



Long-time members of the Valencia Farm Bureau Center are seen at the front doors of their country hall which was constructed before the turn of the century. Mrs.

James Cox, right, is a charter member of the organization and Mr. and Mrs. Ed Wennerholm of Valencia are veteran members.

Farm Bureau—A Link With Old Traditions

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A little bit of by-gone Americana happens on the third Tuesday of each month in the hills back of Aptos.

That's when the Valencia Farm Bureau Center meets for its potluck dinner and business session in a small wood frame hall that dates from the turn of the century.

The farm bureau organization originally was intended to safeguard the welfare of agriculture, and the Valencia unit still studies the problems of farming and makes recommendations to the county farm bureau center. The county group acts on those recommendations and passes them on to the state and national bureaus for action on legislation.

But over the years, the big ranches of the Valencia area have been broken up into small farms and residences. Agriculture no longer plays the pre-eminent role in the community's welfare, and the farm center has turned its attention increasingly toward general community matters.

Mrs. James Cox, who with her late husband was a charter member of the farm bureau center when it was founded in 1917, said, "We're interested in all community improvement and what's going on. We talk mostly now about community development."

She reported the center is a very lively organization, with some 64 persons turning out for the last meeting. Speakers on various subjects form the backbone of most programs. Last meeting's speaker was historian Vincent Leonard who showed film slides of the early days of Aptos and Valencia.

For two years after its founding the farm center met in Aptos. But in 1919 its membership decided to move the meeting place to the Valencia area, the real center of the region's farm activity.

They moved into the old Hihn Hall where lumber mill workers previously held church services and social events at the corner of Valencia and Bear Valley roads. The center later purchased the hall, and has kept it in excellent shape despite its advanced age.

Current leaders of the group are George Gooney, chairman; Bill Stevens, vice chairman, and Col. Henry Berbert, secretary-treasurer.

Center members are proud to point out that all state and national farm bureau activity originates from recommendations of individual centers, such as their own, and that theirs truly is a grass-roots organization.