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The need of community coordination for the prevention of juvenile delinquency and description of a neighborhood experiment

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School of Religious and Social Work
Division of Social Work

THE NEED OF COMMUNITY COORDINATION FOR
THE
PREVENTION OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY AND
DESCRIPTION
OF
A NEIGHBORHOOD EXPERIMENT

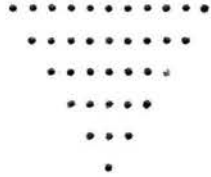
A Thesis

submitted by

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(A.B., Emmanuel College, 1930)
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in partial fulfilment of requirements for
the degree of Master of Science in Social Work
1940

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Second Reader

Richard K. Conant



Report
of a
Neighborhood Experiment

in the
West End
of
Boston

Under the Works Progress Administration Dealing With
Delinquent and Pre-Delinquent Boys

from

January 1936 to May 1937.

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FOREWORD

The ensuing report is primarily a study of an Experiment organized for the purpose of eliminating and preventing Juvenile Delinquency with centralization in the West End of Boston.

Its conception was expressed during a meeting of the West End Joint Planning Board in October of 1936, at which time a vote was taken to evolve a plan whereby paid leaders would be provided to organize recreational clubs among boys in the age group from eight to sixteen years, who wholly lacked adequate parental supervision or essential environmental surroundings. A maximal percentage of these youthful individuals were known to be involved in stealing or to be otherwise behavior problems.

Inasmuch as budget limitations of the neighborhood settlement houses and clubs prohibited the employ of the necessary corps of group leaders, the plan as discussed was deemed highly feasible. On completion of the requirements the outline was sub-

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mitted to the Works Progress Administration. Their eventual approval plus the sponsorship of Judge John F. Perkins of the Boston Juvenile Court permitted the establishment and subsequent successful operation of the Delinquency Project.

From the initial formation the neighborhood agencies have willingly cooperated -- in readiness to offer their facilities when and wherever possible. Of paramount importance in this regard is the West End House, which has functioned as Field Headquarters. An auxiliary group to the originators of the "plan" came into existence -- known as the "sub committee" for the purpose of maintaining general supervision together with the selecting or dispensing of leaders. The five outstanding individuals instrumental in the birth of this undertaking are:

Rev. John T. Powers	Chairman, St. Joseph's Church
Mr. Jacob Burnes	Director of the West End House
Mrs. Freda Rogolsky	Elizabeth Peabody House

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Mr. Elliot Sands Project Director,
Probation Officer
of Juvenile Court

Mr. Abram Resnick Project Supervisor,

the last named, with the aid of his assistant, Mr. Daniel O'Keefe, being responsible for the actual supervision and direction of the group.

My purpose in the following presentation is to deal more or less directly with the multiplicity of social situations and the resultant effects springing spontaneously and consistently from the environmental factors in the general life of the young male element. In addition, the attitudes which develop in relation to these situations will be pointed out and the varied and innumerable delinquencies to which youth is subjected will be stressed. Lastly, I shall endeavor to demonstrate how behavior traits have a natural evolution in the life history of a boy and develop appreciably in the process of interaction between the individual and the ever increasingly prominent and successive events so closely allied to his

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surroundings.

Thus, the aforementioned "experiment" will be the prime feature of my dissertation. A rather intensive study was made possible by the procuring of relevant data, chiefly from those initiating the movement and proved materially beneficial in the compiling of my discourse on Juvenile Delinquency. For their kind interest and cooperation, I extend a full measure of appreciation to:

Rev. John T. Powers, Chairman,
Joint Planning Board Committee

Mr. Elliot Sands,
Probation Officer of Juvenile
Court & Project Director

Mr. Abram Resnick,
Project Supervisor

Individual Group Leaders,

and also for the privilege granted me for perusal of project records, permission for periodic visits to the clubs and the time allowed for personal interviews.

The underlying importance of the Project's

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principles will be duly stressed, as will the varied forms of organization, actual basic operations, the gradual development -- purely by process of a posteriori and a reverse a priori, the present potent status and the marked significant tendencies, in an endeavor to forcefully demonstrate the positive need of community co-ordination for the prevention of juvenile delinquency.

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CHAPTER I

"Juvenile Delinquency ... A Community Challenge"

To definitely understand the behavior problems of a child one must necessarily determine to what extent there are causative factors of delinquency in the groups which govern his behavior. From observation and extensive study, it has been ascertained that juvenile delinquency is invariably due to some phase or phases of adult insufficiency, taking root and subsequent growth from human relations in the primary groups comprising family, playgroup, neighborhood and community. This, therefore, is a prime consideration since youth perpetually reflects cultural patterns (1).

Home Conditions & Relationship

Of fundamental importance is the home, wherein association is unequivocally intimate and face-to-face actualities recur; wherein the process of socialization originates and the initial patterns of social behavior are acquired. The mere span of

(1) Steiner: ... "Community Organization"-- p.15

a few years brings about an appreciable diminution in home influence for as the child grows he becomes a vital and integral part of the playgroup. Here the "gang" so-called and other organized forms of association demand a goodly portion of individual attention. To step over the line of demarcation encompassing family circle and neighborhood where there is maintenance of intimate and personal relations, one is made cognizant of a localized community, and beyond that is the thickly populated, officially organized community representing the city.

The proper adjustment of every delinquent or near-delinquent is a process which challenges resort to every available source of knowledge and skill that modern science has developed. The public, on the whole, seemingly is prone to deal lightly and objectively with these problems by condemnation of the police, the courts and the law and by the erection of institutions and the establishment of clinics, rather than actually reverting to the cultural and community life which furnishes the imponderable, intangible elements that influence the ideals and attitudes of young people in ways productive of delinquency and crime.

The spirit of the community is projected by its youth who evolve from the combined forces in the life and cultural history of the neighborhood and community -- having expression in its customs, traditions and institutions.

The wayward child is justly regarded as a fundamentally normal human being misdirected. His personality is merely an expression of his reactions to life plus a composite picture of physical and mental elements and processes that involve his heredity and environment. An accurate knowledge of the causation of his delinquency is of far more importance than an efficient categorical classification. In a publication dealing with a phase of Juvenile Delinquency Healy (1) offered:-

"The many studies of exterior conditions, physical states or personal habits which have been or are being made of delinquents are not to the point if they are not interpreted in relation to actual causation of the delinquent's misbehavior ... nothing should be more striking than the fact that reactions between living conditions are not fixed and are not a

(1) Healy: ... "The Practical Value of Scientific Study of Juvenile Delinquency" -- p.76

priori predictable. Poverty in one instance is a stimulus to the formation of fine character tendencies; in another, it is the motivation of even major crimes. Poor neighborhood conditions in some cases result in disgust rather than in acceptance of local standards of morality. Adolescent strivings and aggressiveness may help toward ambition and fine accomplishments, or may find outlets largely in delinquent trends. And so on, through practically the whole list of possible causations of delinquency".

The more one studies in this field the more possibilities for future research present themselves.

The family stands out prominently as the chief factor in determining future social behavior. From it comes youth indelibly stamped with high ideals and noble aspirations; or on the other hand, with low, vile, anti-social attitudes toward life. Divorce and legal separation -- criterions of social disorder are on the increase and out of these situations spring the major portion of our juvenile delinquency (1).

(1) Ellwood: ... "Instability of Family as a Cause of Child Delinquency" -- Survey, p.886

The effective socialization of the child not only needs but demands a home with parents living together harmoniously; a home with reasonable comforts and adequate wholesome food for nourishment and growth; a home ever surrounded by opportunities for the healthy development of a physical body. Loving but not overindulgent parents play the principal roles in the permanent life of a stable family. In a child who lacks the warmth of love and sympathy of whose efforts toward self-expression are continuously checked lies the potential production of behavior problems. In such homes incapable of establishing or those persistently ignoring the vital need of these legitimate satisfactions, the child perforce is prematurely driven to the street and in due time resorts to the preferred outlets, such as, excessive day-dreaming, timidity, temper-tantrums, lying, stealing, fire setting and on occasion running away. Merely a few causative factors as terminology lack sufficiency to be a true explanation of delinquency. By and large, it is more a by-product of a vast number of minute social responses frequently originating in the home. Here in this setting exists interplay of emotions, person-

ality and social experience which intimately touch the child. In homes of wealth as in res augusta domi are found behavior problems ... there being no dissimilarity in reactions -- the one differing feature is the number this being far excessive in the impoverished settings. The lack of vital knowledge in child training and care on the part of family is truly appalling and rather surprisingly, this is not entirely confined to the busy mother of the lower economic stratum. Doctor Miriam Van Waters (1) in pointing out the various family conditions contributing largely to delinquency is here quoted:-

"The fact is delinquent children are very often unwanted children. The 'only child', pampered, spoiled, over-indulged and sheltered, frequently becomes delinquent because the parents are too engrossed in personal ambitions, careers in business, or other absorbing occupations to be really interested in the child".

If one should paraphrase the aforementioned, intently study the words and read between the lines, one natural question would, undoubtedly, form

(1) Van Waters, Miriam: "Unwanted & Delinquent" -- Survey 54 ... p.228

itself into: Why should the laws of society demand children to behave when their parents misbehave? Impressions made by responsible forces on plastic minds can never be wholly eradicated. Frequently, in the individual delinquent guilty of the graver offenses including personal assault, theft and the like, is unearthed an unwavering basic feeling of antagonism toward authority and a deeply profound distrust in it. With but rare exception, the delving into the family background of these young offenders has revealed them to be tense with hatred and mutual suspicion. As the age of understanding is approached there comes a corresponding strong tendency for the child to adopt a defense mechanism or to grope for some means or method to secure recognition in the community (1).

Doctors Healy and Bronner (2) in evaluating the influential factors in the life of a child stressed the one true focus immeasurably responsible for initial delinquent trends. If, therefore, a causative agent still existed it is highly logical to conclude that any indicated attack in the treatment and for the prevention should, unquestionably, be directed toward said focal point -- the all-important home.

(1) Journal of Criminal Law: ... Vol.XVII -- p.568

(2) Healy & Bronner: ... "Delinquents & Criminals -- Their Making and Unmaking" ...

