openly.

Workmen are clearing a 75-acre site around Sanford Hill for open bench mining of the ore. The vein, estimated to contain more than 100,000,000 tons of ore, is 514 feet wide, 1,667 feet long, and of unknown depth.

Construction is based on ultimate plans to mine 5,000 tons of ore a day. A mill will separate ilmenite, the substance yielding titanium, and the iron ore will be stored for later marketing to steel firms. Storage is being provided for 500,000 tons of ore.

Titanium clogged the furnaces of the old Adirondack Iron and Steel Company when crews of more than 200 men worked the mines during the 1840's and 50's. The

difficulty of transporting the ore out of the Adirondacks was another that was never solved satisfactorily, and for these two principal reasons the Tahawus mines were closed.

Needed by Paint Industry

The paint industry now requires titanium to add whiteness, covering quality, and water resistance to paint, and the textile industry uses two million pounds of it a year in treating rayon. The bulk of the nation's supply came from India before the war, but titanium deposits are now being developed in Florida and Arkansas—and at Tahawus.

Opening of the Erie and Champlain canals in 1825 spurred a number of enterprises in the Adirondacks, and the Elba, near Lake Placid, iron was being mined by Archibald MacIntyre. A New York state comptroller for many years, he was associated with his brother-in-law, Judge Duncan MacMartin of Broadalbin, and David Henderson, a mining engineer.

The Elba workings had begun to fade in 1826 when a St. Francis Indian named Lewis Elijah walked into camp one day and showed Henderson a piece of ore. It was the purest ore Henderson had ever seen, and he set out at once with the Indian to find the vein.

Near the headwaters of the Hudson, the Indian showed Henderson a vein five feet high. Henderson hurried to the Land Office at Albany and a tract of 6,808 acres was purchased for 10 cents an acre.

Won Gold Medals

Works were built and the first blast furnace finished in 1938. In 1851, MacIntyre ore from the Tahawus mine won gold medals at a London exposition in competition with ores from Norway and Sweden.

But the development of new fields in the "iron range" of Minnesota, and the difficulties with titanium and transportation, doomed Tahawus to a short life. The Adirondack Iron and Steel Company closed in 1859, and a trustee was appointed.

In 1876, the upper part of the MacIntyre property was leased to the Preston Ponds Club for a vacation spot, and the rest was taken over the next year by the Adirondack Club. There are about 30 families now members of the Tahawus Club, successor to the Adirondack Club, which leased the property in 1898 and is still popular with hikers and campers.

Theodore Roosevelt was vacationing with friends at the Tahawus Club 40 years ago this month when word came president McKinley had been shot at a meeting in Buffalo. The vice-president was bumping through the night in a buckboard wagon along a road to the Tahawus post office to confer with his secretary and political leaders when McKinley died.

For her foods article in the women's section of the *Chicago News*, a reporter visited the meats exhibit at the International Livestock Exposition. What she saw there in a display of more thrifty cuts of meat gave her opportunity to put news quality into her story of information about such cuts of meat:

DISPLAY OF ECONOMY MEATS

By Mary Starr

Prime ribs of beef, loin lamb chops, porterhouse steak and center cut ham slices bowed from the limelight at the meat exhibit of the International Live Stock Exposition this year. They make way for an extensive display of the more thrifty cuts of meat. The array of economy cuts carries good news for you if you have found that your food dollar doesn't go as far as it once did.

The secret of economy in meat buying is to explore the possibilities of the less familiar cuts rather than invariably asking for steaks, chops or roasts. The price you pay for meats doesn't influence the food value you receive, for the less expensive cuts are just as nutritious as those you might consider more choice, and when properly prepared they can be equally inviting.

An impressive thrifty cut of beef is the beef heel pot roast. It should be prepared by browning it on all sides, then adding a small amount of liquid and cooking slowly with a cover. The meat will be tender and

deliciously flavored when cooked in this way.

Other economy cuts of beef shown in the exhibit are the beef-blade steak, cross-cut beef shanks, rolled plate of beef, beef short ribs, the arm pot roast, beef brisket and the beef heart.

The shoulder pork roast is a good buy at the meat counter because it has but a small amount of bone and a high percentage of meat. Pork, as you know, is especially important in the diet because it is such an outstanding source of vitamin B.

Country-Style Backbones

Pork country-style backbones give you an opportunity to serve a delicious old-fashioned dinner without a strain on your pocketbook. The fresh pork picnic also is worthy of your consideration. If you like pork chops, take a tip from the display and ask for the blade rib chops—they usually are less costly.

