

THE STORY OF PARCHMENT AND KVP

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Helen Southon

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By Helen Southon ©1937

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### Editor's Note

This article is a sociology thesis submitted by Miss Southon who is a Junior at the University of Michigan. It was written purely as a course assignment under the title "The Sociological Evolution of a Model Village," but is [sic] so thoroughly covers the story of the village of Parchment and of the origin, growth and ideals of the Kalamazoo Vegetable Parchment Company, that it seems particularly fitting for it to be included in this historical issue of the Gazette.

### PREFACE

In writing this thesis, I have drawn mostly from my own personal knowledge of the development of Parchment, Michigan.

I moved to Parchment from Kalamazoo seventeen years ago, consequently I have witnessed nearly all of the change and developments which have taken place there. For the past two years I have spent the majority of my time outside of the village.

Because of this fact, I feel that I can view this model village from the outside as well as the inside. However, in order to prevent my personal loyalty to my home town from playing too important a part I have used selections from The Story of K.V.P. by Elbert Hubbard in situations wherein I felt that the opinions of a visitor would be more impartial than those of a resident.

Helen Southon

## THE STORY OF PARCHMENT AND KVP

‘Paul had a vision. This man had a vision,  
and when a man gets a vision, something happens.’

“You go about the world and find men without shoes, without clothes to keep them warm, hungry and lonely, sick in body, in heart and in soul—men without hands and without legs, blind, deaf, almost a total wreck physically. Of course your heart is touched with pity, but please save a little of that pity for the man who is absolutely void of any vision in life. He is the man who needs your pity most. Men and women who are void of a constructive purpose in life, void of any vision of what life is all about—these are the society folks of today, or those you will bind in the play resorts of the country—men and women with nothing to do, practically through with life. They are the most miserable people of the race. Some never had a vision, others lost what they had or accomplished their purpose and never received a new one. The failures of life are made up from this class of men and women.

“So, to me, these visionless men and women are to be pitied. They are likened unto a ship on the high seas without a compass.

“My vision that I have twenty-five years ago when we started this business is as completely out-of-date as the horse and buggy is today. It is necessary to have your vision renewed just as machinery and methods must be renewed to keep up-to-date.”

(“The Master Salesman of the World”, a talk given by Jacob Kindleberger, founder of the Kalamazoo Vegetable Parchment Company, to his salesmen on the occasion of the company’s Silver Anniversary Sales Conference, held in Parchment, Michigan, January 2-5, 1935)

In this modern age of commercialism, superficiality, haste, confusion, and impersonality, how many people would stop to sneer, to say the man was a visionary, an impractical dreamer, to speak of visions belonging to the pulpit of the philosopher? I think we can safely say the number who would find wisdom in these words would be decidedly in the minority. And yet we have backing to prove that this man was practical, was more than a dreamer. The proof of this lies in the fact that twenty-seven years ago he stood on a plot of ground overlooking a small disreputable sugar beet factory, miles of empty fields with a single farm as a sign of life, but with wisdom and foresight, had the vision of a great manufacturing institution and of a community of contented workers in happy homes surrounding it, determined not only to make paper as well as they knew how, but men and women.

Jacob Kindleberger was the man with this vision which he has through the years of devoted interest seen gradually materialize. He came to Kalamazoo well aware of the fact that everything one wishes to get he must necessarily work and work hard for. As he stood near the bend of the Kalamazoo River, beside the sugar beet factory, situated two and one-half miles north of Kalamazoo, he could see all the facilities for a model paper mill and a model village. The level ground and the river were both important features. With this vision in mind, he began work with about a dozen people in whom he had aroused the enthusiasm of the idea of building a

highly respected industrial organization and a community of men and women who would become good citizens.

In spite of the fact that this is to be a thesis on the evolution of a model village, I feel that since this evolution has taken place mainly through the workings of its industry, this is a fitting place to trace the progress of the industry through its stages of development.