All too frequently indeed does the home of today become actually the breeding place for the criminals of tomorrow. Its stability is at stake. Its maladjustments and disintegrations are of considerable expense to society. Because of the out and out asocialism a remedy must be instituted and thus wipe out entirely a prime group of detriments in juvenile delinquency.

Playgroup

In close proximity to the family circle and next in line, effective stimuli come from playmates, family friends, religious and social associates. Ordinarily the child's first playmates live in adjacent homes and exert an amazing influence upon him in use of language, methods of play, favorite games and lastly, but by no means of lesser importance is his attitude toward others. Occasionally, companions surpass parents in supplying influential social controls. The social nature of the young is so constructed as to actually demand urgent expression and if this lacks proper direction the end results can be none other than harmful social contacts. Full and most effective meth-

od of employing leisure time must be patiently taught and opportunity must be afforded for its wholesome use for both himself and society. The maximal portion of delinquency can be traced back to unwise leisure guidance and the reason a majority of children appear before the court is purely a lack of adequate community direction of leisure time activity. The desire of society is to control people not crime and to best accomplish this end proper guidance of youth must be enforced. Almost unknowingly you ask "how"? Simply by giving youth directed outlets for physical energy, such as, playgrounds, parks and supervised play (1). Carefully directed recreation is one means of reducing juvenile delinquency in areas fostering it. The cost of taking care of even one delinquent is sufficient to provide wholesome recreation for many potential offenders.

Reaching an age deemed feasible for participation in playgroup activities then arises the exigency of the skilled guiding hand of a social agency to supplement home influence. Apropos of this need is the apt quotation:-

"The club is the anchor of modern boyhood" (2).

- (1) Elliot: ... "On Control of Crime" -- The Playground .. XX, p.89
 (2) Butler: ... "Boys' Clubs & Crime" -- Review of Reviews, Apr. '29, p. 74

As the degree of normalcy which mental and physical growth attain is measured purely by the constancy of the attention and encouragement expended in the process, so then shall the guidance attending the development of the individual with resultant attitude toward socialized life, be the one determinant of his place in society. If then, this be true, the factor to bear in mind is the prime essential of a follow-up course once his initiation into a social group has been effected. Certainly, the future evaluation of social behavior and self-expression depends solely on the procedures adopted at this particular period. Therefore, to simply acknowledge youth's existence as a club member and thereafter promptly ignore him or blissfully treat him as a by-product of a social vacuum is truly unworthy of intellectual guidance. Youth longs for self-expression ... youth demands individuality. And, if leaders are incapable of handling or lack insight into these individual essentials by omitting to attach significance to his membership in any or some few of the clubs which entitle such distinction, then can be only surmised the permanent injurious effects. For the official stamping

in coming years as an asset or liability to society is determined at this early point in youth's life. Skillfully directed social centers offer wholesome activities for expending surplus energies. So may it be said with surety that individual recreational guidance is a positive, firm, fairly marked stride toward the diminution or elimination of delinquency. Although pronounced as the most ideal of any preventative yet devised, supervised recreation can never compete or be adjudged as a substitute for the home, church or school in child training and character building. Its placement as supplementation to these more stable institutions, however, will hold it aloft as a true, valuable ally.

Powerful in influence, outstanding as a preventative and in closest proximity to the first -- ever and always "home", stands the church as an alert enemy and true warrior of delinquency. Here is a substantial, secure factor -- its very foundation solidified on spiritual and moral principles. Through its various auxiliaries it has disclosed recognition and anticipation of the alterations in the tempo of life and ever compatible with progressive changes offers

to the individual in the process of growth something to do, something to think about and something to enjoy. Today more than ever before youth cries out for this guiding hand. This can be given and will be given when churches throughout all communities stand for a united cause and dramatically swing wide their doors through the medium of supervised clubs for the recreational and cultural needs of youth. Some have already responded but by far the maximal number are still in the background. The church has ever been cognizant of the role it plays in human lives, and so not impervious to the demand, not thoughtless of youth, but unassuming in the significance of its strength and control has retired from the limelight. But when cold facts are faced garbed in the exigency of present day delinquent trends then may the church offer to youth's leisure time the potent stimuli in adequate degree not only to attract but hold our young adolescents. Then, assuredly, will be exercised intelligent training, strict supervision and patient guidance in the development of nature's outlets -- youthful work, play and love, ... predicting nothing more paramount than the healthy mental and physical arrival at a valuable and secure adulthood.

Religious Affiliations

The Church is a self-appointed moral prop to the Delinquency Movement and stands as a cooperative, willing advisor to those interested in the cause. Freely disposed and eager to link actively with the courts an obstacle was confronted in the absence or rather lack of efficient method of so doing for the most practical end results. The method of procedure for the establishment of this link is still undevised. So, for this reason only, the leaders of Juvenile Delinquency have refrained from accrediting the church with more direct work. "Willing material" stands as a challenge, and unfortunately will remain unchallenged until a systematized planned contact is produced. Unethical, certainly without precedent, would it be to speculate on the probability of a donor of materialism to solve the problems of all institutions to which it is ready to present its materialism. But it will ever be expected and desired that the church will staunchly remain as the moral, cooperative and solid prop to this great and thoroughly christian movement (1).

(1) Perkins, Richard: ... "Treatment of Juvenile Delinquency" -- p.45-46

Other Prophylactics

Unless the home is well sustained on a normal rhythmic balance, tempering sympathy with understanding and basic stability, the child emerging therefrom into the street is literally unprotected and an ideal foil for the "gang" so-called. Herein exists an increasingly forceful suggestibility. Eventually, the youth enticed into that group or one similarly organized and comprised of two or more members, though unwillingly, will be gradually but steadily lured into active criminal participation. Although alone the idea of the act would cause a shrinking from the very repulsiveness of it, collectively, an unseen power forces him into the repellent performance. Too well known as a source of demoralization is the un-directed gang to its members ... it plays a starring role in chronic truancy, juvenile delinquency and all too frequently its vital grip is partial qualification of crime's "finishing school". Augmenting racial friction, its firmly established policy of suggestion is an outstanding factor in race riots. This last is something which demands more than mediocre consideration if due control or actual cessation is to be ef-

fectcd.

Obviously, the outstanding problem of juvenile delinquency is prevention, but perversely the indicated procedures are not always so sharply defined. Inasmuch as human nature en masse possesses a generalized background in common based on desires, urges and drives, pertinent preventative measures will be an absolute necessity, simply because this same generalization in short-sightedness failed to incorporate individual extent and limitation in relation to these massed outlets. All too frequently these positive abstract entities proved the discordant or off-key notes in the formulated scale of rules governing society. With the increase in criminal causes becoming more apparent and delinquent incentives more overwhelming, just in a corresponding proportionate measure will society be compelled to evolve machinery productive of indicated counter-irritants (1).

If delinquency is classified as a disturbed equilibrium allying the individual to his environment, then it is not merely supposition to advance as the paramount need the social machinery to

(1) Sullinger, Thomas: ... "Social Determinants in Juvenile Delinquency" -- p.63

pave the establishment of harmonious relationships.

Quite concisely but pointedly, Adler (1) in his study of delinquency behavior offers:-

"An individual in the community is constantly engaged in orienting himself in regard to his general and special environment. Just as in the simple process of maintaining one's physical equilibrium it is possible to become confused and dizzy, so an individual may become disoriented socially.

The variability both of human beings and delinquent causes is so excessive that a unitary conception is not sufficiently marked to establish the specific therapy most beneficial. However, initial progress may be possible if a plan were evolved whereby development of emphatic and locally directed efforts of the pre-delinquent child is attempted to divert energies and ideas away from waywardness. Only by accurate and guided direction of youthful activities into useful channels can this be accomplished. The one, all-important aim is nothing but simple preparedness in anticipation of the crisis which too of-

(1) Adler: ... "A Behavioristic Study of Delinquency" --
p-17

ten looms suddenly in the individual life.

Although previously proclaimed, the oft-repeating will ever be logically warranted to permanently emphasize that the peaceful, placid, rhythmically balanced home is the most powerful of all prophylactics in delinquency prevention as yet revealed to light.

.....

A spectacular, vitally interesting, fast-moving, informative method craving a tremendous portion of the world's mighty spotlight is the newspaper of the present day. As the main source of progressive, humane, intimately related events, its perusal has become a routine custom in the daily life. That it is valuable, educational and cultural cannot be denied, but inasmuch as it is the prime printed broadcasting organ of life in the vivid depiction scaling the sordid to the sublime and its accessibility within effortless grasp of the youth of our land, its ever renowned power of dramatization should be in constant subjection to caution and restraint. Instead of focussing its

searching rays on degradation, violence and crime and high-lighting the lordly gang leader, petty gun-man and the over-rated, enumerated enemy so-called as the top-ranking menace to society, editors and contributors should unite in the denouncing rather than upholding vile criminal acts. To dramatize illegal transgressions and violent murder as spectacular, exciting and alluring is to figuratively question the very saneness and soundness of democracy. Too, it is hysterically and basically perilous to youth -- consequently, a powerful stimulation of delinquency. A curbing hand on word power may prove a prominent means of undermining or slackening of "ego props" and also deprive delinquent youth of the self-deceptive enjoyment derived from being "written up". Their satisfaction and pleasure in notoriety is fundamentally the same as the psychology that offers to others a smug complacency in published recognition of their activities and philanthropies (1).

Other prophylactic measures noteworthy as delinquent preventatives may well be enumerated as ... desirable neighborhood, rigid enforcement of child labor laws, supervised recreation, Americanization class-

(1) Sullinger, Thomas: ... "Social Determinants in Juvenile Delinquency" -- p.65-70

es for parents in immigrant communities, the personal touch of public school teachers who are in readiness to ignite the one spark of interest in the child, the instituting of socialized education and the prompt recognition of a need for additional visiting teachers (1).