Ham remains one of the favorite American meats even though its price has put a premium on its use. The shank end of a ham is an economical buy because it contains a high percentage of lean meat to bone and is as tender and delicious as any section of the entire ham.

Economy Cuts of Lamb

As a whole, all lamb cuts are tender and can be cooked by either roasting or broiling. For variety or because you like the flavor developed by braising meats, you may prefer to cook some of the thrifty cuts in this way. Lamb-shanks, well-browned and cooked with vegetables until tender, give a hearty meal that has a definite appeal for the men in the family.

Lamb choplets are one of the most interesting cuts displayed in the exhibit. The choplets are made by cutting a pocket between the ribs and lean of the breast of lamb, opening it along the side or at the flank end.

Stuff the pocket with ground lamb, then slice between the ribs, giving an ample and attractive serving of ground meat enclosed with a strip of lean. Lamb choplets should be browned, then covered and cooked with a small amount of liquid until tender.

Riblets for Stew

Lamb riblets also come from the breast of lamb. They are excellent for stew and are made by removing the breast bone and cutting between each rib. Veal riblets are made in the same way and are equally usable.

The breast of lamb, which is very inexpensive, is also attractive when boned and rolled.

Thrifty Roasts

The leg of lamb isn't the only possibility for a lamb roast. More economical is the lamb shoulder roast which is both tender and delicious. The cushion-style shoulder of lamb is square in shape and has the bone removed. When a savory stuffing is inserted and the meat roasted, it puffs up like a pillow and can be easily carved into attractive servings. Pork shoulder can be prepared in the same way and makes a larger roast.

Shoulder Chops Less Costly

Rib and loin lamb chops make way for shoulder chops of lamb when economy is important. Shoulder chops contain a lot of meat and can be either broiled or pan-broiled. When slowly cooked, they are both tender and flavorful. Ground meats and stews have long been over-worked as budget balancers, but they should not have lost their appeal. The not only thrifty but smart homemaker should double her efforts to serve them attractively so that her family will not tire of seeing them on the menu.

Valuable Meat Specialties

Nutrition conscious as you are, you will make meat specialties an important part of your weekly menu. The best known meat specialties are liver, kidneys, heart, tongue and sweetbreads. Liver, with its bountiful supply of iron and vitamins, should always be served at least once a week.

Many stories from scientific fields make good copy for newspapers as well as for technical journals, when written plainly in terms that the layman can understand. As mentioned elsewhere in this textbook, *Science Service* has in recent years been making just such stories available to newspapers. The example given below is a typical one

of this type. While it is rather brief and might be classed as either a news or a news-information story, it has all the elements of a feature article also. This was taken from the *New York Times*, but it doubtless appeared in many other newspapers:

TOOTH DECAY AND FARM SOIL

Houston, Texas. (Science Service)—Deaf Smith County, in the Texas "panhandle," may give to the world a chemical formula for preventing tooth decay, it appears from preliminary studies reported by Dr. Edward Taylor, director of the dental division of the Texas State Department of Health, at a recent meeting here of the American Dental Association.

The sound teeth of residents of this county so impressed a dentist in one of its towns, Hereford, that he suggested that a study of local food and water intake might prove valuable.

Following this suggestion, the teeth of forty-three native-born continuous-resident persons in and around Hereford, chosen at random by a teacher and an NYA worker who knew nothing of local conditions, were examined. Not a single decayed tooth or filling was found in these people, whose ages ranged from 2 years to past middle age, Dr. Taylor reported.

Equally if not more impressive was the finding that people who moved into the county from other States, with the usual number of cavities and fillings, after having lived there a few months ceased to develop further caries. Even a few cavities in teeth brought there as much as five years previously with active decay had ceased to be active and the cavities had acquired hard glazed floors and surfaces.

Tooth decay in Deaf Smith County, according to conclusions reached so far, is only about one-half as much as the lowest amount heretofore reported in the United States and much lower than the average.

Deaf Smith County is part of a high level plain, the top soil a dark, sandy loam, below which there is clay containing a high percentage of calcium carbonate. Moreover, wheat ground in Hereford mills has a high protein content and is about six times as high in phosphorus as the average standard flour. Milk samples at a local creamery contained 30 per cent more phosphorus than accepted standards.