#### FOUNDED IN 1909

In October, 1909, the company was organized with a capitalization of fifty thousand dollars. With this money were bought the land and buildings, a minimum amount of equipment and the first shipment of paper. At that time the company did not make its own paper but rather bought it and then converted it into Genuine Vegetable Parchment. Gradually through strict economy and decided thoroughness the plant was enlarged—new machines were constantly being bought, new additions to buildings were made, the employment of help increased until the mill has reached the place where it stands today, one of the greatest paper mills in the world. Indeed, it has long been known as “The World’s Model Paper Mill”.

The company is now capitalized to five million dollars and its buildings cover approximately one hundred and thirty acres of land. From the southern end of the mills to the northern end, it is approximately one and one-eighth miles. From the original organization of about a dozen people, it has grown to an organization of over fourteen hundred people, of whom over three hundred and fifty have been with the company ten years of more.

Perhaps a brief journey through the mill will acquaint the reader with the types of occupation a paper mill affords and the type of mill the Kalamazoo Vegetable Parchment Company is. Throughout this brief account, “The Story of K.V.P.”, by Elbert Hubbard, will be used extensively.

#### BANQUET IN THE STOKE-HOLE

A paper mill, in the minds of most people, is associated with slop, dirt and dust. One has visions of rag-sorters breathing bushels of dust as they work—of dark, damp, dank cellars and grimy workers when he thinks of paper mills and paper making. At KVP Company, however, there are no dark, dank corners—the rooms are all mammoth and flooded with light. All the so-called basements are above ground level. Everything is spotless clean. In the making of paper, one of the prime requisites is to have everything free of dirt and grime. All the roads around the factory are paved, the windows are all screened and wherever there is a possibility of dust arising, special means are provided to immediately take care of it. There is no limit to which the KVP Company will not go to prevent contamination of their product. Even the boiler-house and power-house are spotlessly clean. To demonstrate this, a banquet was once serve[d] in the stoke-hole of the power-house to the salesmen. It was served by the stokers themselves and was a huge success. The rag room, perhaps the only place where dust might be found, has been eliminated in the past few years and only purely vegetable fibers are used for the manufacture of the paper.

## HOW PAPER IS MADE

As we travel from room to room, we see painted in large letters at both ends of the rooms "Quality First". Mr. Kindleberger says this not so much to inform the folks but to remind them. We visit a mammoth storeroom for pulp at Mill No. 2 which measures sixty feet by two hundred feet, and when filled in the late summer it contains approximately \$225,000 worth of pulp. Most of this pulp is imported from Norway and Sweden and must be brought in in late summer because the ice closes up the lanes of transportation in the winter. Next we go to the beater room. This room contains twenty huge machines, each somewhat on the order of an oversized washing machine. Here the coarse pulp is beaten and much water is added. A filler and sizing is also sometimes added to the pulp. This filler may consist of china clay, talc or gypsum; the sizing of resin, so the paper will take ink. The coloring is also added here. The grade of paper to be furnished depends largely upon the kind of pulp used and the beater treatment. This pulp is then called "stuff". It is as white as snow. It is every bit as pure and clean as balls of cotton on a cotton plant. Mr. Kindleberger will prove this to you by taking a handful and eating it as he shows you around the rest of the mill. So apparently KVP conforms to the Pure Food Laws.

The part water plays in papermaking is very important. Fourteen million gallons of water are used daily at the KVP mills. A clean, clear, pure water supply is an absolute necessity to the paper-maker whose product

If paper is to be printed, it needs to be made smooth. At the end of the dryer rolls of the paper machine there are tall stacks of very heavy steel rollers. These are called calenders. When the paper is passed between these heavy rollers, it is ironed out flat and smooth, very much like clothes are ironed, and is said to be "calendered". The finished paper winds up on a big roll. From here on the paper is run through different processes, depending on whether it is to be Genuine Vegetable Parchment, Bond, Waxed, Household Papers or some other of the many different kinds of paper.

## MILE OF PAPER EVERY SIX MINUTES

The equipment of the KVP mills is the best that genius can invent or money can buy. At every turn one is brought face-to-face with wonder machines and devices. The modern paper machine is truly a "miracle machine". KVP operates four such machines, two of which are each a block long, and inspire you with something like awe. These "miracle machines" can each make a mile of paper thirteen feet wide in six minutes. They were the wonder of the industry when first built and to this day, even other paper mill men are astounded at the speed with which they produce such high-grade papers. These machines are the KVP answer to the cry, "It can't be done!" "Failure is not in the KVP lexicon, and the perfection of this machine is but another testimonial to up-to-dateness, perseverance and prescience."

