

Teddy Roosevelt’s Silent Echo: The Second Country Life Commission

Essay by Gene Wunderlich on the American Country Life Association

By Gene Wunderlich¹

In 1958, Congressional hearings for a second Country Life Commission invoked Theodore Roosevelt’s concerns for the condition of rural America when he formed the first Country Life Commission in 1908. The link between these Commissions – one retired, one aspired – was the American Country Life Association, an umbrella organization evolved from the first Commission. America’s midcentury social and economic transformations called for new institutions, and the struggle for a second Commission was an answer to that call.

Introduction

Students of the Country Life Movement are familiar with Theodore Roosevelt’s Country Life Commission (CLC), and its landmark 1909 report. Fewer students are aware of an American Country Life Association (ACLA), formed by one of the CLC’s members. Still fewer students realize that the ACLA nearly managed to resurrect the CLC 50 years after its first incarnation.

Rural America, like the rest of the nation following World War II, underwent massive technological, social, and geopolitical changes. Agricultural technology and capitalization shifted people and power between rural and urban areas. Interstate highways, air travel, television, the GI Bill, and home improvements changed lifestyles for many and widened the gap between those with and those without. The world represented by ACLA was undergoing a social upheaval embroiled in civil rights actions and Cold War politics.

ACLA serves as metaphor for rural institutional change. The membership struggled mightily over its role in a changing world, especially after World

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War II. In the search for guiding principles, the association conceived the vision of a Second CLC. The vision did not materialize as expected.

The First (Roosevelt) Country Life Commission

President Theodore Roosevelt transmitted his CLC report to Congress on February 9, 1909, less than a month before leaving office. Had the 20th amendment moving the presidential inauguration from March to January been in effect at that time, it is likely the report would never have come to light.

Amiable, easygoing William Howard Taft, while sympathetic to many of Roosevelt’s policies, had neither the energy nor inclination to vigorously initiate progressive Republican programs. Almost immediately in his new presidency, Taft’s attention was diverted to struggles in Congress over tariffs and income/inheritance taxes. The split between the Roosevelt and Taft administrations culminated in Taft’s dismissal of Gifford Pinchot as head of the Forest Service, following an interdepartmental fight over hydropower sites in National Forests. Country life issues went unattended. The CLC’s report, in fact, met with hostility in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Creating the commission, then preparing the report, was something of an organizational and production miracle. After much of Roosevelt’s soliciting and arm-twisting of persons to serve on the CLC, the chosen chairman, Liberty Hyde Bailey, declined to serve. Only Roosevelt’s great consternation and pressure from Pinchot caused Bailey to relent and, on August 20, 1908, the commission came into existence.¹ The CLC was charged with producing a report by January 1, 1909, that is, in less than 5 months. To supplement available facts, a half million questionnaires were sent to persons on rural free delivery routes and others. Responses totaled about 150,000. Rural leaders were contacted. Farmers held meetings in district schools, and reports from 200 of these were supplied to the commission. The CLC held 30 hearings across the nation, and individual members made their own inquiries, finalizing their report on January 23, 1909.²

The 1909 CCLC report contained a review of “the most prominent deficiencies” such as farmer disadvantages in the market, lack of training and education, inadequate transportation, depletion of soils, poor leadership, and hardships of farm women. Many remedies were proposed, such as improved parcel post and postal saving banks; creation of a highway engineering

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service; reduced disadvantages for farmers in taxation, credit, and transportation; a system of surveys of agricultural regions; education; and control of corporations and speculation. The Commission recommended:

- Taking stock of country life, including comprehensive surveys of rural life with Federal and state governments and educational institutions to understand rural problems and design solutions;
- Developing a national system of extension work for improving not only farming but all interests of rural life;
- Campaigning for rural progress including national, state, and local conferences, with cooperation of religious, educational, medical, communication and other organizations.