The truly outstanding problem in carrying out to full satisfaction a delinquency prevention program is the vital need of securing coordination between all agencies for civic and moral betterment in those neighborhoods where delinquent trends exist or those who are potential havens of waywardness. Not only the immediate environment but the community in its entirety should be forced into full consciousness of the cost of juvenile delinquency socially, morally and economically. The responsibility is then theirs to assume, and accordingly, resort must be made to every available prophylactic. The awareness and the ever bearing in mind that delinquency is as equally contagious but appreciably and immeasurably more harmful than any physical disease should carry with it the necessary precaution. Although the community stands as a provider of the most efficient scientific remedies for the elimination and lessening of disease, it

(1) Sullinger, Thomas: "Social Determinants in Juvenile Delinquency ... p.65-70.

placidly reclines on the side-lines and permits the most insidious and disastrous social atrocities to pursue an unmolested course in the lives of the young.

Intensive study has demonstrated that juvenile delinquency is no longer an individual problem; rather is it one of the community and the attitude of the community toward youth. For when the essential fact is squarely faced that delinquency per se is primarily a product of the community then will it be obvious that the child who is forced to resort to the streets for play is no more unsocial than the community which denies approved, guided, wholesome outlets for self-expression. Juvenile delinquency from actual cause to end result is, therefore, the outstanding problem of any community ... morally, socially and educationally. A more thorough understanding of youth is a prime essential. Adult insufficiency as a causation has proven its potency for it is known that for every delinquent child there are two or more adults who have failed to comply with social responsibilities. As a problem it stands as a direct challenge to the highest and most ideal in every community. Idealism in relation to the young is well-named but unless

linked closely with materialism its value declines perceptibly. Uplift work has never been a solution to any problem but scientific constructive programs is a method insuring effect. In a simple, undiluted, untrimmed phrase it is purely a business proposition (1). In his study of "Probation and Delinquency" states Cooley (2):-

"Prevention costs money, but it pays and is cheaper in the end. The prevention of crime is the business of every social force and every citizen in the community. For its accomplishment, however, we shall need the thoughtful interest of an awakened intelligent and religiously-minded community".

The modern day has exhibited an understanding of certain phases of child life better than ever before, but surprisingly this increased understanding has failed to reflect its elevated level in the apparatus adopted for treatment. In recent years the home, church and school have attained measured heights of child knowledge and medical science has freely contributed in proportion to its progress. Each commendable in relation to youth but of little

(1) Van Waters, Miriam: .. "Youth Town & The Delinquent Child" -- Survey 52, p.608-11

(2) Cooley: ... "Probation & Delinquency" -- p.344

or no value until unision is appreciated. Combined they will be positive factors in reducing or eliminating criminal procedure in cases of the delinquents. Principles evolve from experience and experience develops only by relatively short steps to that height which offers possibility to generalize anew and to seek new directions with confidence. In more recent years the courageous dared experiment and thus lengthened and increased the strides. One who fully appreciates and is truly alert to the significance of this magnanimous cause reneges on predicting the immediate future but, unhesitatingly, will come forth to vigorously uphold the present course the continuation of the already established experimental work -- confident after all that the understanding of those in power warrants it. Criticism of a constructive nature will profit considerably along the gradual, steady progressive route. All must remember that the forces in command of the Experimental Project are not in the process of erecting the framework but simply working cautiously and rather meticulously on specifications. Interest is deep ... Enlisted factors are strong ... The problem is undeniably stupendous. ... Progress, therefore, must be careful, gradually increasing and certain(1).

(1) Perkins, Richard: ... "Treatment of Juvenile Delinquents" -- p.55-58

Thus, having had the pathological significance of delinquency corroborated by intensive, investigative study, it is logically assumed that the institution of therapy -- either basic or specifically aimed at the true source, is the next step in the endeavor to totally control or at least stem the progressive, insidious trends. Apropos of this, an organized movement in the guise of ... "Community Coordination for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency" is here presented, and the ensuing chapters will offer a detailed report of its dealings with delinquent and pre-delinquent youth from January of 1936 through May of 1937.

This neighborhood experiment bears the seal of approval of the Works Progress Administration and holds focal sway in Boston's West End. ... The initial step is flawless -- the site of centralization ideal in setting.

To justify this may I say here that for several years my working days were spent in this section. Consequently, I am familiar with the district, know its people, their gross lacks and urgent needs, the struggles of family life, the deplorable conditions

of homes and almost daily, have I observed the young offsprings, whose very birth deprived them of the natural heritage of life's opportunities.

To further depict this impoverished, colorful, cosmopolitan area to readers, but duly mindful of my limitations, I attempt a penned portrayal:-

Here, Boston's West End, literally, is a setting self-created ... figuratively, an Old World counterpart. Here, in a word, exists the throbbing laughter, the babble of alien voices, the human intimacies, the disturbing emotions of living flesh in and around the countless, three-floored structures piling themselves desperately to the limit of vision. Here, the fiery eyes, coarse black hair, tawny skin, slavie and celtic features of its English-speaking children displaying traits and mannerisms of the varied progenitors. Here, the earth's far corners have endowed with their spiritual grandchildren, equipped with noble heritage but only partially alive to the glory and mind of man. Here, living conditions are comparable to the Old World'd maladjustment to this new progressive era. Here, life is culled from the

narrow, twisted streets -- taken in childish hands and squeezed relentlessly to yield a trickling livelihood. Evaluation, here, is whittled to the core and termed in pennies and dimes. Here, race customs rather than moral inhibitions prevail for truly, here must have originated that far-flung banner "the survival of the fittest". Here, youth's playground is the jostling, congested mart ... their games, the vicarious trades of the hour, and the earning capacity of the victor duly proclaimed in the award of loyal, admiring sportsmanship from his competitive field. Here, in this chaotic area, under the potency of adult influence and sophistry, innocence and naivete are readily snuffed out. And here, quite sorrowfully, may be frequently heard the patter of "unarriving feet" on the "Eternal Road". Conclusively here is the very essence of life in its torments, ecstasies and conflicting elements. But specifically here, in heartfelt reminiscence Nation advisors and State leaders will one day return "home". Here today stands Democracy's future permanence in its hope of youth. And recently here, the very axis of our Experimental Project was erected in the Boys' Neighborhood League -- swinging wide its portals to the social, cultural and recreational needs

of our impoverished, impetuous youth. And truly predictable here, I know that a not too distant, exuberant dawn will welcome the day of this undertaking's accomplishment. A day crowned with the immeasurable hope of a community, brimming with the companionship of youth. Youth gliding swiftly onward -- fleet-footed and merry in the exhilarating rhythm of loving, working and living in unision. Then will all be strangely moved by a picture, previously wrought with imminent peril, of refreshing, wholesome, healthy, happy youth.

.....oOo.....

CHAPTER II

"A Neighborhood Experiment"

The preconception and actual birth of twin objectives forced the Experimental Project to the awareness of a palpitant, active life. Each distinctly individual at inception but created as a strength-giving vitality to the other for a more sound, vigorous and valuable development. Prefacing the family name "Delinquency Prevention", one aim was "appeal" -- favoring the unfettered, free, impetuous youth whose leisure hours lacked the essential supervision and guidance of an organized recreational center. The other was garbed in "attractiveness", and without force or deception, invited the pre-delinquent and delinquent boy to an environment adequately equipped for the normal absorption of youthful desires and urges. Each tread cautiously the progressive path to a worthy goal and hopefully glimpsed the day when they would unite in the interest of all youth and for the security and betterment of the entire neighborhood.

Is it mythical that a parent in display-

ing his precious offspring avoids the secluded, shaded, untravelled lanes, and with a seeming effervescent pride seeks the congested promenades where jostling humanity promptly betrays in the reactive and interested glance the admiration and attention craved? Presumably not, for when this parent movement set out in appealing attraction for the enrollment of youth, not even momentarily did its steps either lag or stray but forged ever onward to the main roads of contact conducive of desired end results. As a consequence of the recognition accorded, those capacity-crowded, highly travelled, youth-infested pathways were thusly acclaimed:-

Personal Approach

Contact of Group Leaders with
Corner Gang or the Individual Boy

Recommendations of Public and Pa-
rochial Schools

The Juvenile Court

and lastly, but no degree lessened --

Youth's individual voluntary enroll-
ment in lieu of association with oth-
ers already signed (1).

The first tottering steps of the Project's life were carefully observed and patiently guided by a

(1) Resnick, Abram: ... "Boys' Neighborhood League Report"-- p.1

staff recruited exclusively from the immediate neighborhood and comprised two supervisors, fourteen leaders and a secretary. The personnel Corps deemed proper for this all-important, life-giving work were selected by eventual process of elimination. The stumbling block encountered at this time was in the form of certified restrictions implied by the Works Progress Administration. However, the ultimate course pursued failed to disclose at any time even minute semblance of ill effects produced by the choice of leaders. The choice per se was, therefore, commendable. In the early phase, advancing steps were taken cautiously and along the course when intimate contact with individual youth was gradually applied to a working knowledge an undeniable strength encompassed this unit. Today, the staff stands as a capably, skilled and thoroughly well-knitted structure carrying on an excellent performance of something truly worthwhile. Modern industry assumes its future value purely on a theoretical basis, but no more assurance has any industrial enterprise of satisfying results than this Delinquency Project that initiated its development by the so-called confrere of theory -- that of practical method in the guise of its grouped leaders. Exper-

lenced and with an intimate knowledge of the by-products in the supported cause, these massed workers had been rooted and developed in the identical environmental surroundings of their young proteges. This in itself stood for a positivistic advance of value extending beyond "par" and certainly, a reliable recommendation to those in power for the assurance of a practical approach to end accomplishment.

At no time from organization has formal education been stipulated as a prime requisite, but investigation revealed that of the first group elected some few had had previous experience and training in boys' work; four college degrees could be displayed, and the remaining others had emerged with full credits from highschool achievement. On a borrowed, somewhat trite phrase, "be that as it may", no soaring height of degrees nor unlimited acquisition of theoretical policies had the likelihood to remotely substitute that possessed, viz, ... actual understanding of youth from a strengthened practical viewpoint.