Traveling cranes and carriers, miniature overhead railroads and car tracks facilitate the work--carrying materials and finished product from basement to loft, from machine to machine, from department to department, from mill to railroad car. Incidentally, the KVP mills produce nine million dollars worth of paper each year, and every day a trainload of paper leaves

Kalamazoo—which is the world’s largest paper center. An army of carpenters are engaged making cases wherein to ship this vast output which is distributed worldwide.

“Tested and tried by firms alive to their responsibility—firms recognizing the value and necessity of a superior wrapper for their product and how such a wrapper brings them a bigger business and an added prestige—the KVP goods measure up, and from North, South, East and West, orders come pouring in.”

## SCHOOL PAPERS

The KVP people do not hold to the old idea that any kind of paper is good enough for the American school child to use in his studies. Fabulous sums are spent for magnificent school buildings and other things necessary to place children in the right educational environment, therefore it is fitting and essential that they are given good paper to use.

The desire and intent of the KVP is to do its part in promoting this idea among the educators of this country. To this end educational talks on paper and its uses especially relating to scholastic and commercial work, are given periodically by executives who have the psychology of paper as related to good work at heart.

## PAPERS FOR THE HOME

Constantly on the watch for things which would lighten the burden of the housewife, the Specialties Department has gradually been built up until now it is one of the very important divisions of the industry. Table coverings, Papricloth, a specially treated waterproof paper sheet that has largely supplanted the old-fashioned rubber sheets; surgical waxed paper for a sanitary covering of wet dressings; gift wrapping paper; pie tapes; no-curl shelf paper; heavy waxed paper; household parchment and the new refrigerator paper are only a few of the invaluable servants and helpers of their users. Also a very wonderful paper known as Dusting Paper, that dusts, cleans and polishes all in one operation.

## RESEARCH IMPORTANT

The KVP workers are continually looking for new uses for paper. They are always and forever testing out things. A spacious building is occupied by a corps of alert and eager workers engaged in this research work.

By artificial means the climatic conditions of any given zone can be duplicated. Frigid, torrid, temperate, summer, winter, spring, fall, humidity and aridity—all these are simulated in special rooms and compartments.

“Fruit from California, fish from Labrador, cheese from Edam and honey from Hymettus may be substituted in various packages to varying changes of temperature and the changes noted”.

Every run of KVP Genuine Vegetable Parchment of Waxed Paper is tested in this laboratory. It has to measure up to the requirements of the purposes for which it is intended.

Packers, canners, truck farmers, dairymen, cereal manufacturers, bread and biscuit makers, candy manufacturers, tobacco manufacturers, fish and game distributors—in fact every activity dealing with the distribution of foodstuffs to the people have the privilege of KVP research work and analysis of their specific problems regarding perfection of their shipments. Many take advantage of this service. In this laboratory one sees[d] food of all descriptions undergoing package and transportation and storage tests. One might see a carton of coffee that has been floating around in a tank of water for three weeks and not a drop has seeped through the KVP container—fruit kept for months wrapped in KVP tissue, lettuce packed in crates lined with Whalehide as crisp and fresh as when it was first packed.

“Waste is anathema at KVP and they are continually seeking ways and means to eliminate it both in their own mills and for their customers. The assets of a nation are its men and women and they are valuable only as they are healthy, and to be healthy they must have, among other things, pure food.”

“The farmer, dairyman, and the meat packer feed us but their usefulness would be discounted were it not for transportation. But even transportation—wonderful thought its effect has been on the world’s market—has not influenced the food supply of the nation to such a degree as has refrigeration and, above all, the careful wrapping of foodstuffs in the proper kind of paper. The people of KVP stand ready to confer and co-operate with distributors and purveyors of food in the solution of their packing problems. They believe in health, sanitation, efficiency. Their interest in humanity and the business of their friends does not stop at papermaking. Only recently A [sic] Saginaw firm had mechanical troubles which were threatening a tie-up of their plant and the loss of considerable time, money and business. The service specialists of KVP hurried to their assistance and were able to solve the problem.

