

A Brief
EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

of the

**Fayette County
Rehabilitation Project**

Conducted by the

AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE
[Quakers]

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA



1937

WHO WE ARE

The American Friends Service Committee was organized in 1917 by the Quakers of the United States and Canada as an avenue through which young men and women of the Society of Friends could express their desire to help their fellowmen, not by bearing arms and participating in war, but by helping to heal the wounds of war. This desire to help people is based on a deep religious conviction that there is something sacred and God-like in every human life.

WHY WE ARE HERE

Since the world war this country has been going through economic booms and depressions, all of which bear close relationship to the causes of war. The American Friends Service Committee, at the request of President Hoover in the winter of 1931-1932, undertook a program of child feeding in the Bituminous Coal Fields of this country. This brought them in contact with the difficult problems which the miners faced when the coal industry was going through major changes due to retrenchment following the World War, increased competition with gas and oil, and need for less men due to the mechanization of the mines. As a result of these contacts the American Friends Service Committee became interested and began to experiment with ways and means whereby unemployed and partially employed miners could produce their own food supply on the land and develop new skills as a source of cash income.

THE PLAN

As the next step in experimenting with this problem we have purchased two hundred acres of farm land three miles southwest of Republic, Fayette County, Pennsylvania. On this land it is planned to develop a community of about fifty families. From one acre to one and one-half acres will be included in each home site. In addition to this each family may secure larger acreage for gardening and for pasturage if desired. It is hoped that new skills will be discovered and developed in the community as an aid to cash income.

The following questions and answers will help to make clear more details of the plan. Since this is experimental we reserve the right to alter the plan as experience dictates.

1. WHO ARE ELIGIBLE?

Families with an industrial background will be eligible. Preference will be given to men ranging in age from thirty-five to an upper age limit to be determined in each case on its own merit, according to financial resources, family production capacity, and life expectation. In families with no financial resources there should be evident family production capacity for a period of ten to fifteen years. No discrimination will be made on account of race, creed or color; however, due consideration will be given to maintaining a proportionate balance.

2. HOW WILL HOUSES BE PROVIDED?

In so far as possible houses will be built by the families themselves under the supervision of trained mechanics. A loan will be made for the purchase of land and materials. The largest loan to any one family for the purchase of land, material and necessary skilled supervision will be \$2,000. Repayment of this will start as soon as the house is occupied in monthly installments extending over a period not to exceed twenty years. Interest will be charged at the rate of two percent. Interest and principle will be amortized at the rate of one dollar per month for every \$200 borrowed; for example, if \$2,000 is borrowed the monthly payment would amount to \$10.00 per month.

3. WHAT FORM OF COMMUNITY LIFE WILL BE ORGANIZED?

It is expected that the members of the group will work cooperatively in the development of the cultural life and economic activities of the community.

4. MUST APPLICANTS BE AMERICAN CITIZENS?

Since citizenship is basic to the development of good community life, applicants shall be either American citizens or shall take steps toward naturalization at once.

5. WHAT HEALTH REGULATIONS MUST BE MET?

A thorough medical examination will be required of all members of the families of applicants before final acceptance.

6. FROM WHAT AREA WILL APPLICANTS BE CHOSEN?

Preference will be given to applicants from Luzerne and Redstone Townships and the immediately surrounding area.

7. IS THIS A REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT?

This is not a real estate development in the ordinary sense of the word. It is operated as a non-profit corporation for the purpose of experimenting in finding a greater economic security and better social life for the great body of industrial workers in this country. It is recognized to be a small development as compared to the problem, but we believe it may have significance in finding the answer to the great social problem of economic insecurity and industrial displacement.

For Further Information Write or Call

The American Friends Service Committee
Republic, Fayette County, Pa.

Office located on the farm three miles southwest of Republic

Office Hours: 9:00 A. M. to 5:00 P. M. excepting Sunday.