"This indicated that possibly all vegetables, dairy and meat products of the area are comparably high in these elements so necessary to building and maintaining tooth tissue," said Dr. Taylor, who noted that every rural and many of the urban homes have one or more windmills, drawing water from a depth of 70 or 80 feet—water that has abundant fluorine and calcium.

Dr. Taylor declared his group believes a formula can be arrived at which will produce a high degree of immunity to tooth decay by the proper combination of fluorine, phosphorus, calcium, vitamin D and possibly other factors in the food and water intake.

The following three stories illustrate well the kind of story suitable for publication in magazines. Any one of these stories could have been prepared by a college student in journalism. Two are from *Farm Journal and Farmer's Wife* and one from *Concrete Highways and Public Improvements.*

DELAWARE'S NO. 1 FARM-TO-MARKET ROAD

(From *Concrete Highways and Public Improvements*)

Started in 1912 as a privately financed boulevard, the Coleman du Pont Highway, Delaware, has turned out to be one of the most important farm-to-market roads in the United States. Building of this 16-ft. concrete highway went

on for a number of years, with Senator Coleman du Pont supplying the funds for its construction. In 1917, the road was turned over to the Delaware State Highway Department, which was organized during that year. Senator du Pont continued to furnish the bulk of the funds required for the original construction until its completion in 1923.

Since 1929 the State Highway Department has been transforming the Coleman du Pont Highway into an express route between Dover, the state capital, and Wilmington, the largest city in the state. The old slab has been utilized wherever it could be and widened to conform to modern standards of two-lane width. Where superelevation on curves has been necessary and where the old alignment was considered too dangerous, new concrete has been built. The entire northbound lane, however, is entirely new pavement of portland cement concrete.

The Coleman du Pont Highway is now divided for 45 miles between Wilmington and Dover. Of this, 36 miles has a 50-ft. parkway separating the two opposing 24-ft. roadways. This construction extends from Dover to its intersection with the Elkton Road at State Road, Delaware. The other nine miles from State Road to Wilmington is a seven-lane divided highway, the four lanes comprising the southbound roadway.

Future plans of the State Highway Department propose the dividing of opposing traffic streams on both U. S. 13 (du Pont Highway) and U. S. 113, another main north-south highway, for the length of the state.

Justification for making the du Pont Highway one of the country's most modern and safest roads is found in the heavy traffic that has developed in the last decade. For, what started as a privately financed boulevard, is now one of the most important farm-to-market roads in the country, as well as a strategic main artery on the national defense system.

Usually, engineers classify farm-to-market roads as those on a secondary system which assure reasonably quick delivery of farm produce to centers of use and distribution by way of the state's main roads.

The Coleman du Pont Highway, however, qualifies as the state's No. 1 farm-to-market road. In a single year the following amounts of produce moved over the road:

One million crates of poultry—approximately 20,000,000 birds—from the "broiler" country of south Delaware and the Maryland eastern shore;

More than 213,000 bu. of peaches. These came from the Deep South as well as from local orchards;

More than 1,120,000 crates of cantaloupes, 950,000 crates of strawberries, and 2,000,000 bu. of potatoes;

During the strawberry and melon seasons, fruit from as far south as Florida is trucked over this highway.

Traffic counts along U. S. 13 indicate how extensive the truck traffic is:

A count made just north of Dover showed approximately 6,000 vehicles per 24 hours, 20 per cent of which were trucks. Half of these were out-of-state vehicles.

On traffic north of the intersection of the Coleman du Pont Highway, and Elkton Road, where Maryland traffic merges with that from south Delaware, the daily average was found to be 14,000 vehicles, with more than 3,000 trucks. At this station more than half the trucks bore foreign license plates, many counts at night showing that out-of-state trucks were more than twice the number of Delaware trucks.

Over Memorial Day, 1941, over 35,000 vehicles passed this station on one day and more than 100,000 were counted in a 72-hour period.

The maximum traffic, of approximately 37,000 vehicles per day, is at the town of State Road.

OUR FAMILY LIKES FROZEN FOODS

Mrs. Raymond Silvanus of Illinois Comes to the Farm Kitchen as a Guest Cook

By Miriam Williams
(In *Farm Journal and Farmer's Wife*)

Imagine enjoying May's rhubarb, June's strawberries, July's green peas, August's corn-on-the-cob and December's prime pork roast when April gardens are just being planted! Perhaps you don't have to imagine, but are, yourself, having dinner this coming Sunday of last spring's fries, and green limas and peaches from your own cold storage locker. For one of the fine things about frozen foods is that they know no season.