### HELP THE OTHER FELLOW

“Help the other fellow” is a KVP motto. Still another slogan is to be seen swinging from a beam in the KVP office which reads: “Our Motto: How Can We Be of Greater Service to Our Fellowmen During the Year?” and there you have the alpha and omega of the KVP institution. It is an organization with instincts of fellowship and friendliness; dedicated to service and to the art and craft of paper making.

It is founded upon the twin caissons of truth and honesty. It has enjoyed phenomenal growth. It has achieved great things. It rejoices in the good-will of its customers. It has vision. Its executives are men who understand.

From a small beginning, the KVP mill has grown to be one of the largest paper mills in the world making products that have attained worldwide recognition as quality goods. The company has shouldered heavy responsibilities; they have demonstrated that they know how. By courage, investigation, self-reliance, concentration and co-operation, they have attained a position in the van of the great papermaking industry,. The road that leads to Parchment is no

longer a pathway through the woods—it is a broad highway—an artery supplying the great heart of humanity with a beautiful, useful and beneficent product.

K.V.P. is an institution which has a soul.

### TOP WAGES FOR INDUSTRY

During the years of the depression the plant was kept running much better than the average plant. Not at any time was it running less than five days a week and the reduction of wages was kept at a minimum. In fact, the wage scale has always been the top for the industry. As Mr. Kindleberger said at the opening of the annual KVP sales meeting of 1933, “Don’t hide your life under a bushel. There isn’t a finer company in all the world. Tell us what we are doing wrong and we will correct it quickly and keep it so. This company pays its men as much as they can—not as little as they can.”

The health of the employees is one of the prime concerns of the organization. Every employee must have a thorough physical examination by a doctor and a dentist before he is taken into the plant. The mill cooperates willingly in any way to provide necessary medical care for its workers.

### START OF VILLAGE

Upon the Kalamazoo Vegetable Parchment Company as a solid foundation, the model village of Parchment, Michigan, has been built. By tracing the development of the industry through its twenty-seven years of growth, we have provided the basis upon which to trace the equally spectacular rise of the community.

In 1909 when Mr. Kindleberger began work on the setting up of a paper mill and a community, there were, as the nucleus around which he was to build, three farm houses rather widely scattered. When he began looking for employees he found twenty-five people willing and anxious to start on the ground floor and build upward. Several of these men brought their wives and moved out of Parchment and lived in tents. The others walked to and from Kalamazoo. This lasted for about three years.

At this time there were very few automobiles. The road to Kalamazoo was no more than a buggy path. In the spring it would be covered with mud while in the winter it would be buried under several feet of snow. The mill started at 6:40 o’clock every morning. This made it necessary for the employees to leave Kalamazoo by 5:30 in order to walk the two and one-half miles to work.

Gradually as the mill enlarged they found they were able to advance enough money to build a few houses. This was done and about ten families moved to Parchment. It was at that time no more than a large family. Every one was intensely interested in the development of the mill and this and their inability to easily travel into Kalamazoo drove them closer and closer together.



## SUNDAY SCHOOL STARTED

Soon feeling the need for a little organized activity and social life, they decided upon starting a Sunday school. Seven of the residents got together and paid a “downtown minister”, as he was called, to come to Parchment for an hour on Sunday afternoon. This was the real start of the community activities. These meetings were held in one of the larger farm houses.

In the winter months, when the condition of the roads made it impossible for the minister to come to Parchment, rather than give up the meeting, a few of the members would get together and plan a musical program, a play, or oftentimes a community sing. An old hand pump organ provided the music. The people were so pleased with these programs arranged by the members of their own group that the movement grew.

## WELFARE HALL

With the growth of the employment brought about by the growth of the mill, the population increased. The farm house soon proved too small for these weekly gatherings. Above one of the mill buildings was a good-sized room used as a lunch room by the employees. It was not long before the women of the community had the room redecorated and had convinced the men of the need for a raised platform to be used as a stage. Weeks were spent in rehearsal of a children’s play to be given on Children’s Day as the grand opening of the new Welfare Hall, as this addition was called. Everyone lent their hand in helping to bring about the success of the event. Whole evenings were spent together, the women making costumes, the men discussing the possibility of a new addition to the rapidly growing industry.

