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Hill, James C., "New Farmers, Why Are We Here?" (1964). *Documents*. 914.
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IV

NEW FARMERS, WHY ARE WE HERE?

James C. Hill

VIRGINIA

NEW FARMERS, WHY ARE WE HERE?

New farmers, why are we here? This question has been asked by thousands of N.F.A. members whenever they are assembled for the purpose of holding a meeting. Each time we answer: To practice brotherhood, honor rural opportunities and responsibilities, and to develop those qualities of leadership which a New Farmer should possess. This answer has given us the three reasons why we meet, why our organization has grown, and why it has assumed an important place in the rural life of America.

As most of you know, the New Farmer Organization is an outgrowth of earlier state organization, begun at the suggestion of Dr. Sargent. Such organizations were often social and recreational in nature, but certain educational self-improvement, and cooperative features were often included as well.

Before answering the question as to why New Farmers meet, let me ask you another question: What is the N.F.A.? It is, . . . "the national organization of farm boys studying vocational agriculture in public schools throughout the United States of America." And this is quoted from the Guide to the N.F.A.

The foundation upon which our organization was built included improved agriculture, leadership, cooperation, character development, scholarship, citizenship, service, thrift, organized recreation and patriotism.

Now, why do New Farmers meet? We meet "to practice brotherhood, honor rural opportunities and responsibilities, and to develop those qualities of leadership which a New Farmer should possess." We meet to learn to do things which will make life more pleasant and profitable on the farm. We meet to train our hands and minds in order that we may make rural America a better place in which to live and work. We meet to learn the means whereby the great problems of industry, productivity, plenty, and happiness may be solved. Truly no group

ever met for more noble purposes.

In the N.F.A. we learn to practice brotherhood, we learn that we are neighbors with the world. Believing that competition makes a better world in which to live and work, we compete with our neighbors in the markets of the world. We do not want a monopoly of farm products; we want competition that will keep us working toward the improvement of ourselves, our farms, and our products. For we realize that to be recognized the farmer of today must be far better prepared than was the farmer of yesterday.

We of the N.F.A. are truly brothers in a brotherly organization. In the Boykins Chapter of which I am a member, our program is built around the policy of providing opportunities for all boys in so far as their abilities will permit. We believe in helping those who are in need. We believe that charity is needed among even the most prosperous nations and peoples. For proof of our belief in charity, may I quote a statement from our Creed? "I believe in the practice of cooperation in agriculture; that it will aid in bringing to the man lowest down a wealth of giving as well as receiving." I am fully convinced that our Creed is based on a sound and lasting principle.

The N.F.A. honors rural opportunities. No other group does a better job of glorifying the opportunities of rural life and of teaching its responsibilities. We are taught that farming is a calling to be accepted only by those trained in agriculture. We do not believe the idea that farming is anything other than a respectable calling fitted only for those fitted for nothing else. To be a good farmer is the greatest and noblest of callings. We feel honored to be engaged in the same occupation as former President George Washington, the father of our country. He was a general, but he was a farmer first, last and always. He was a model farmer who practiced some of the better methods of farming we are taught

today. To be fitted for farming, our N.F.A. believes we must develop ourselves to benefit all. As our Creed so ably states:

"I believe that each farm boy bears the responsibility
for finding and developing talents to the end that
the life of his people may thereby be enriched so that
happiness and contentment will come to all."

The N.F.A. develops those qualities of leadership which a New Farmer should possess. Through our chapter activities, we learn the value of leadership; we learn how important it is for the rural youth to develop this ability. In every New Farmer organization, whether it be local, state or national, we learn leadership not only by instruction but through actual experience. Serving as an officer in our N.F.A. organization is indeed an honor and affords a wonderful opportunity for developing leadership. It is not necessary to be an officer to obtain useful training; our organization offers opportunities for serving on committees and taking part in parliamentary procedures.

After hearing what I have said New Farmers, whatsoever things were lovely, whatsoever things were true, whatsoever things were of an honest report, if there were virtue, or if there were praise think on them. And try answering why we are here. We are here not only for our own improvement but also to learn cooperation--helping others along the way of life. The president's statement in the N.F.A. closing ceremony, I believe expresses our feeling toward life and our fellow man: "As we join with our fellow students, classmates, and friends, let us be diligent in labor, just in our dealings, and in all things be honest, and above all, play the game fair." Using this as our guide, we shall surely attain our goal--better living in rural America and this New Farmers is why we are here.