Because the CLC was unable to fully analyze all of the data collected for its study and report, much information was not included and remained unused. Unfortunately, Chairman Bailey allowed the circulars [questionnaires] to fall into the hands of Secretary of Agriculture James Wilson, who had become antagonistic to the CLC’s work and some of its membership. Many of these circulars were destroyed.³ Lack of a congressional appropriation also hampered accessing and processing the data; Congress did not authorize the \$25,000 Roosevelt requested for the CLC. Only 2,000 copies of the final report were published as a Senate document. Congress forbade any further Commission activity.

Nevertheless, the CLC report was a remarkable achievement. Historian Clayton Ellsworth (1960) noted that the report was a masterpiece because 50 years later prominent rural leaders went to Congress seeking a second CLC that would be as effective as the first.⁴

CLC’s difficulties with Congress and the Taft Administration underscored the split between Roosevelt’s progressive and Taft’s conservative wings of the Republican Party. That split resulted in the election of Woodrow Wilson in 1912 and passage of much of Roosevelt’s progressive program. Despite the initial difficulties, the work of Roosevelt’s CLC met with eventual successes. The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 created a national system of extension education. The Smith-Hughes Act in 1917 put vocational education into high schools. Transportation was given a boost by the Federal Aid to Roads Act of 1916. Rural credit was expanded by the Federal Reserve Banking Act of 1913 and

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the Federal Land Bank Act in 1916. Other improvements in public health, agricultural marketing, transportation, and education were consistent with the Commission’s recommendations.

The American Country Life Association

In November, 1917, Kenyon L. Butterfield chaired a meeting of 17 leading educators, church representatives, and USDA officials at the University Club in Washington, DC, to address problems of rural education, health and sanitation, homemaking, country planning, local government, and the social and economic well-being of rural people. It was a closed meeting, held without fanfare midway through America’s involvement in World War I.⁵ A committee, chaired by Butterfield, was formed to create an organization for improving the condition of country life in the spirit of the CLC report.⁶

From the Butterfield committee’s preparations, the First National Country Life Conference was held in Baltimore, Maryland, on January 6-7, 1919. That Conference begat the National Country Life Association, soon renamed the American Country Life Association. Subsequent conferences – their agenda and discourse – formed the structure and mission of the new Association throughout most of its life. Committee structures followed from areas of concern: family, health, education, social services, government and legislation, social life, morals and religion, communication, cooperation, and international aspects of the country life movement.

The ACLA envisioned itself as an umbrella of interests across a broad spectrum of rural life. ACLA emphasized social life over, but not to the exclusion of, economic aspects of rural development. Following the end of World War I by less than 2 months, the First Conference carried an appropriate theme, “Country Life Reconstruction.”

Roosevelt died at his home in Oyster Bay, Long Island, on January 6 1919, the first day of ACLA’s first Conference. The Association passed a resolution honoring him and recognized his role in creating the CLC.

ACLA’s first officers were Kenyon Butterfield, president; Warren Wilson and Edna White, vice presidents; and Dwight Sanderson, secretary-treasurer. Butterfield would be re-elected ACLA president for the next 10 years, and later was named an honorary president until his death in 1935. As a member of Roosevelt’s CLC.⁷ Butterfield linked it to the organization (ACLA) that

sought to launch a second Commission half a century later.⁸

For over half a century, ACLA was a forum for addressing the problems of rural communities and people. Its umbrella quality permitted widely divergent views to coexist. It remained politically and ideologically neutral as an organization, but ferreted out concerns of particular importance to rural people. The three major farm organizations – Grange, Farmers Union and the American Farm Bureau Federation – were represented throughout ACLA’s run, although ACLA was dominated more by educators than activists. Extension was always well represented. The mainline churches also were represented and active.

Work of the committees and the almost entirely volunteer staff centered on the annual conferences, most often hosted by Land Grant universities. Also, during the first half of the ACLA’s life, a lively monthly called *Rural America* informed subscribers of developments in country life and carried articles from Calvin Coolidge,⁹ Franklin Roosevelt,¹⁰ Henry A. Wallace,¹¹ Grant Wood,¹² and a great range of other scholars, activists, and citizens. The ACLA flourished during the bleak 1920s and 1930s, but by the onset of World War II, rural America had greatly changed and the association began rethinking its role and needs.