One has only to listen in on the conversation of two or three old residents of the now modern Parchment to realize the wonderful spirit of friendship and loyalty that was felt and expressed in the activities In the Welfare Hall.

## NEW SCHOOL

A small one-room schoolhouse was built. There was one teacher for the entire school, the membership of which did not exceed twenty-five children. It was not long, however, before the rapid growth in the population made it necessary to find another place for the education of the children.

At this time the company built several more houses. These houses were large and spacious. They were not, as many industrially build house are, a repetition of one another. Each one was entirely different from the other. They were built with the comfort of the residents in mind. A few individuals began building homes of their own. It was soon possible for all the workers in the mill to also be residents of the community.

## THE COMMUNITY HOUSE

The Welfare Hall, which had a few years before seemed large and roomy, now became over-crowded. There was not enough space for the whole village at the Sunday school meetings

and the entertainments. Mr. Kindleberger realized the need for a new hall. Looking backward over the rapid development of the population and the looking forward to the probable future development, he called a meeting of the adults of the community.

It was with unanimous consent that the Schau farm land was bought and the ground broken for the new community House. It was modern in every way. It had a beautifully equipped kitchen, shower rooms, a large dining room, a small private dining room, two large parlors, one for the men and one for the women, two large pillared porches, two completely furnished apartments on the second floor for the caretakers to live in and lastly, a huge assembly hall. At one end of the hall was built a stage. It was equipped fully with lighting effects, stage drops and perfectly built for the best sound effects. Above the stage was a huge storeroom. Into this room went all the costumes and scenery which had been used in the Welfare Hall programs. This building was provided by the industry to be used by all the people of the community at any time.

After the building of the Community House it was decided to use one of the apartments for the first three grades of the school. New teachers were hired and the school grew rapidly. The school children presented many plays and operettas at the community House under the direction of the teachers and the mothers. More scenery was added to the already large store until now practically any type of amusement can be presented with proper scenery within a hand's reach.

## EARLY TRANSPORTATION

During all this time there were still no roads by which one could easily get into Kalamazoo. At first all traveling was done on foot. It was not long, however, before the mill provided a truck to take the women into Kalamazoo to do their shopping. It was an ordinary mill truck with a bench on either side. It usually made a trip to town twice a day. It was quite an event. Everyone would stand in front of the community House and wait for the truck to come from the mill. It was generally loaded down with baby buggies and shopping baskets. A time would be set for returning and the truck would pick them up and bring them back home. In very wet or snow weather the truck often had difficulty making the trip.

There was one store which provided everything from tools to food. It was a typical country store and all the purchasing was done here. The owner of the store lived in a few rooms about it—consequently, it was open for trade all hours of the day and night.

## GARDEN PLOTS

Of the farm which was bought for the building of the Community House, much of the land was unused so the idea was conceived that the mill would allow anyone who wanted to use the land for growing things could, with the condition that it should be well kept up and not allowed to become an untidy spot. Almost every family selected a plot of this ground and set out vegetables and fruit. It was the pride and joy of everyone to see if their garden plot could not produce a little larger tomato or firmer head of lettuce than anyone else.

The canning season in Parchment was certainly a busy season. Everyone canned everything. Mothers, fathers, grandmothers and children were all kept busy peeling peaches, skinning tomatoes until the last sign of fresh fruit and vegetables were gone.

At the end of the canning season a magnificent bazaar was held in the auditorium of the community House and in the parlors. All the canned things were on display. Prizes were offered for the best pies and cakes. Patchwork quilts were raffled off—aprons, pan holders, dresses and sweaters were sold. Candy booths and the fish pond and grab bag were sources of joy for the children.

### MODEL VILLAGE PLANNED

Houses began to be rapidly set up so Mr. Kindleberger decided that it would be a wise plan to map out a model village and have it follow the plan decided upon. This was done and the result has been the development of a model village, as it stands today.