Farm Journal and Farmer's Wife folks experienced a bit of luxury living when our latest Guest Cook, Mrs. Raymond Silvanus of Lake County, Illinois, prepared delicious meals from her own farm-produced and locker-frozen foods. We invited this up-to-date young woman to come to Philadelphia and our Farm Kitchen to show our readers how one progressive farm family makes use of a locker plant in helping solve its food problem. Her story is helpful, we believe, to all farm women who plan a year-around food supply, whether they have lockers or not.

Since Mr. Silvanus was comparatively free in February when we arranged for the trip, he came, too. They brought with them, packed in dry ice, a whole assortment of frozen foods—tender green peas and baby limas, corn-on-the-cob, succulent asparagus tips and French cut green beans, pink rhubarb, plump red strawberries, and golden peaches. Also there were two beautifully cleaned and cut frying chickens, beef cut in neat pieces for chop suey or stew, and a wonderful crown roast of pork with the center stuffed with sausage. Everyone who sampled these foods at the Farm Kitchen praised their good color and fine fresh flavor, for they were prepared and cooked just right.

The Silvanus rule about lockers is this: *you take out just what you put in.* They believe it pays to choose fruits and vegetables at their prime, to follow approved methods as to treatment before packing, then put them into modern containers and rush them to the locker plant, which in their case is four miles away. Important, too, is the fact that their plant at Mundelein is well equipped, with a pre-

cooling room for meat, a sharp freeze room where a 20° below temperature is used, and locker rooms kept at zero. The operator, Mr. Bauer, an expert meat cutter, has experimented with wrapping papers and containers, and buys the best in quantity lots for his patrons.

We figured that it would cost $124.75 to purchase at city market prices the frozen fruits and vegetables which Mrs. Silvanus put into her locker last year. This included 380 pints of fruits and vegetables and 25 packages of corn-on-the-cob. As for meat, in a year and a half they have put in for freezing 2 lambs, 1 veal, ¾ beef, 5½ hogs and 30 chickens. They estimate a saving over retail meat prices (by the half or quarter carcass) of $85, minus the cost of cutting, wrapping and storage at the plant.

They use two and sometimes three lockers, at a cost of $25 a year, and usually make one weekly trip to the locker, on Fridays when Mrs. Silvanus buys groceries. During fruit and vegetable season, of course, they go as often as there are fresh things to put in. What Mrs. Silvanus cannot freeze, she cans, and this includes tomatoes, baby beets, pears and some peaches, besides pickles, relishes and preserves.

I know that the account of all these foods must make you think that "she has a large family." The fact is Mr. and Mrs. Silvanus have just one small, and adorable, daughter. But they have two hired men most of the time and lots of company. As Mrs. Silvanus said, "We probably spend more on food than is necessary, but it makes a big part of our entertainment. We enjoy our home, so have invited guests at least twice a week, and folks drop in besides." To be prepared for any emergency, she keeps a well-stocked emergency shelf of such foods as canned date-nut bread, tuna fish, shrimp, cake and muffin mixes.

Our Guest Cook brought with her some University of Illinois bulletins giving directions for freezing fruits, vegetables and meats. (We suggest that you write the Extension Division of your own State College for such help.) These, with suggestions gained at meetings sponsored by her Home Advisor, Mrs. Helen Volk, and her own and her neighbors' experiences, give her a real knowledge of frozen foods.

And by the way, have you tried frozen rhubarb? It's a favorite with the Silvanus family. It is cut fairly long for sauce, fine-cut for pies, and packed in containers without sugar. Other fruits, as berries and pitted cherries are packed in layers with sugar. Mrs. Silvanus fills cartons quite full, finding that they settle enough in the journey to the locker plant to allow space for expansion in freezing.

Mrs. Silvanus cautions against over-blanching vegetables. Dip them in very cold water to cool quickly. She picks vegetables early in the morning, when at their prime, and has them in the locker by noon. She never does more than 16 pints of peas or one crate of berries at a time, and often does asparagus and rhubarb the same day.

We noted that Mrs. Silvanus used paper containers entirely, trying several kinds. She feels that modern waxed and lined paper containers have these advantages over glass jars: they stack and store better in the locker, they don't break

and, most important, vegetables can be cooked without thawing, which retains flavor and vitamin content.

She has tried many kinds and cuts of meat, and feels her success is due to careful wrapping and low storage temperatures. Pork, Mrs. Silvanus suggests, should be used within four months, but she has carried poultry, beef, lamb and veal almost a year.