World War II and its aftermath presented the Association with a new order signaled by the GI Bill, farm technology, the Cold War, migration, medicine, interstate highways, television, and the Great Society. Conference themes reflected new problems, or reiterated persistent ones. “The Years Ahead in Rural Living” (1950) recognized “New Aims in Rural Life” (1955). “Rural Families with Low Income” (1956) anticipated “Our Concern for the Disadvantaged in Town and Country Society” (1963). The tenor of such conferences predated, and perhaps facilitated, the formation of the President’s Advisory Commission on Rural Poverty in 1966.

ACLA held its last conference in Morgantown, West Virginia, in 1976. With its 55th conference, “People, Land, and Energy,” ACLA suspended its own synthesis of ideas for improving the quality of rural life.¹³

The Second Country Life Commission

ACLA’s struggle with its mechanics and mission reflected a larger uncertainty in national rural policy.¹⁴ Economic, technological, and political changes

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worldwide were redefining the national identity in the 1950s, much as Roosevelt’s era had witnessed America’s earlier emergence. The ACLA forums on themes such as “Rural Life in a Changing World,” “Home and Community Responsibility in a World of Tension,” and “An Appraisal of Our Changing Rural Communities” reflected agriculture being swept up in national and international turmoil.

From the end of WWII through the Korean conflict, ACLA addressed a wide range of problems and concerns about rural America, but wavered in its focus. Its forums reiterated the association’s traditional concerns of education, health, social well-being, church, migration. The ACLA leadership appeared aware of this lack of focus as it worked to deal with rapid changes in rural America. Then, at the October, 1953, Board of Directors meeting¹⁵ in the Memorial Union at Iowa State University, Don Pielstick¹⁶ proposed that the association recommend to President Eisenhower creation of a Second CLC. His modest suggestion sent ACLA on a decade-long odyssey for new national outlook on rural America.

At the board meeting during the 1954 conference at Michigan State University, the idea of a Presidential Commission was discussed.¹⁷ It seemed a way to provide focus, energize political forces, and direct national attention to rural issues. In 1955, a committee, chaired by Joseph Ackerman,¹⁸ recommended to the ACLA conference attendees that subcommittees be formed to design segments of the proposal for the second commission, and that the draft proposal be presented to ACLA’s membership in 1957 or 1958.

At the 1956 ACLA conference business meeting at West Virginia University, the committee dutifully reported, but the matter was merely turned back to the Board of Directors without meaningful action.

By 1956, ACLA was reinventing itself and investigating emergent issues such as pockets of persistent rural poverty. At its 35th conference, “Rural Families with Low Income: Facing the Problem,”¹⁹ Ed Bishop – who, a decade later, became Executive Director of President Lyndon Johnson’s Commission on Rural Poverty – spoke.²⁰ Bishop anticipated new programs, and to some extent his own role in shaping them, by asserting that “failure to improve the levels of living of a large number of low-income families has resulted in extensive criticism of current policies and programs and in demands for new programs.”²¹

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Also at the 1956 conference, Don Paarlberg, Assistant to the Secretary of Agriculture, recalled Roosevelt’s CLC and ACLA’s inheritance of that calling. He spoke hopefully of the new experimental Rural Development Program instituted under the Eisenhower Administration.²²

A new committee, chaired by Milo Swanton²³, was instructed by ACLA President Arthur Wileden to draft the proposal for the Second Commission. That proposal was presented at the 36th ACLA conference, July, 1957, at the University of Missouri. It contained a lengthy justification, six objectives with economic, social, and spiritual “areas of concern,” and fairly specific recommendations on composition, structure, and procedures of the Commission.²⁴ The membership voted support.