A beautifully paved road was constructed from one end to the other. A regular bus service was established between Kalamazoo and Parchment. Trees were set out along the highway and along side streets which were still mere paths.

### MODERN SCHOOL

The one-room schoolhouse had proven inadequate. A modern two-story building was constructed. It has twenty rooms, a music room, library, a dining room and a small kitchenette. Every year the faculty increased until today there is a teacher for each grade from kindergarten through the tenth grade. There is a music teacher and an art teacher. Every teacher is young, full of vitality and enthusiasm. They all live in Parchment and share its advantages and contribute to its social as well as educational life.

The new school building is situated on the northern border of the village, away from the factory. It has a large spacious lawn in front and a playground behind. The playground is equipped with swings, and slides and teeter-totters for the children. A football field and a baseball diamond, as well as a track, has [sic] been provided for the older students. It is enclosed by a fence so as to keep the smaller children out of the road.

For the safety of the students, there has been an organized a Student Patrol System. The high school boys take turns directing traffic before and after school. There has never been an automobile accident in this region.

### LADIES' AID

The women have long been organized in the General Ladies' Aid Society. They do a great deal of fine work. They visit the sick and the aged. They sew and make scrap books for the Kalamazoo hospitals. They put on plays and supers not only to raise money but to provide social activities for the people of the community. With the money they do make, they give much

to charity organizations and take care of the poor cases in the districts outlying Parchment proper.

### MEN'S CLUB

Perhaps one of the finest organizations in[s] the Parchment Men's Club. Any man in Parchment may belong. They have set up as their goals and purposes three things: first, to make Parchment the best possible place in which to live; second, to back up every worthwhile activity which will make outstanding men and women of our boys and girls, and third, to create a spirit of fellowship and mutual helpfulness.

### COMMISSION GOVERNMENT

Six years ago the village became incorporated. It has a commission type of government. The residents elect the mayor and the commissioners. It has proven to be a most effective arrangement. This can best be shown by the fact that this year the village treasurer has collected more than the amount of taxes assessed against the property-holders, and in the entire village, there is only sixty dollars delinquent dues, and these are practically all on vacant lots, and due to the fact that the whereabouts of the owners of this property are unknown.

### NO DEPRESSION AT PARCHMENT

By the time the depression began being noticed all over the country, the K.V.P. Company was firmly established. There was not a man in Parchment without a job. Everyone was well taken care of. With the severe pressure elsewhere, many people began flocking into the village knowing they would be cared for. The corporation was more than willing to do all it could for the unfortunate people. Additional workers were taken on and jobs found for these men. However, it wasn't long before it was impossible to take on any more help in the mill. A new solution to the problem had to be found. The actual giving of charity seemed to the leaders of the organization no solution to the problem. What the men needed and wanted was work. This Mr. Kindleberger was determined to provide.

### KINDLEBERGER PARK

A large section of Parchment was still undeveloped. It consisted of about forty acres of land. This land was very hilly and unsuited for farming or for building homes. Mr. and Mrs. Kindleberger, in 1930, gave this land as a gift to the community for the building of a park, and the grateful villager at once named it "Kindleberger Park". Immediately work was provided for almost a hundred men. Under the careful guidance of men educated along the lines of park development, and with the financial aid of the mill, the park was begun. All through the years of the depression, steady jobs were provided for many men. The various organizations—the Sunday School, the Ladies Aid Society, Men's Brotherhood, and the school children—contributed to making this the beauty spot of the village. What was once mere untilled land is now a lovely garden. There is a huge grass baseball diamond, tennis courts, horse shoe lots, a grass toboggan slide, a beautiful sunken garden, dozens of little paths meander around the hills. All the hills have been planted with grass. Flower beds dot the lawn, a bridle path wanders

through the park. On the top of the highest hill has been built a circular place for meetings. There is a brick fireplace in the center. A contest was held for the naming of this spot. It is now called "Scout Hill".

During the summer months band concerts are held on this baseball field. It lies in a natural amphitheatre with hills backing it. Fourth of July and other national holidays are celebrated here. There are usually eight to ten thousand people present at these events.