A near-by family, the Earl Kanes, like frozen cranberry relish, to serve with July 4th duck, also frozen. Another neighbor, Mrs. Lewis Mills, has successfully frozen cauliflower, packing tender flowerets and lower stems, to be creamed separately. She also froze 40 quarts of cottage cheese, and her family found it as fresh as ever six months later.

Such ideas as these are helping to write a new chapter in food preservation on the farm—one which makes possible a year around supply of fresh foods.

A NEW WAY TO PAY THE DOCTOR

(By Carroll P. Streeter)
(In *Farm Journal and Farmer's Wife*)

One day last summer I called on Leon Adams, a young farmer in San Juan County, Utah. He was riding a tractor around an alfalfa field at a merry clip, just finishing the second cutting. And he could do it serenely, despite the fact that his wife lay in a hospital sixty-three miles away, where she had just had a serious operation. For not only could he be sure that she was getting expert medical and nursing care—which is amazing in itself when you know San Juan county—but he knew that the doctor and hospital bill would be only $73.

The explanation was simple. Adams and 266 other farmers insure themselves against sickness costs through the San Juan County Medical Co-operative Association. Every year they pay a definite amount, an "insurance premium," of $35. Except for a few possible extra charges in special circumstances, they know that this is going to be their sickness bill for the year, no matter what happens.

They have exchanged the risk of a big expense for the certainty of a small one. They can plan to meet it because they know in advance what it will be and when it will be due—just like the installments on the new refrigerator.

It happens that the Adams family has had two major operations, on which they figure they've saved $500—"half the price of this new tractor I'm riding on," as Adams expressed it. But over a period of years the San Juan County farmers don't expect to save money. Annual payments may add up to as much as occasional medical bills would be. What these farmers will do is (1) get more medical care for this money, (2) *smooth out* the costs of sickness over the whole period, and (3) assure their doctor and hospital of a more certain income, thus helping to keep medical care available at all.

Whether farmers generally are going to change over to this insurance method

of paying for medical care (as well as helping to keep it near) no one knows. But they're going to have a chance to decide, right soon.

It's no wonder that something is being tried, for too many people are going without needed medical care. The Farm Security Administration found in a survey of 43,000 farm families in Texas and Oklahoma that *one in every three* births was not attended by a doctor. Of some 16,000 cases of serious illness no physician was called in more than 50 per cent of them. And many families who were failing to pay Farm Security loans were defaulting because of poor health. Men who were generally considered "good for nothing" oftentimes were sick, or were staying in from the field to take care of the children because of a sick wife.

Partly responsible is the increasing cost of medical care. The U. S. Department of Agriculture finds that the cost has gone up 16 per cent since 1910–1914, and that the average charge for a doctor's visit to a farm home is now $7 by day and $8 at night.

Much has been said about lack of doctors and hospitals in rural communities. *But an even bigger problem is to make it possible for farmers to use the doctors and hospitals they have.* There are 200,000 empty hospital beds on any given day, and a lot of them are in rural hospitals. Meanwhile doctors, whose services are so badly needed, often aren't called at all or aren't paid if they are called.

The medical profession's frequent statement that "nobody need go without care—we'll take care of the needy whether paid or not" doesn't answer the problem, for most folks *want* to pay and consider it a personal defeat to accept charity. They won't ask for free care. They simply go without.

The situation became an emergency for the Farm Security Administration in the depression years. It had to do something to protect its loans—by making it possible for farmers to keep earning. So it launched a plan that amounts to voluntary health insurance.

That was in 1937. Now, just four years later, 90,000 farm families, or 475,000 individuals, are enrolled. Local plans cover 754 counties of 33 states, including all of Vermont, stronghold of individualism.

Any FSA families can join, paying a flat amount per year for medical care. What they pay and what they get differ widely, by states. However, in an "average" instance the family gets ordinary medical care, "emergency" surgery (necessary to save life or limb), "emergency" hospital care in a ward, care of a mother before, when, and after a baby is born, drugs prescribed by a doctor, and enough dentistry to relieve pain. It's not a complete program of health care, but it's more than most of these families were getting before. Remember that these families are a low-income group.

In northern states FSA families pay $25 to $35 a year for this care, in southern states $15 to $20, and in western states around $30. The money comes from the FSA which adds it to the loan the family already has for machinery, livestock, etc. So far about 76 per cent of these loans are being repaid. For those families too poor even to borrow the money the FSA makes outright grants of money for medical care.