However, despite this asset it was con-

cisely and definitely revealed in a report of the Project that it was not the intent at any time of the dominating powers to convey the impression that the staff was so all-knowing, adequately equipped and fully positivistic in methods adopted that nothing further could be learned. Quite the contrary, the early organization leaders convened weekly for the purpose of acquiring additional and more efficient ways and means of advancement. At these meetings too, problem discussions of boys were held and techniques suggested with eventual application for more variable programs. The so-called mulling over of individual problem cases, neighborhood conditions, corner gang knowledge, etc., frequently and profitably resulted in solution at these gatherings. Intermittently from onset of establishment, experts or specialists in boys' work responded either to appeal or invitation for the sole purpose of rendering experienced aid in the controversial problems which occasionally cropped up. From the very start of the Delinquency Movement it was clearly perceived that the absorbing of new and approved methods of supervision and the ever acquiring of knowledge was a fundamental necessity for an appreciable approach to success. Thus, systematized, planned courses were

arranged for staff members and included such subjects as: ...

Approach to Leadership

The Practical Club & The
Practical Program

Know Your Neighborhood

Game Room & Play Techniques

The above were each of ten weeks duration and concomitantly for a similar period, the schedule included a two-hour "First Aid" class conducted by the Red Cross. In view of the apparent soundness basically of the compiled regulations, no undue deviation was attempted. Meetings and lectures were allotted for periodic A.M. leisure intervals and at no time infringed on working hours. Thus, to the human force of leaders driving the line of action was demonstrated the vital need of preparedness at all times ... being adequately armed they were in readiness for youth in numbers flocking in as their charges.

The figurehead or "lay" committee 'be-

hind the scenes' comprised mature, adult, interested individuals representing church, neighborhood, social agencies and the court. Their very alertness and intimate contact with the actual work of the project, the established policies and principles together with personnel selection accorded them the 'behind the scenes' connotation in the guise of a sponsoring body only.

Organization Technique

The actual organizing of youth required prolonged and careful consideration with resultant subsequent grouping in numbers from fifteen to twenty. Age and locality were deemed the prominent factors at this point for the purpose of insuring a more natural setting. In the process of formation the majority of these clubs came into being from the original type of "corner gang" variety with but seven or eight initially admitted. In an endeavor to proceed along lines of appealing interest to generalized boyhood, ways and means were suggested, deliberated upon and subsequently that which displayed wisdom in its adoption was the one seemingly valuable in the attempt

to procure an inevitable true group spirit. In brief it carried a certain allure in its offering to the individual making the first contact the automatic appointment as leader of his set. This, in turn, proved that assumption of the entire responsibility of organization and program was his alone. The success of this method of approach will be viewed in the following presentation: ...

After approximately a one-month period of operation membership had climbed rapidly to within the vicinity of twenty. The course pursued in the organizing process was sufficiently commendable to point out to the adults in power that the placement of responsibility on the shoulders of youth is merely the awakening of an inner force urging them on to display or produce that which will demand in return laudable recognition. The actual formation procedure set each group apart ... independent in itself, was certainly a wholesome, compelling means of arousing individual interest. Thus, on each set rested the selection of a name by which their club henceforth would be known. On them also the nomination of officers and the formulation of laws for their constitution ... this last

was accomplished with the aid or under the supervision of directors. In addition, these young members assumed full control of their own finances and the source of the regulation club treasury was none other than the weekly dues stipulated merely by reason of age and consequently variable in range from one to five cents. In the process of constitution-forming the boys made their own rules of conduct, planned activities program and devised creditable laws governing the future initiation of new members. Truly can it be said that the organization itself was literally established and carried on by youth. Throughout this period the director acted in an advisory capacity offering technical information when or if necessary. Inasmuch as this project deals with boys in the age group from ten to fifteen years, it is of noteworthy interest that several of the conduct rules adopted exhibited little or no variation in any of the clubs ... the minimal exception only being observed. In part, the four outstanding and all-important were none other than ... "No stealing -- No swearing -- No gambling -- No smoking". Surprisingly, some few clubs favored a rule against school truancy. Unquestionably a very marked significance is attached

to the regulations established in that the membership of the entire groups comprised only boys from an overcrowded neighborhood in the West End's so-called slum area.

When full organization was in swing, it was disclosed that daily meetings were held with the exception of Sunday and a special Saturday program was conducted either in A.M. or early P.M., depending simply upon the character of the work planned. In the course of operation, if the occasion arose, a trip outside the city limits demanded the entire day. This set-up as introduced, with an element of certainty can be said, was indeed a radical departure from the ordinary boys' club or Settlement House routine. Usually a club gathering in a social institution has but one organized meeting each week. On occasion there may be two but rarely, if ever, are more conducted. The boys individually have the privilege of going more than once weekly if they desire but never is it permissible for them to appear collectively as a club. This very factor contributed in a definite way as an outstanding point of departure in the Project's early development. Here, the same boys in the

same group appear daily ... a plan that received continuous encouragement because of the additional opportunity of self-expression. It also offers to leaders a more prolonged and careful supervision and assures the necessary time for the proper adjustment when required of the various individuals in the group. These directors or leaders are each responsible for a report of accurate daily attendance. A consecutive three-day absence of any member results in the prompt seeking of a legitimate reason. If, eventually, it is proven that illness enforced the absence, no action is taken, but on the other hand, if some definite connection is directed toward delinquency, a thorough investigation ensues (1).

Logically, such a set-up is conducive of absorbing the problem boy into a group ... not en masse, but as an individual. No stigma is ever attached to the delinquent or problem boy in that he seeks membership in routine fashion as does the normal applicant. Within a stated interval full acceptance by members is necessary, and if approved, once within the club confines, no special attention is accorded him insofar as the group is concerned. In the event that an

(1) Resnick, Abram: "Boys' Neighborhood League Report" ... p.2-3

individual is not accepted, those directing the course of this undertaking are likely to strike a snag and necessity demands the adoption of new methods and their prompt employ for the sole purpose of his gaining admittance.

It has been pointed out in this study that in order to know the background and the value of the individual himself one important factor must be constantly borne in mind, i.e., that the majority of boys are normal in every respect with the exception that a goodly percentage totally lack the guiding influence of a social agency. Unless delinquent boys were so-called charter members in their group, no attempt is made for the admittance of more than two in any one unit. Experience has proved rather conclusively that such a minimal number of delinquents could not be sufficiently potent to have even remote effect on the average member. Rather surprisingly, however, the reverse situation is almost a power in itself. For it has been frequently demonstrated that a wholly normal group has a tremendous influence on the problem boy, if in the course of events, he has succeeded in effecting the necessary

adjustment of himself as an individual to the rest of the group.

If, after a number of appeals, it is believed that a problem boy will not gain admission to a group his interests are solicited. One of the directors is then contacted and full particulars are offered with the eventual understanding that the boy must be elected once his name is proposed. In so doing, the director must have paramount in mind that any method employed violating the spirit of autonomous rule of the club would not be condoned. The club, in the final analysis, is its own organization and as such is not forced to accept orders from anyone. Therefore, the director is confronted with his own problem demanding self solution. It has been explained in the report investigated that he plans a campaign along lines best conducive of results. Ordinarily, this is directed primarily toward the making of indirect inquiries as to the attitude of the members individually and collectively and in the majority of instances time is the device affording him adequate opportunity of preparing them for the applicant. A positive campaign stroke is his suggestion

that one or two of the boys propose the name of the new member. Only as a last resort is a direct appeal to the entire club ever made by him. Should the occasion arise that forces him into this a fairly marked degree of certainty must exist that he will be successful. However, up to the present time such complicated steps leading in and out of involvement have not been warranted.

Suffice it to say that this method of organization has permitted definite and certain planned results that could not have been reached by any other means. It is truly instrumental in presenting the director an opportunity to analyze and become personally acquainted with every boy in his group. His observation of the effect which the group collectively has on the individual problem boy is well defined and if faced with the proper adjustment of the delinquent youth he has the vantage point of almost immediate procedure.

Inasmuch as meetings are held six times weekly, the programs in consequence should be both variable and constructive if lively interest is to be

sustained. It shall ever be a confirmed belief that group pressure has marked influence in the disciplining of a problem boy ... either delinquent or pre-delinquent than any personalized method as yet devised. Group discipline is impersonal, natural and rarely if ever has an aftermath or effect.

Apart from a daily attendance record, each director is obliged to write a resume of group activities and also of any problem in the event of its arising with individual boys. The combined records of each unit are then openly discussed with supervisors. Failure of early solution of any problem usually results in its reaching a main topic at staff conventions. In addition to the required monthly report, the supervisor is responsible for compiling weekly summaries of the progress made.

At the present time this project has wholly abandoned the appellation "delinquency" as it was originally known, and has substituted with official approval the more symbolic title ... "Boys' Neighborhood League".(1)

(1) Resnick, Abram: ... "Boys' Neighborhood League Report" -- p.4

Program of Activities

An approved program is not carried out en masse ... suitable adaptation to the needs of each individual group was preferred. On this schedule due stress has been placed on the entire athletic sport -- basketball, baseball and football in season, with swimming an all-year-round activity. Supplementing the more active display are the weekly business meetings, discussions, debates, dramatics, games, story-telling, classes in arts & crafts plus field trips. Programs exhibit daily variation and are usually in keeping with the seasons indoors and out. Tournaments among the groups are possible if in compliance with one important feature ... no club is permitted to take part unless the events entered into have been a group activity with the maximal club in active participation. As in all sports centers the better players are naturally those selected with the so-called second-string or substitutes. On the other hand, there is actually a "second team" duly chosen and entered as such. In this way, it was felt by the supervisor, according to the detailed report, that the objective was not merely the development of "star" players but rather was the

game employed as a valuable instrument for the promoting of active, wholesome fun. This in itself was found to result beneficially to the individual in presenting the true exemplary method of recreation with its effect on character building. Similar is the principle applied to cultural activities ... be the program what it may, all should have equal, active part. As this is the object in view careful consideration should precede any plan prior to adoption and must naturally resolve itself simple as ... workable, practicable and permissible to average boy participation.