Every year new improvements are being made in the park. Already its influence is spreading. The street which passes along the side of the park has changed from one of the most undesirable to one of the most desirable places to live. Several lovely new homes have been established. A wide paved street has replaced the narrow dirt road. All land holds certain restrictions so the village can be assured that undesirable buildings will not be established.

### COMMUNITY HOUSE ENLARGED

Much employment as this project did provide, there was still room for much more. The children had, for several years, been asking for a gymnasium. This seemed to be a fitting time to gratify their wish. The Community House, being situated in a centralized place, seemed to be a good place in which to build it. At the same time, the idea was raised that the Community House was becoming too small for the larger activities so why not enlarge the auditorium and the stage at the same time.

This was done, with the result that now the Community House had become the core of the activity of Parchment. The church and Sunday school services are held there and so are entertainments given in the auditorium and on the enlarged stage. The open porches have been enclosed and are lovely sun parlors for the Nursery School. One room has been turned into the minister's office and, perhaps greatest of all the youth of Parchment is provided with a place to spend all of its idle time. The gym is a regulation-sized gym. The walls are all of knotty pine boards. The floor is made of mastic tile. Basketball nets, trapeze rings and ropes, tumbling mats, pool tables—everything has been provided. Below the gym are now locker and shower rooms, rooms for handball and manual training all with the latest equipment.

The school children now have regular gym periods and are able to enter contests with other schools in such sports as basketball and volleyball.

### YOUNG PEOPLE'S PROGRAM

When most boys and girls reach the age of ten or twelve, sometimes before, they have a great urge to get out and earn their own money. This is a typical American feeling. To make money makes them feel important and self-reliant. One of the aims of the leaders at Parchment being to develop self-reliance in the boys and girls, young men and young women of the Community, it has provided work for them to do.

For the past five or six years the K.V.P. organization has hired the high school students above the age of seventeen to work in different parts of the mill during the summer vacation. It

not only provides them with money for the summer months and money to buy clothes, but also gives them a knowledge of what working for a living is like, and gives them that feeling of independence and pride which comes from being able to help pay your expenses.

## THE HOME WORKS PLAN

For the boys between fourteen and seventeen, the Home Works Plan for Community Youth has been organized. It is a plan to give the boys and girls of a community useful and profitable part-time work in vacation months.

The factory and a group of the parents act as the sponsors. Two of the men teachers of the high school direct the activities. The boys elect a pres[id]ent and other officers common to any business enterprise. They solicit and do odd jobs in the community. Some of the things they find to do are: mow lawns, wash cars, paint buildings, clean basements, take care of the children, weed gardens, pick cherries, wash dogs, scrub porches, wax floors, wash windows, and anything else they are asked to do.

The “company” is paid, not the boys, who are paid from the company treasury on the basis of work done, less certain deductions for overhead. Thus, it will be seen that the boy gets training in sales, in accounting, in collections, and in other business practices as well as in work with his hands. He learns the value of the dollar as never before. It will be found that the wage set-ups wherein the boys can earn around twenty cents an hour are about average.

The boys eleven to fourteen are similarly organized to make and sell such things as clothes props, ladder stools, two ropes, bird houses, hose reels, lawn furniture, and other simple and useful articles. A school manual training room in the basement of the Community House is used. This organization is called The Junior Furniture Company.

Girls of the ages twelve to seventeen are organized in the same way to bake cookies and pastries, do simple sewing, care for children, and serve luncheons. This is called The Home Baking Company and is supervised by the president of the Ladies Aid Society.

These activities are supported wholeheartedly by the whole village. The great success of the enterprise has led Mr. Kindleberger to send the following letter to many of his friends, customers and salesmen, in other towns, and the movement is spreading all over the country:

“Dear Friend:

There is a beautiful story in the good Old Book. It is about a woman who lost a pearl of great price. She searched diligently day and night until she found the pearl. Then she called in her neighbors to rejoice with her over the recovery of this precious pearl.

We, too, have been searching diligently for a prize far greater than pearls or silver or gold. It relates to the method of making men out of boys.