In October, 1957, ACLA’s executive committee met in the Federal Extension office of E.W. Aiton to plan a meeting with Agriculture Secretary Ezra Benson in November. ACLA hoped Benson would present its proposal for a Second Commission to President Eisenhower.²⁵

On November 25, 1957, ACLA delegates met with Secretary Benson. The secretary seemed favorably disposed to the proposal, but remained noncommittal. He said the proposal would “need the support of many different groups,” implying that the proposal at that stage was politically impotent.²⁶ ACLA President Roy Buck, Vice President Aiton, and Secretary E.W. Mueller also met separately with Dr. Gabriel Hauge, an Eisenhower economic advisor. Mueller called that meeting “helpful and encouraging,” but no more.

The year 1957 was stressful for the nation. *Brown vs. Board of Education* successfully challenged school segregation, and federal troops policed the integration of Little Rock schools. The Civil Rights Act was passed. Congress undertook investigations of concentrations of economic power in several industries. Farm price and income problems following the Korean War plagued the agricultural sector, and the Soil Bank from the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1956 was implemented.

Tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States simmered over conflicts in the Middle East. The Soviet Union launched Sputnik I just before the ACLA meeting with Secretary Benson, and Sputnik II just after the

meeting. In short, ACLA’s proposal for a Second Commission on Country Life faced enormous competition for presidential or congressional attention.

In June, 1958, Secretary Benson responded to the House Agriculture Committee Chairman Harold Cooley with a reference to S3596, a bill “to establish a Commission on Country Life.”²⁷ The Bureau of the Budget did “not see any clear need for creation of a Commission on Country Life at this time. The duties of the Commission already appear to be vested in the Department of Agriculture.”²⁸ Benson favored the objectives of the Commission, but went along with the Bureau of the Budget.

Hearings on companion bills to establish a Commission on Country Life²⁹ were held by the Subcommittee on Family Farms of the House Agriculture Committee on July 8 and 9, 1958. The proposed Commission, with 25 members chosen by the President and Congress, would return a report in 2 years and then expire six months after that. Fact finding and problem identification were primary objectives, as was investigating the connectedness of urban and rural livelihoods and living. In his testimony on behalf of the legislation, ACLA President Roy Buck emphasized the changes in rural conditions:

... There was a time when you could almost denote country life with agriculture. And this was certainly true 50 years ago when the first commission was appointed....There are farmers and it still is largely the background of the country community, but there is also a place of residence and a place of making a living for millions of other people who are only indirectly related with agriculture.³⁰

In the fall of 1958, Rep. Brooks Hays of Arkansas, a champion of the Second Commission, was unseated. ACLA directors sought Hays’ advice on how they should reintroduce legislation to the new Congress. The Board also asked Dr. Buck to write to Don Paarlberg, then Special Assistant to President Eisenhower, to see if he could influence the 1959 budget to include funding for a Second Commission. Paarlberg was an ACLA member at the time and was generally supportive of ACLA’s program and approach. Privately, he may have supported the proposal. However, his response to Buck indicated that the administration’s wasn’t likely to back the idea:³¹

Thank you for your letter. I had thought, too, about the defeat of Brooks Hays and the consequent loss of his support for your proposal. I think that you are on the right trail in working with the Congress on this matter... The present position of the Executive Branch, of which you are aware, resulted from [an] extensive review, and I would doubt that circumstances have sufficiently changed to recast this position....

The proposal for a Second Commission on Country Life continued to garner support in Congress with another round of hearings in May, 1959.³²

At ACLA’s July 1959, conference, President Buck cited the hearings in the House (the Senate had not yet held hearings).³³ Meanwhile, ACLA turned to other endeavors such as the support of interns with the International Cooperation Administration and ACLA representation at the White House Conference on Children and Youth. The association tracked a bill by Senator Karl Mundt to create a Commission on Small Towns. Still, in the early 1960s ACLA was struggling to refine its objectives and secure needed financial and organizational support.