Very shortly after this enterprise was organized a schedule of arts and crafts was arranged. This particular item of planned program proved to be of major importance in that it demonstrated the need of adaption to suit group participation. At onset one afternoon weekly was devoted to this type of work in the making of various objects. However, within a relatively brief period observation resulted in a fairly marked diminution of group interest. Shortly thereafter, the group voted the work unfavorable. However, the directors on the other hand felt that this program

had certain value as a means of determining group effort ... it taught individuals to work together, to cooperate with each other and to coordinate their efforts for the accomplishment of something of which they individually or collectively could be proud. The original crafts program failed in this regard simply because one of striking similarity was being carried on in the schools. Accordingly, alteration was essential for necessary interest. The key note of the undertaking in its entirety was club projects. Strangely enough, one group of individuals made a decision to delve into aeronautics. Here the director was totally unfamiliar with this subject but two boys exhibited their proficiency after volunteering their services to handle the work. Today, no group in the League surpasses this one in keenness and acuity. Concentration was centered on the building of a large ship which inevitably would be duly inscribed with the name of their club. Each member played some part in construction so that its completion would be theirs ... individually and collectively. The certainty of that which lacked wholesome, active interest demands attention and eventual alteration to insure a degree of practical results for here may be pointed out that this unit was none other than

the one which previously had voted on the termination of the arts and crafts program.

A second group united in the building of a golf game and when completed duly presented it to the house for the Junior Game Room. Other units displayed more than moderate interest in the electrical field.

The aforementioned group participations were cited to illustrate that when a definite form of activity was undesirable to maintain active interest the need of abolishment arose and with the subsequent institution of a more apt program restoration of adequate interest occurred. Group effort was, therefore, valuable only when maintenance of combined, keen interest was assured.

Problem of Seasonal Planning

In the fall of 1936, the first swimming classes were organized through the cooperation of the Charlestown Boys' Club. There an average of thirty-five boys were sent each Saturday morning for classes.

An alternate program was planned thusly ... one week for those individuals who knew how to swim and the week following only those who had never indulged in the sport. This schedule was maintained throughout the entire winter.

It was pointed out in the report that the program of activities did not adapt itself theoretically from books for each unit compiled its own schedule including such sports as resulted in keen enjoyment to all. Although it is generally believed that cultural development carried with it more value than the mere physical, the project had no intent to stress this or force it on boys not quite ready for this phase.

Program content is never a source of worry ... backgrounds and interests vary and a slow approach is preferred if the boy rather than the leader's development is considered. The individual interest is manifested by nothing more important than his regular daily attendance. After approximately one year period on a working basis with fourteen groups, it was ascertained by those in the lead that the max-

imum interest lay in the cultural field which included arts and crafts, meetings, discussions, trips, etc.

It was disclosed that there are those who are opposed to a program such as this, that is, the club enforcing each member to participate in activities, for as further explained, this is akin to regimentation and does not allow for individual expression. To the opposition factor, one of the directors rejoined that regimentation per se was not considered unsatisfactory when dealing with pre-delinquent or subnormal boys ... individuals whose own homes have failed to offer necessary early discipline and whose street environments were not conducive to control of self. In fact, it was additionally stressed, there is actually little regimentation if one considers the following:

The boys join voluntarily and may leave at any time desired. Each has to consciously decide what individual desires he himself will relinquish if he wishes to enjoy the benefits of the group and earn the respect of the members. The boy is taught

to enjoy freedom within the club by respecting the interests of others. Finally, and of marked importance, is his learning that modern society does not permit people to live alone ... in order to exist one must learn to cooperate.

The consideration of the summer session demanded thought for with the coming of warm weather and the closing of schools, the problem of caring for the young, especially in such crowded neighborhoods assumed an outstanding aspect. In this particular district many individuals, unable to go to a summer camp, are forced to lead an aimless existence in the streets and so become eventually more or less of a problem to parents and to the neighborhood at large. In addition, the cessation of activities in Settlement Houses because of their operation of summer camps greatly aggravated the problem. Thus, to meet this urgent need it was found necessary to speculate at length on the advantages of a day camp program. Subsequently, this was organized with very specific objectives ... some of which being:-

Three mass picnics with average attendance ..	175
One cruise to Provincetown with aver. "	155

Twenty-five overnight camping trips with approximately fifteen boys to each trip.

Fifty daily hikes ... twenty boys each time.

Forty educational trips ... twenty boys on each trip.

Ten field days at playgrounds with average attendance of one hundred & fifty boys.

Further perusal of reported activities revealed that the ensuing fall months found many of the original clubs still intact. Five of these with a total of one hundred boys were so well organized that it was believed they would be entirely capable of carrying on themselves independently. As clubs they joined up as regular members of the West End House and Elizabeth Peabody House shortly thereafter. However, contact with them was not cut off for the leaders remained their directors. In view of this, new boys were recruited to fill the gaps ... although not too surprised the response was edifying.

It was illustrated by the monthly reports that the daily average attendance was seventy-five percent of the total enrollment. Data relevant

to nationalities in the various groups was of considerable interest. The Italians lead with a percentage of 62 ... the Jewish with 13 percent ... Irish with 10 percent, and each of the following with 7 percent ... Albanian, Greek, Ukranian and French. In reviewing the report it was noted that the director of the Project was apparently under the impression that there were many more Polish families in this district than the final analysis displayed ... that is, if membership can be considered a true cross section of the population. To quote him here:

"Apparently we are either wrong in that impression or else we have not been reaching the Polish youth" (1).

Night Work

A truly rare feature manifested itself in the nightwork of the various project workers. Evidently they were not only interested in knowing the boy while he was under their supervision but certainly departed from known regulations or system of a civil concern, when they proceeded to delve into

(1) Resnick, Abram: ... "Boys' Neighborhood League Report" ... p.5

neighborhood conditions directly responsible or the means of creating problems inducive generally to juvenile delinquency. True they were powerless to alter any of the spots breeding delinquency but the work itself was valuable in offering clear-cut backgrounds. Apparently they were nothing more or less than observers in their night wanderings without police powers. Four of the leaders set forth each night except Sunday and covered all public places in the neighborhood, street corners and night clubs -- the logical directions where they believed that boys would in all probability gather. In the event, during these travels, that powerful persuasion might have tonic effect, it was readily offered. Rather surprisingly, during these nightly strolls in search of their own members, occasionally the leaders were successful in enrolling new boys. Obviously the primary purpose in this particular type of work was to ascertain the various individuals who were out late at night and to seek the reason. It was learned in some instances that a desire to earn money for family needs was the cause. In others, it merely amounted to lax home control, where parents did not know and did not care what their children

did on the street. For the most part, the intention was to tie up their work with the conditions prevailing in the district. Following a stated trial period of the above, the workers then divided the section into three main divisions and thereafter set forth in groups of two between the hours of eight and eleven P.M. The territory patrolled was around and within the following districts: ...

Scollay Square's business section
and surrounding streets.

Boston Garden ... North Station and
the surrounding streets.

All street corners in the residen-
tial sections of the West End.

The subsequent reports as written by these workers were interesting and somewhat revealing but failed to indicate a tie-up with other agencies in the district. It was explained that the word revealing was employed in view of some "finds" but no expected natural techniques of treatment were apparently applied for correction, or if they were no reference was made to them in the reports. However, if for no other purpose, these nightly jaunts offered

strength to previous knowledge in dealing with youth.

From a thorough investigation of the Delinquency Project's report it was learned that their corps of workers do not profess or attempt any case work in families or engage in any home follow-up, where the court has jurisdiction, mainly because they are known as social workers and do not claim any official connection with the court. Informally, however, their work could very readily be tabulated as such for they engage in considerable checking on their young charges as indicated in a review of the report. Relationship with the boy is established in a friendly and natural way and it is eventually through the boy that contact with the family is made. In numerous instances the approval of these leaders is more natural than that of the formal case worker. After their experimental period these adult individuals feel that their attempts have been crowned with fairly well marked success. In the course of future development, they are of the opinion that the method of procedure in studying case work will become an invaluable aid in the process of a necessary and proper adjustment of juveniles.

The variable types of groups operating within the project's confines, the procedure of contact, together with the effects of group pressure on individual boys in the club will be illustrated in a somewhat detailed fashion in the ensuing pages (1).

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(1) Resnick, Abram: ... "Boys' Neighborhood League Bulletin" -- p.5-10

CHAPTER III

"Group Pressure As a Means of Effecting The Natural Adjustment of The Problem Boy"

To specifically elucidate the underlying power of club pressure on boys of variable types under varying circumstances, a selective process from a series of unusually interesting reports resulted in the five following. Seemingly, these more aptly corroborated the accepted theory that group pressure is a potent method of effecting the natural adjustment of the problem boy.

Case I ...

(Age Group: 14-17) ... (Membership: 22)

Illustrating that the number of behavior problems in any one unit must necessarily be restricted, this particular group pointed toward the end results and consisted of boys, formerly meeting once weekly as members of a neighborhood agency. Apparently the Project's founding was propitious in that at the psychological moment during the course of January

1936, these boys were of such calibre as to demand the attention of those in power. Obviously, they had been persistent problem issues to the Agency in which they held membership and continuous failure to stem their waywardness was about to result in expulsion. Not only was the club forced to tolerate their misdemeanors but the neighborhood community as well, for the majority had contact to some degree with the Juvenile Court for minor legal infractions. Many of them had arrived at a working age and not only were idle but totally lacked any desire for remunerative occupation. The number attending disciplinary classes was minimal ... while others of the set, although of age to further benefit from sessions of vocational guidance, adapted their leisure to devious ways, entirely ignoring any form of authority.

An experimental period of one year with them under the new project was resultant of some apparent improvement in group conduct. The mere fact that slight progress was made in this same time interval toward developing group loyalty relative to organized social activity was gratifying and a measure of surprise was evinced when their supportive

energies produced basketball and baseball teams in readiness for competition ... proving unsurpassed only by those exhibiting a greater degree of athletic skill. Eventually a Sport Night Program conducted by this collective body was indeed worthy of the approximate three hundred people which it attracted. At no time from onset were meetings other than well attended. With funds from the club treasury sports equipment was procured and a substantial sum was retained as a carrying balance. As a group in its entirety the esprit de corps was almost superb ... responding to club activity and displaying fairly marked appreciation of social institutions. Individually, however, no significant alteration was observed -- each remaining as a problem to the community at large. Some were sufficiently successful in striding within easy grasp of the arm of the law.