We called a group of our men together here in Parchment and told them briefly of our method of organizing our boys and girls into three companies, from

12 to 15 years, and from 15 on up, and selecting competent leaders to guide and inspire these youngsters in a program of helping themselves.

We have now passed through the second year of this experiment. I know of nothing in my life's experiences that has given me as much real joy as to see these youngsters, just a week before school, wind up their affairs with enough money in their pockets to buy their books and their clothes for the school year.

A movement of this kind can be started in every community in our land if grown men will take a little interest in the matter.

The folder enclosed will tell you about those organizations. We received the inspiration for this movement when several of the fathers of these children came to us and said, "I don't know what to do with my boys and girls this summer."

We know that an idle brain is the devil's workshop and that they will get into devilment of all kinds if you don't find something useful for them to do.

Secondly, my own experience as a small boy—how I was taught to help myself—has been the best part of my education.

Several years ago we sent out a letter entitled, "Self Help a Way Out" which we are attaching. Perhaps you have read it before. We firmly believe that a work of this kind in every community would help much for the future welfare of our country."

For the very small children the summer Bible School is held. It is attended by about one hundred and fifty children. Besides studying Bible stories, they learn to draw pictures and make many simple things.

The business district has grown from one store to seven stores and a barber shop, gasoline station and a garage.

There are two doctors, one dentist, and a minister living in Parchment. Every year the children are given physical examinations and any who need medical care and are unable to pay for it, have it provided by the various organizations. The minister, in addition to his work in the Community Church, heads the welfare work.

The welfare program is so organized that all cases in need are taken care of out of funds raised by the people of the community. They have never had to call on outside help for anything. The charity work which is needed is mostly outside of Parchment the country about. Because of the generosity of the residents much help is given to outside people; linen, gifts, and flowers are given to the Kalamazoo hospitals.

### THE CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Every year at Christmas time a Christmas program is given at the Community House for all the employees of the mill. There are now over 1,400 employed. The building is always beautifully decorated in true Christmas fashion. Outside above the door is written in large lights, "Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year". Two large trees on the lawn are decorated with lights and tinsel. Inside the decorations are lovelier than one could ever wish to see.

The program may consist of a few selections from the band, made up of employees; informal talks given by the heads of the industry, parts of “The Messiah”, given by the choir of 150 Parchment voices; and an address given by some well-known speaker. At various times, Dr. Shannon, Mike Rice, Homer Rodeheaver and a host of other well-known men have spoken here. As the people leave the hall, they are presented with a lovely gift. On the occasion of the Silver Anniversary, each employee was presented with five silver dollars. Usually the gift consists of a large basket filled with all kinds of food.

Also at Christmas time the Sunday School has a Christmas party. Every child, now about 500, has a part in the program. Each one is presented with a huge stocking filled with nuts, candy, oranges and a toy.

### A FINE PLACE TO LIVE

In twenty-seven years, this little village has accomplished a great deal. It is still growing rapidly. There is always a waiting list of people to move into Parchment—houses cannot be built fast enough. Most of the people own their own homes and one of their main purposes is to keep it always in the very best condition.

Because of the careful planning of Mr. Kindleberger and the men who helped him lay the foundation for the village, it has become a village with all the conveniences of a modern city and without all the disadvantages. Every street is lined with beautiful trees. The houses are all far enough apart to have large spacious lawns. The building restrictions are such that there are no disreputable buildings to be seen. The company takes care of all vacant lots—keeping the lawns mowed and weeded.

We hear a great deal about GOOD PAPER AND GOOD PEOPLE—the dreadful effects of the secondary groups taking the place of the primary groups, but here we have a situation where a typical secondary group, the paper mill, has kept the primary groups in the foreground and done everything possible to build a community in which these exist face-to-face relationships, permanence, and intimacy in spite of the fact that the number is greatly increasing yearly, and there is a definite purpose in mind.

This purpose can best be expressed in the words of one of the oldest citizens of Parchment, “The idea of the management, from the beginning of K.V>P. has been to develop not only a model paper mill and a highly respected industrial organization, but also to build up a community of men and women who would become good citizens, and I think we can truthfully say that we have here, at Parchment, the nearest approach to a large, happy, family that it is possible to find anywhere in the country.”