In each local plan the money is turned over to a bonded trustee. When a family is sick it chooses from among the doctors and hospitals who have agreed to co-operate (and that's usually most of them). The doctor then bills the trustee—not the patient. Sometimes the trustee has enough money to pay the bills in full—more often he does not. So he pays so far as possible, and the doctors forget the rest. The average payment has been about 60 per cent of the bill.

"This way we can pay the doctor—we aren't ashamed to call him" . . . "It's the only way a man like me can really get enough medical care for his family" . . . "It was the first time I was able to go to the hospital when I had a baby," farm folks have told me. And so far as the doctors are concerned, Dr. George F. Johnson of Alliance, Nebraska, pointed out that "We were collecting mighty little from these people before; 'most anything is an improvement." Besides, the doctors don't have to do the collecting.

But it isn't as simple, nor as uniformly lovely, as it sounds. "More problems arise than you'd think possible," one FSA county official in Arkansas confided. Usually they boil down to just three:

1. There's not enough money in the pot. The FSA families can't pay more, but some doctors, being human, find it harder to give them as good care as they do better-paying patients. In fact a few of the best doctors won't have anything to do with the plan. They don't have to.

Probably this would not be true in a higher-income group where families could pay more. Several authorities agree that a group of medium-income farmers, say in the cornbelt, could probably buy really adequate medical, hospital and dental care for their families for $60 to $70 a year.

2. A few doctors and patients try to beat the game. Some doctors have charged for calls never made, some have made unnecessary calls or done unnecessary operations, some have rung in unpaid bills from years past. To regulate this, county medical societies have set up reviewing committees of doctors who must O.K. every bill before it is paid. This does away with flagrant abuses; it will never cure petty dishonesty.

A few families, on the other hand, practically run the doctor to death, simply because "We've paid for it." Some health associations have regulated this by dropping families who won't mend their ways. Others have allowed the doctor to charge the patient for the first call in any illness.

No amount of regulation will make a plan work unless the doctor is capable and conscientious and unless the people will play fair.

3. The first year or so, an accumulation of ailments, neglected for years, practically swamps the doctor. Smart doctors, once they have this situation in hand, go on to do preventive work to cut down their labors in the future.

Despite the troubles, it is significant that 95 per cent of the FSA plans are renewed each year.

A second nation-wide development in voluntary health insurance, now beginning to affect farmers, is in hospital care. For $1 to $2 a month a family is assured three weeks or so of ordinary hopsital care in a ward, if recommended by a physi-

cian. Back in 1933 there were only 5,000 people in hospital-care plans. Today there are more than *six million*. But only 10,000 of them are farmers!

Why not more farmers? Well, groups of workers in factories and offices are easier to "sell," and collect from, than scattered farmers are. Naturally those selling hospital insurance have concentrated on the easiest market. In fact it appears that if farmers want hospital insurance they will have to take some initiative themselves in getting it.

Another reason why these plans have not reached farm people is that *a great many rural hospitals are so bad that no self-respecting plan will have anything to do with them!* That was the experience in Missouri, for example, where the State Farm Bureau has been putting on a hospital-insurance drive.

The American College of Surgeons, Chicago, will inspect any hospital of 25 beds or more, free of charge. All a community need do is apply. Why not have this agency inspect *your* hospital? You might be surprised, if it did.

No less than 10 million people in industry are already involved in some kind of voluntary health insurance. Employees of the Northern Pacific railroad have had their own co-operative for 59 years! Today they own four large hospitals and have 400 doctors on full-time salary.

The Michigan and California State Medical Societies are now offering state-wide medical-insurance plans. In Michigan Dr. Dora Stockman, a leader in the State and National Grange, pushed the necessary bill through the legislature. In many other states farmers will soon have opportunity to buy cooperative health insurance—if they want it.

The plans described here are not "State Medicine" (except that the government has had to donate to a certain extent to the Farm Security plans). They aren't the *compulsory* health insurance plans of Europe, with all of their defects. The medical care itself is not even "socialized"; there is group cooperation in paying for it. Such plans are exactly as "socialized" as a farmer's mutual fire insurance company, or a co-operative creamery.

Voluntary health insurance won't meet the needs of people too poor to pay the annual or monthly payments. It won't interest a lot of the people who could pay. But it is a device for those who are interested in trying to pay for medical care in some easier way.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Find three feature stories particularly marked by the characteristic of originality; three marked by imagination; three by personality.

2. Clip five feature articles whose style, in your estimation, is particularly appropriate and effective.