Hence, the sole aim of bringing group pressure into individual lives has thus far met with only partial success, viz, a marked animated spirit collectively. When the allotted trial period was approaching ad finem, it was the consensus of opinion generally that the set-up was highly perilous in lieu

of the ever lurking possibilities that tended to destroy or at least mar the characters now fundamentally normal. The ever present struggle between the two forces was pointed out as the prominent factor, which perforce, would in time cause the resignation of the "good boys" so-called to avoid the stigma which, undoubtedly, would stamp them as bearing a striking similarity to those members less desirable.

Rather surprisingly, in this regard leaders were in accord and one possessed the courage of convictional heights to volunteer:-

"Of course, we should never organize a group on this basis ... we would rather organize a group of so-called "bad boys" but never half and half"(1).

.....

If truth in substance predicates the brief, uncrowned classic "Repetition denotes reputation" ... then, en passant, shall I be just another of the ranking, prolific, unclassified entities to postulate on the changelessness of time, the reward of endurance, and the perverseness of success' ratio, merely to rat-

(1) Resnick, Abram: "Reports on Groups Handled by Clubs"
... p.1

ionalize and vindicate with a fair quota of temerity that ... "Rome wasn't built in a day".

How then shall any undertaking, howsoever noble in origin be so hastily and freely stamped as either success or failure, when the experimental period per se was wholly inadequate to demonstrate the maximal worth? What should personal, mildly condemnatory attitudes stem a valuable positivistic movement? If in an abundant, flowering orchard, one tree in seasonal time produces fruit whose life is halted in early growth by tiny familiar worms -- should one be led to believe that all thriving, healthy fruit of the same family or tree are concomitantly affected by similar infestation or by those thwarted in growth?

Isn't it true that the unpaved, unmanned highways and lanes in life will be carelessly tossed in the discard when firmly embedded ridges and ruts made on impressionable surfaces by insidious, uncontrolled, stronger forces deem them unfit for use? Possibly natural elements may eradicate some few but by token of the same process others will become more indelibly grooved. If however, one day value as definite connecting links to commercialized life is disclosed,

then and only then will restoration to normalcy occur by dint of pressure and the constancy of supervised human labor and perseverance.

So, therefore, by similar rationalization, shall problem boys who in a relatively brief period carried a banner labelled "esprit de corps" (denoting in their combined attitudes the recognition of authority) one day unaccompanied reach an identical level when individual observation and guidance reassumes its warranted degree of importance.

Although it was generally felt that a short step had been taken in the experimental period, personally, I believe that a definite progressive stride has been gallantly made toward the accomplishment of the distant end for which the project originally set out. As a beginning it has proved meritorious but from this point the potentialities, unreservedly, might have more sizable, potent, permanent results if the present inadequate ranks are reinforced by many additional sympathetic workers. Unless this is done, the individual attention, now so vital, will necessarily subjugate its need to the al-

ready established principles. As such, the undertaking will continue to operate on the basis of collectivity which is but a negligible endeavor to attain the desired goal-- youth, the "individual". In other words, the plan as adopted will persist in gathering in youth in quantities to the confines of a clubhouse ... and consequently, will depend solely on the probability of an effortless, aimless chance to some day reach one, two or mayhap three of the behavior problems individually.

If supervised, manned labor could solidify the rutted routes by filling in with processed essentials the grooves on impressionable surfaces, thus obviating disuse, so logically, may additional leaders be qualified to personally guide misdirected young lives; strive to erase that which environmental conditions indelibly printed on young minds by presenting an incentive and paving the way to heights of individual responsibility and honor. Thus will achievement and full satisfaction be theirs when true, worthwhile citizens are sent forth to the door of manhood.

.....

Case II ...

(Age Group: 11-12) (Membership: 21)

In the course of September 1936, the initiation of the so-termed "corner-gang" variety as charter members marked the official start of this second of my selected group. An all-important factor in the strides toward desired success, this particular club will ever be recognized as a decisive advance in that the young individuals tendered membership holding at onset were boys who originally had been ganged together on the outside under "Jim". As leader he was accorded the privilege of full sway. Having reached that faint line dividing childhood and adolescence, the quota of his thirteen years was to say the least complete. Apparently he had been a tabulated figure with the law for the preceding five years and it was ascertained from various sources that he had been to all intents and purposes a prime problem in both school and in the neighborhood generally. At the time of his acceptance into the project's club, details of his past had been carefully analyzed. The consensus of opinion of all who had had contact with him was simply that in his role of influencing other youngsters, Jim was immeasurably undesirable. Ap-

parently in the preceding year he had been approached for the purpose of possible membership in two or three of the other units but quite successful was he in eluding those who sought his enrollment. His one desire constantly in mind was leadership and the attention which his position accorded him. To this end he had surrounded himself with children in the street, (considerably younger than her) who in due time became the props of his egotistical longing. The enticement of his being co-director of a unit was in all probability the inducement which finally provoked his interest. After recommendation by the court, Jim's admittance to the club carried with it the aforementioned distinction. Mr. Spotniz, the leader, believed this to be at least partial if not the entire solution to the problem. As he pointed out, in the long run, it was without doubt the lesser of two evils. By the very fact of encouraging Jim's active interest in the club, the results if successful would prevent his wandering about on the outside and the eventual harmful effects on other young individuals. After approximately one week on a working basis, the following is a copy of what actually occurred at the organization meeting:

"What do the Jim associates want to do? Play football? ... No! Play handball? ... No! This group of husky, energetic, frisky boys demanded a room in which to play Black Magic Games. So, en masse, we moved in to take control of a large room and prepared ourselves for our labors. We played: 'G.Mah ... a test of power observation; Magic Pencil; Yes, Professor; Black Magic, and then we finally tackled a regular business meeting.

'Election of officers was attempted with some trepidation and alarm ... but we succeeded. Having expected that Jim, because of his powerful personality expressed so subtly through his hands, would be the only nominee for chairman and all the subsequent offices, I was very much surprised to find three members nominated for chairman ... the procedure was continued and in the end Jim was elected chairman.

'The group then proceeded to make rules and regulations that were to guide the organization:

'Stealing was first brought up and paraded before the boys and drastically they dealt with

this villain ... abrupt dropping from club, West End House and even the Burroughs News Foundation.

'Smoking merely meant being dropped from the first two aforementioned organizations.

'Lying brought with it suspension and
'Swearing a fine to be set by the club.

'After these rulings were passed Jim was asked to explain exactly what these rules meant to the club and one of the boys asked if the same action would be taken against him were he to steal or to smoke, and immediately Jim answered in the affirmative. Evidently whether he meant it or not, Jim was trying to impress the group with the necessity and importance of a club to his gang'" (1).

When this particular unit had been operating for approximately four months, a typical example of what group pressure does in the development of an individual was illustrated. It appeared apparent that the club or rather the majority of its members were enthusiastic about the arts and crafts ses-

(1) Spotniz, Max: ... "Club Meeting Report" -- Boys' Neighborhood League, -- p.2

sion ... those without interest were minimal but were forced to attend by pressure. The chairman impressed each that absence would result in definite exclusion from all other programs with the exceptions of meetings. Quite surprisingly, this worked.

For a second time since onset officers were elected. With two others Jim was again nominated for chairman, and this time defeated by one vote cast by "C". This obviously hurt him considerably and his eyes brimmed with tears. But the club had taught him! Formerly, a similar situation would have resulted in his walking out angrily and in all likelihood his wrath would have been eventually vented on the unfortunate "C". However, without the slightest display of sulkiness or apparent bitterness, Jim was the first to nominate "C" for the office of secretary and aided materially in voting this member into the executive ranks. Some time later Jim was elected baseball captain. This group has since carried on beautifully and offer a well diversified program.

.....

This so-called "Jim", in my opinion, to

use a loquacious term, has "what it takes" to be a leader of men. The phrase is a trite expletive but carries with it an apt descriptive force. In this youth is discernible a marked "individuality" for his age and with proper direction and instruction in the next few years should play a part in unearthing a few of his hidden potentialities. It is very evident that early environmental surroundings were instrumental in offering him a wayward course. One might suspect that in his intimate family circle the "head" was the only one upon whom attention was showered. Having grasped the attitude and knowing full well the results, all efforts presumably were bent toward acquiring for himself the role of leader. Obviously he was a success in his own mind and in the eyes of his followers. However, from the report of his conduct within the club, I should not judge Jim to have any particular inclination toward waywardness. He simply lacked the essential guidance and loving sympathy in his own home so essential to a child. The group now carried with it greater responsibilities than his original corner-gang and without any qualms he readily accepted the trust placed in him. Time as termed by a few months proved that he was worthy

and certainly, three or four more years with careful supervision should be the true means of developing that which he now possesses in goodly measure.

.....

Case III ...

(Age Group: 11-13) (Membership: 23)

This group organized in the late autumn of the same year was not centered about one leader but contained various elements which in the course of time fused into a harmonious whole. Excellent leadership and program were responsible. Widely different types were combined in this unit and made up the entire membership as will be here pointed out: ...