ACLA concluded that the strategy to create a Second Commission simply was not working.³⁴ A committee to redraft the proposal was created, and a new proposal was prepared and presented to members.³⁵ Throughout the early 1960s, at ACLA meetings and conferences, members held to the need for a Second Commission. Meanwhile, the proposal as being retooled even as new initiatives were undertaken, many under a newly emerging rubric of rural development.

President Lyndon B. Johnson declared War on Poverty in his January, 1964, State of the Union Address. After much civil strife and legislative lurches, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed by Congress and signed by the President. By August 1964, the Equal Opportunity Act was passed; the Office of Equal Opportunity was created to address problems in employment, welfare, and public services. Mass Transportation, Wilderness Preservation, and Land and Water Conservation Acts were passed. The Vietnam War escalated.

By this time, the social and economic pretext for a Second Commission on Country Life had been pre-empted by other public programs. Attention had

been diverted to war and re-elections. Between 1960 and 1964, ACLA committees had been active in reviewing the earlier proposals. Some congressional activity on the Second Commission continued to engage ACLA as late as 1963.³⁶ Paul Johnson, chairing a last ditch effort, noted that “Civil rights legislation and other matters have made it inopportune to mount a strong drive for such a Commission...,” recommending “that we set aside or abandon the commission idea and study other approaches to the problem of making rural America more articulate and consider other types of strategy for assuring our town and country communities of their proper place in the nation’s affairs.”³⁷ Thus, ACLA’s 10-year effort to create a Second Commission on Country Life ended.

It would be wrong to brand the second commission effort a failure. The ACLA and its member organizations had reshaped their thinking about the issues confronting rural America. How much of that reshaped thinking went into public policies and reforms is impossible to assess. However, on September 27, 1966, President Johnson signed Executive Order 11306 creating the National Advisory Commission on Rural Poverty. That Commission was charged with a comprehensive study of, among other things, “trends in American rural life...unemployment and underemployment and retraining in usable skills...adequacy of food, nutrition, housing, health, and cultural opportunities...rural migration, adequacy of community facilities and services...,”³⁸ all items that might have been lifted directly from the ACLA workbook. The odyssey for a Second Commission on Country Life did not end exactly as planned, but ACLA members could take great satisfaction in the report *The People Left Behind* issued in September 1967 by the commission.

Conclusion

It is worth recalling that 50 years earlier, in 1909, Roosevelt’s Country Life Commission completed its entire investigation and report in five months. Ellsworth (1960) argues that the birth of the Commission was long in coming, referring to Roosevelt’s association with mid-road populist Tom Watson in the late 19th century and the 1901 luncheon with Horace Plunkett.³⁹ Even though Roosevelt and Liberty Hyde Bailey did not become personally well acquainted until 1907, Bailey’s reputation was substantial and his work was familiar to Roosevelt. Probably the principal agent in engineering the CLC was Gifford Pinchot, who, through a long trusted relationship, moved Roosevelt to create the Commission and select Bailey as its chairman. Such expeditious completion of the report was, most likely, due to Roosevelt’s

decision not to run for re-election.

Had the CLC not completed its work before the end of Roosevelt’s term, the report would never have seen the light of day. Had Bailey not relented and agreed to assume the chairmanship in August 1908, the commission likely would never have existed. Had Bailey not succeeded in persuading Roosevelt to appoint his friend, Kenyon Butterfield, to the Commission, Bailey would not have accepted chairmanship. And had Butterfield not subsequently created the ACLA, its efforts to create a Second Country Life Commission in 1958 may not have been assumed by any other organization.