Approximately one-half dozen of these young individuals had been allied with a previous club that had closed its doors at the end of the season in the early summer. Six others were the so-called wayward or misguided youths who apparently had been engaged in petty thievery. The remaining members, rather surprisingly, had displayed a somewhat refreshing juvenile trait in seeking enrollment simply because of the director's personality. Confronted with the total dissimilarity as characterized above extreme difficulty was exper-

lenced by the dominant powers in the course of organizing. Although no details in regard to obstacles encountered or occurring events were presented in the project's report during this interval until definite establishment was assured, one might be prompted to logically inquire: ... What did this particular leader or director possess to such a surmised degree that endowed him as it were with the power to guide and control within a relatively brief period this rare juvenile assortment? If seemingly, I have strayed from the report which is at hand, I can only state that the unit as "one" in the accepted sense of the word certainly offered me no visualization of potential success when due deliberation had been given to the odd combination of members. Solely, in the interest of a marked curiosity was I urged to deviate from my original trend. Perhaps it was intuition that sensed a gradual diminution in curious-mindedness were I to continue along with the club's record. Whatever the cause, I must state here that a flash momentarily carried me back to the young boys whom previously I had accused subtly of having a well-known "crush". Hereafter, I shall firmly encourage mental restraint but before restrictions are in order, a desire to obviate myself of

the term "indiscreet" I am forced to make one further comment: ... The personality of the director who guided by undemonstrated compulsion widely divergent factors to a central point has justly earned the warranted "magnetic" emblem. To justify that which I silently condemned a few moments ago, I shall now continue with the club's progress in step with those few admiring youngsters who responded so readily to human appeal. When this club had been on a functioning basis for an eight-month period it was truly outstanding as the leading group in the entire organization. The past winter it was this club that was runner-up for the Basketball Championship. Their arts and crafts project demonstrated in its eventual success an unusual degree of intensive interest and supervision. Group loyalty is excellent and as illustration of some few of the situations that occurred plus the variability of the adjustment problems handled, a portion of the director's daily report is here quoted: ...

"At 3:30 P.M., the club met for the weekly business meeting. Only three boys were absent and each one of these had reasonable explanation. Joe was one of the boys absent and it was reported to the club that he was in the hospital. The club decided to get

'him a "Get Well" card. An important problem was discussed by the members. The boys brought up the delicate topic of home lessons. Their teachers had been complaining and the members felt that the club was the proper place in which to thrash it out. They discussed the matter at great length and finally decided that from now on anyone not turning in his homework would be suspended from the basketball games or from any other interest he had; and, if he still did not conform the club would be forced to expell him. Continuing their discussion on literary matters the club is now preparing to take up debating, declaiming and essay writing. A committee of three was appointed to bring to the meeting the following week subjects for debate.

'The aeroplane project was discussed.... the boys showing marked interest and the club voted to spend some money for supplies. Two of the members are the instructors and are doing some marvelous work.

'A former probation boy and also a member of a now defunct club became a member on three weeks probation. The director had a talk with him

before his admittance and the boy said he felt the club would help him and that he would like the chance of helping the club.

'Another problem was taken into the club as a real member ... has a flare for basketball and since he hasn't any gym togs, the director plans to furnish an outfit.

'The director said, "'I am in the habit of reading my boys' school report cards, so I was fairly surprised to see the better marks some of them had'" (1)".

In reviewing the complete report of this particular group one incident stood out sharply defined as an unequivocal demonstration of how the rigidity of group pressure infrequently appears almost cruel in the insistence of proper behavior:

Frank with a rating of a two-month membership was observed by some few of his club conferees in an active gambling role. Although in the director's report cognizance was made of the exist-

(1) Dubrofsky, T.: ... "Boys' Neighborhood League Bulletin -- Club Report, ... p.4-5

ing probability that this was not an isolated instance, almost immediate expulsion ensued. However, the director and club leader apparently saw in this youth sufficient worthwhile material for future possibilities, and thus appealed to the members collectively. They pointed out the fact that Frank could not be expelled unless the club took action. However, seemingly from the displayed attitudes there was little if any club future for said Frank. Almost immediately, in the presence of the two adults, the club prepared to cast a vote. Believing from their reaction that judgment had already been passed, the director at this point saw definite need for prolonging the members' decision. Accordingly, he explained carefully the importance of the situation and the extreme seriousness of expulsion of one of them without due deliberation. His suggestion that they appoint a committee to give full consideration to the case and then report results, purely in the hope of his ease of convincing a few rather than the club in its entirety. Thus was the committee by marginal vote duly formed with instructions to meet immediately when the regular session was completed. The ensuing struggle to reach a decision lasted about forty-five minutes with ap-

proved recommendation for a three-week probation period.

Some time later this individual still known as Frank met the remorselessness of the fate from which he had so narrowly escaped in the preceding paragraph. The sustained interest of the director, however, proved the instrumental power after a lapse of several months to gain this boy's admittance to one of the other units. Frank's background after investigation proved somewhat revealing and although fully written up in the project's record, but a sketchy outline is here presented:-

This youth had reached the age of thirteen years and it was ascertained that for the past nine years or from the age of four, he had entertained himself with playing cards. At onset, inasmuch as it was nothing more or less than a substitute for a child's game, the parents had encouraged him in his source of amusement. However, as Frank grew older this childhood pasttime donned a garb of remunerative value. ... At the time of enrollment in the first club the director was well aware of the habit. With the privi-

lege of membership he had made a promise to stop card-playing. In his own defense, Frank claimed the necessity of a prolonged period for breaking a habit of such long-standing. In his attitude of sincerity it was felt that this youth had adequate strength of character to overcome any fault if given sufficient time, or more important still would be the exercising of patience of those guiding him. At no time during his brief career had he ever appeared before the court.

.....

Case IV ...

This fourth of my selected series is very brief but wholly adequate to illustrate how an adult in the capacity of supervisor or director can be a powerful influence in detouring the youthful individual from the habit-forming road of a vice by his alert awareness.

While sauntering in the immediate neighborhood of the club, a director observed one of his young proteges carrying a can of beer. On this first

occasion, although no comment was entered on the report, it is assumed that no admonition was meted out. However, shortly thereafter a recurrence of the above episode resulted in prompt questioning of the boy. By the director's prodding the following was elicited:

Evidently in his home, this young member has consciously known of the considerable consumption of beer, and obviously the parents voiced their objections to Al's imbibing. After talking for some time, he freely admitted that it was no especial craving for the beer itself but for the effect on other people whom he wished to impress with his maturity having attained such degree that the privilege of so indulging was his. When certain harmful effects were duly pointed out and the suggestion made that he stop entirely, his promise was readily given. If in the future he had in his possession a spare dime which ordinarily he might spend on beer, the director offered to deposit it until a certain sum was attained for the purpose of purchasing a basketball uniform. This simple suggestion, surprisingly, worked for some time later the "Al" of our story was elected basketball captain. Since the initial deposit of dimes he has not imbibed (1).

(1) Resnick, Abram: ... Club Report -- "Boys' Neighborhood League Bulletin" -- p.4

Case V ...

This fifth and final of the serial case reports is in my opinion highly valuable from the point of illustration and favors in a definitely proven method the influence of group pressure not only in the building of character but also in the necessary display of good sportsmanship.

In the process of organizing this club adopted a rule against smoking by its members, with a transgression addenda which carried with it a fine of five cents. A committee was appointed to report any observed infringement on this regulation. ... (The director of the unit was present at the meeting where this rule was enforced). In due time one member evidently had transgressed and was so reported by the authorized committee. When confronted, he readily admitted the infraction and promised not to repeat the act. In defending himself before his fellow members he stated that smoking was a habit with him of a somewhat prolonged duration and although he sincerely endeavored to conform to club regulations, his effort though brave went down in defeat by his

craving to indulge. The fine was subsequently paid and the incident as such was promptly forgotten. The factor of marked interest in this particular case was that no member felt his calling attention to the breaking of a rule was "squealing" ... rather were they all inclined to the firm belief that the agreement not to smoke was considered a fair one by all, and logically in their youthful thinking, the member who failed to comply with a solemn promise was the poor sport (1).

.....

(1) Resnick, Abram: ... Club Report -- "Boys' Neighborhood League Bulletin" -- p.5

The report was emphatic in stressing that membership of the various clubs was not always solicited and without any personal contact entering into it, rather frequently young individuals appeared requesting enrollment. The leader or director would look into each case to be assured that the desire for admittance was not simply to change from one agency to another. Since onset of organization very few clubs have been forced by failure out of existence. Of the twenty-four units initially established only three are not intact at present. One failed completely for no other reason than improper direction; the other two had progressed to a point that transfer to other agencies was deemed wise. The individuals, however, were not entirely lost to those who had been leaders inasmuch as contact was maintained despite the fact that these two units had been absorbed into other agencies.

In the work of supervision, it was found by the directors and leaders that dealing with the individual was not always successful. Many problem boys adjusted themselves satisfactorily, while others despite all efforts displayed continued maladjustment, simply evinced no active interest and finally drifted away.

In view of lack of facilities and proper agencies the workers were powerless. The court as an ally was also helpless as nothing could be done unofficially, that is, without some overt anti-social act.

Findings

The perusal of the preceding case studies carries with it a certainty of conviction that the project in its dealings with youth has spiked a superior "par value". Although lacking the details of actual recording they are wholly adequate as an illustrative method in stressing a specific feature. To bring attention to the various factors in need of further cooperation by proof of actual work is without doubt a powerful but subtle demand for recognition. Throughout may be clearly seen that the youthful individual is the constantly exhibited strong factor and it is conclusively pointed out what the group expects of the child. Though somewhat variant in each unit, this is a determining feature. Certainly of maximal importance is the recognition of workers that the problems dealing with the intangible emotional desires and conflicts of the young person requires a thorough analy-

sis as a basis for action. They are further demonstrative of the fact that although it is seemingly impossible for one director to be intimately acquainted with boys in a grouped unit individually, it is on the other hand an accomplishment with resultant benefits for the boys to individually seek the acquaintance of the leader.

On the whole, I believe that the Project has definite proof that one of the most powerful appeals that adults can wield in any work with youth is to exhibit full confidence in him. If, consecutive follow-up is attempted that of studying the youthful tastes and probing to unearth any talent by means of encouraging him to talk of his primary interests, there is the inevitable surety of one day reaching him. Indications throughout seem to favor constant movement in the boys' clubs for if the enterprise slackens its pace or definitely lags, the members are not willing to submerge enthusiasm and sit back contentedly awaiting return of their original interest. In variable ways and means

in the course of this report it was revealed quite frequently that the belief of those dominating the movement was simply that their young proteges loved the "imperialism of good-natured firmness".