Again, a single event may have determined the fate of the Second Commission. Don Paarlberg, a member of ACLA, left his position in the U.S. Department of Agriculture to become Special Assistant to the President. He left just a month before the ACLA special committee met with Agriculture Secretary Benson, when the proposal for new commission was politely rejected. Had Paarlberg remained in his position as Assistant Secretary of Agriculture just a little longer, he might have been persuasive in supporting the creation of the Second Commission.⁴⁰

Endnotes

1. Other Commissioners were: Henry Wallace, Editor of *Wallace’s Farmer*; Kenyon L. Butterfield, President of Massachusetts Agricultural College; Walter Hines Page, Editor of the *World’s Work* in New York; Gifford Pinchot, Chief Forester of the U.S. Department of Agriculture; Charles Barrett, President of the Farmers Union; William Beard, Editor of *Great Western Magazine* in California.
2. The Commission and its operation is described in great detail by Clayton Ellsworth in his article, “Theodore Roosevelt’s Country Life Commission” *Agricultural History*, 34 (4), 1960, pp. 155-172. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3741303>, Accessed: August 26, 2010.
3. Olaf Larson and Thomas Jones, “The Unpublished Data From Roosevelt’s Commission on Country Life,” *Agricultural History*, 50 (4), Oct 1976, p. 586. Some circulars were not destroyed; data were archived at Cornell and results reported in their article.
4. Ellsworth (1960), p. 169.

5. November 16-17, 1917. Minutes recorded that “no publicity through the press be given the proceedings of the two sessions.” Appendix in Proceedings, First National Country Life Conference, Baltimore, MD, January 6-7, 1919, p. 175.
6. A more complete treatment of the history and patrimony of the Association can be found in: Gene Wunderlich, *American Country Life: A Legacy*, Lanham MD: University Press of America, 2003.
7. Butterfield played a crucial role in forming the first Commission. Indeed, Bailey held as a condition of accepting chairmanship of the Commission that Butterfield be named a member. Years later, Bailey recalled: “I said, if I serve on this Commission, I must have Butterfield.” Liberty Hyde Bailey, *Some Reminiscences of the Development of the American Country Life Movement*, Mimeograph of talk at Rural Ministers’ Family Camp, August 19, 1943, Tompkins County Recreational Camp, NY, p. 3.
8. Liberty Hyde Bailey was President of the American Country Life Association in 1931. He was assisted by Vice Presidents Charles Galpin and Mrs. C.W. Sewell. Benson Landis served as Secretary of the Association from 1929 to 1941.
9. “Fundamentals of Cooperative Marketing,” February 1925, pp. 3,9.
10. “A New Rural Planning,” October 1931, pp. 7-9
11. “Farm Tenancy Today,” January 1937, pp. 3-5.
12. “Revolt Against the City,” February 1937, pp. 3-7.
13. However, legally, the ACLA still exists. Under the laws of the State of New York, the American Country Life Association, Inc., is a “Domestic Not-for-profit Corporation” with a status of “active.” The Association was incorporated under the laws of the State of New York in 1924 and has so remained. *De facto*, ACLA ended with its last conference in 1976, somewhat ironically, the year the Homestead Act was repealed, with provisions for Alaska to 1986.
14. Changes in both mechanics and mission were reflected in revision of the Association’s constitution and bylaws in 1950.
15. Handwritten notes of the ACLA secretary and printed version of Director’s meeting minutes in the Proceedings of the Association’s 32nd conference (1953).
16. Director of the Department of Town and Country Church, National Council of Churches of Christ. His proposal recorded in assembled minutes of Secretary-Treasurer, Board meeting, October 5, 1953. At a February 1954, meeting in Washington, DC, representatives of the

Department of Town and Country Church, American Country Life Association, National Catholic Rural Life Conference, and Federal Extension Service discussed the state of rural life but postponed action on the Second Commission in favor of further discussion “with other agencies.”

17. Proceedings of the 33rd conference of ACLA, East Lansing, MI, Sept. 15-17, 1954, p. 78.

18. Other members of the committee were S. Janice Kee, Paul Miller, E.W. Mueller, Don Pielstick, and Irwin Will. Proceedings of the 34th conference of ACLA, State College, PA, July 12-14, pp. 77-78.

19. July 9-10, 1956 in Morgantown, WV.

20. President Johnson created the National Advisory Commission on Rural Poverty with Executive Order 11306, September 27, 1966. The Commission’s report, “The People Left Behind,” was issued September 1967.

21. Charles E. Bishop, “Clarifying the Problem,” Proceedings of the 35th conference of ACLA, Morgantown, WV, July 9, 1956, p. 6.

22. Don Paarlberg, “Facing the Problem” Proceedings of the 35th conference of ACLA, Morgantown, WV, July 9-10, 1956, pp. 27-33. In January, 1954, President Eisenhower had directed USDA to conduct a study of low income farmers. A 44-page report, “Development of Agriculture’s Human Resources,” was released in April 1955. A pilot program in rural development was initiated by USDA in 1955.

23. Other members of the committee were Roy Buck, Paul Johnson, David Lindstrom, Paul Miller, E.W. Mueller, and Irvin Will.

24. Proceedings of the 36th conference of ACLA, University of Missouri, July 15-16, 1957, pp. 93-98.

25. Assembled minutes of ACLA secretary, October 3, 1957. Author archives.

26. Following instructions from the Board of Directors, December 3, Rev. Mueller drafted a letter seeking support from organizations with ties to ACLA. Letter to Radio Farm Directors (repeat to others) December 14, 1957, assembled minutes of ACLA.

27. Sponsored by Sen. Ralph Flanders of Vermont.

28. Letter to Cooley from Benson, June 24, 1958. The Bureau of the Budget is now the Office of Management and Budget.

29. 85th Cong, 2nd Sess, HR 11844, sponsored by Brooks Hays of Arkansas, and HR 12239 sponsored by Albert Quie of Minnesota, bills to establish a Commission on Country Life.
30. Hearings on HR 11844 and HR 12239, House Committee on Agriculture, 85th Cong, 2nd Sess, 1958, Serial DDD, U.S. Government Printing Office, p. 38.
31. Letter to Roy Buck, President of ACLA, from Don Paarlberg, Special Assistant to the President, December 5, 1958. Archives of Wisconsin Historical Society.
32. Hearings were held on HR 5012, HR 5022, HR 5517, at which Roy Buck, Brooks Hays, E.W. Mueller, and others testified. Hearings of Subcommittee on Family Farms, “Country Life Commission,” House Committee on Agriculture, 86th Cong, 1st sess., May 6-7, 1959, Serial T, U.S. Government Printing Office.
33. The National Council of Churches of Christ in America, for example, sent a resolution to ACLA in support of the second Commission. Assembled minutes of ACLA Board of Directors, November 30, 1959. Others, including churches and church organizations, cooperative associations, state departments of agriculture, the National Education Association, libraries, Grange, and the Farmers Union sent letters to ACLA or congressmen. The Farm Bureau was officially neutral, but clearly favored the position of the administration, at least until 1961. Archives of the Wisconsin Historical Society.
34. Assembled minutes of ACLA Board of Directors, November 28, 1960. Author’s archives.
35. “A Proposed Pattern For a Presidential Commission on Country Life,” an exhibit in assembled minutes of the ACLA Board of Directors, July 10, 1961, and printed in Proceedings of the 40th conference of ACLA, July 11-12, 1961, Washington, DC, pp. 99-102.
36. See Report of the Committee on the Presidential Country Life Commission by Chairman Milo Swanton in assembled minutes, and printed in Proceedings of 42nd conference of ACLA, Raleigh NC, July 9-10, 1963, pp. 65-66. No new legislation had been in the House, and a bill by Hartke of Indiana, S.1967, was not heard in scheduled hearings.
37. Proceedings of the 44th conference of ACLA, 1965, report of Board meeting, p. 101.
38. President’s National Advisory Commission on Rural Poverty. *The People Left Behind*, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, September 1967, p. vi.
39. Ellsworth (1960), pp. 155-6.
40. Paarlberg later returned to USDA to be Director of Agricultural Economics. As Director, he addressed ACLA in 1970: “USDA and Rural Development,” Proceedings of the 49th conference of ACLA, Arlington, VA, July 14-15, 1970, pp. 19-22.