Finally, as a material aid to further progressive steps of possible future workers, the complete review of the work thus far accomplished by the Project sharply and clearly indicates its own value. In other words, to personalize it as something personally worthwhile to youth, its own self-appraisal might in all probability be thusly phrased:

The Project's experimenting group through blundering and succeeding by trial and error method unquestionably make available points of departure for the future.

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CHAPTER IV

"Notable Accomplishments of the Project's Work"

Boston's West End ... The acclaimed ideal setting for the Delinquency Movement in the cause of youth, quite perversely is probably the one prime setting lacking ideals for youth himself. The combination, therefore, affords fertile for the experimental period. Here, stand out two irrelevant factors ... The American school and the foreign home. How then could one expect other than mental confusion in the motley group comprising the adults and their offsprings. A confusion not perilous nor permanent in the strictest sense of the word but certainly harmful to the young individual who during his impressionable years is literally being torn diametrically apart. His very youth with the implications of his mediocre mental retention becomes lost to his family, to school, to society and at times quite disastrously is he lost to himself. West End requires primarily socialized education for with an altering generation there has occurred dramatic alteration in child psychology today. When teachers in the schools can offer him that which foreign home influence is un-

able to give him then only will the youth where such conditions exist be a potential asset to society. Give him a true insight into himself guide him in the course of responsiveness to natural processes and gradually will be observed respect for himself as an individual together with equal respect for others.

In the project's report it was found that in a state of social disorganization, such as existed among the children of the West End, community resistance was low. Delinquent and criminal patterns arose and were transmitted socially just as any other cultural and social pattern was transmitted. In time, these patterns became dominant and shaped the attitudes and behavior of the persons living in the area. Thus, the section became a delinquency area with resultant need of definite objectives. In this garb the movement stands as a saving grace of childhood -- offsetting the destructors.

Study and experience has taught that a community program requires a technique of cooperation. That it depends not only upon the existence of social agencies but also upon their ability and willingness

to cooperate and to carry through plans initiated by its officers. Then it requires its correlation of undertakings with the social agencies and the coordination of the social agencies themselves in order to accomplish team-work in the Social Service Field.

The application of this knowledge in the present neighborhood experiment resulted in a true community program. However, one factor was rather pronounced that in order that a program of preventative and constructive work be continued and furthered in the community, a better understanding and cooperative spirit was absolutely necessary. That was the project's challenge ... here, it is the reason for this study.

The experiment requires a tremendous driving power to prevent delinquency. As it stands now it is not tied up with any such force. Quite valuable would be the Juvenile Court or other social agencies ... preferably church and school, which would carry with them the necessary legal pressure to enforce "right doing".

Progress of Experiment

Despite the fact that essentials for worthy accomplishment are not as yet available, appreciable progress can be seen along the course from onset. Some of the outstanding gains thus far are cited:

The boys now publish their own newsheet with the editing and compiling their own accomplishment. At the present time the various units are in a position that soliciting is no longer necessary boys themselves approaching to request enrollment. Certainly, the undertaking has played a part in making their young members settlement house conscious. Amateur shows and tournaments in keeping with the respective clubs were encouraged. Originally, the programs were one hundred percent athletic but after the first year stress was placed on good social and cultural content. Thereafter, it was observed that the original 100 percent had declined to 60. Declamation was an essential factor in the weekly program chiefly to impart confidence in themselves and to be an aid to better self-expression.

By October 1936, five groups were ready to be transferred to various settlement houses in the district. These groups comprised about one hundred boys who were developed by the project. They were amongst the first to be organized and had been under continual supervision. The majority of them never belonged to an institution before and now found themselves full-fledged members of the institution with their own clubs. While they have joined in the regular way the West End and Elizabeth Peabody Houses, the project did not lose them completely, inasmuch as their original directors were instrumental in keeping the contact and voluntarily acted as directors even when the youthful individuals went to other agencies. The interest of leaders and directors is assuredly commendable, for as will be readily seen their capacity as volunteer directors of their previous charges certainly infringes on their leisure time.

The Arts & Crafts Club steadily advanced, ... reaching a point where space was inadequate. In this regard arrangements were made for a room to be used exclusively by their club members under the able direction of Mr. Ruben Guild.

In view of the innumerable children between the ages of seven and ten years who congregated daily ... interrupting the program and constantly being troublesome to the West End House, an attempt was made at grouping them for the purpose of supervision. Thus, the West End Midgets came into being. Rather than have them roaming through the building it was deemed wise to gather them under the direction of Mr. Gentile. Their programs were widely divergent from the older units ... consisting for the most part of games suitable to age. The original group numbered twenty-five, and as has been stated was organized simply to prevent the children running through the building. However, within a span of a few weeks it was discovered that approximately sixty had been enrolled with an average daily attendance of forty-five. Because of inadequate man power and facilities the project was unable to handle this sizable group. Although it would have been desirable to guide leisure hours of these children, it was felt by the directors that energies at present should be expended on the older groups who already presented real problems to the neighborhood and to themselves. The Elizabeth Peabody House, however, fully cognizant of the impor-

tance of restricting these young "Midgets" consented to accept them as a group from the Project ... supplying both directors and facilities. Early in March of 1937, therefore, the entire unit was transferred with the loaned services of Mr. Gentile for the purpose of acclimating the children to their new environment. There he remained for a period of one month.

Inasmuch as it would be impossible to cite all the project's minute accomplishments, the following statements will be conclusive of noteworthy gains:

This Delinquency Movement has taken under its wing over two hundred youngsters from the streets and has provided wholesome recreation under excellent supervision every afternoon. It has provided a place where problem boys or border-line cases can be absorbed by giving them a normal environment with normal and healthy youngsters. It fills a vital need as there is no place in the West End where a large and assorted group of children can spend time under proper leadership and guidance. It proves that the district needs more recreational facilities if the

problem of delinquency is to be properly regarded and handled. This project is developing local boys who will understand boys' work and their relations to the community.

It is making for good citizenship at a time when America is facing a juvenile crime war.

Directly then the experiment did reach the problem boys in this area offering ample outlets for their energies under proper supervision and guidance. Seventy percent of the boys never belonged to any club previously even though such were available in the district. The influence for good naturally reached the home and so indirectly the project's work was again felt.

Although every social service agency in the community should be enlisted in the cause, the schools in the final analysis should take over a considerable portion of the work. After all it is an educational process and not until we have the coordinated efforts of all agencies in the district will the ideal program be achieved.

Unofficially, it had been reported that less children from this district were appearing before the juvenile court since the inauguration of the movement. Although the project has attained certain definite results we cannot say that it has caused cessation of the delinquency.

Accent on Youth

Lastly, we can safely say it has been sufficiently indicated that juvenile delinquency has many causes. If the evil is remedied there must be many changes in the environment of the youth. The task is manifold and the forces must correspond. The time has come for the establishment of a clearing-house in every city, for the betterment of the city in every respect, of which the Juvenile Court should make the greatest use. Civic Improvement Leagues should enrich their purpose and extend their efforts by having more consciously in view the improvement of childhood.

A Civic Improvement League enlists those most closely and really interested in improvement and

enlists them as volunteers. When open to facts and actual conditions such persons can exercise the healthiest censorship over officials who are inclined to get away from the notion of the public good. They learn of hidden conditions, they agitate, enlist followers, publish conditions, keep the standard of official action high, they act privately, legally and publicly. The systematic organization of the moral forces of the community is as inevitable as the organization of labor. The result will be more action and cleaner cities, more accurate knowledge of facts, dissemination of those facts, higher ideals and achievement of them. It is just this that not only the youth of the city needs but also this project if we are to give the experiment a fair trial.

The Works Progress Administration allows the Neighborhood League to handle this problem themselves without benefit of an advisory board. This might be done with good results but financially they are not secure. Youth on the other hand demands what the project offers but also demands the security that it will continue. The staff of fourteen workers is large enough to actively and actually prove results.

Although this study covers a period of one and one-half years From March 1937, the time of its organization, the project is still in operation and hopes to have a period of five consecutive years to test their methods. Under the present set-up leaders are not as permanent as desired ... being subject to federal lay-offs. The time and energy spent in recruiting new workers and orienting them to the work has its disadvantages not only to the workers but more important still to the problem boys. City Improvement Leagues should be the order of the future, to accomplish through private interest and support what public interest is powerless to accomplish.

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CHAPTER V

"Conclusions"

As every road I have travelled has led me inevitably to individual youth, I trust that you will condone as timely my appearance here in a timely cause. My interest in young boyhood generally coupled with the prevalence of delinquency throughout this vast nation of ours prompted me to travel a road to Boston's West End. And here, in this district, my idealism was a seeming nothingness in face of a working materialism in the Delinquency Cause for ideal youth. A cause set forth as ... "Community Coordination for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency" which you have seen as the topic of this theme. My visit at headquarters in the investigative process was of vital interest and availed me valuable data in the combining power of an elevated idealism and an intensely basic materialism. With curiosity never dwindling I learned what this movement had thus far accomplished in pursuit of its goal.

In the proper setting of prominence in

the foreground stands the home with the contributing factors to juvenile delinquency well demarcated as ... physical, mental, moral, social and economic conditions. Then the home disrupted with its loss of care, guidance and economic support of the ruler. And then, a substitute of the original in the guise of a step-father ... strongly marked as a causation.

In closest proximity will be found the wide, free, open roads leading away from the home with their numerous curiosities to attract. Here, is where youth's leisure is spent. Too often does he travel the by-paths in search of resources for enjoyment. Because these are unguarded and unpatrolled it is apparent that they are strong determinants in leading him from the protection and supervision so needed. In view of the lack of supervision the child in defense is not responsible for his waywardness when no sign points out "do not enter".

Beyond the home and its surroundings is the school seemingly adequate and satisfying in structure but totally inadequate and unsatisfying in recreational facilities so essential for wholesome boyhood. Within one may expect rigidity and elasticity

of discipline from the attitude of their charges flocking out. Ranks are incomplete significant of poorly enforced attendance laws, inaccurate grading, unsympathetic and untrained teachers in their failure to meet racial and mental differences by modification of the courses of study. In brief, one looking closely might find a proffered trend toward truancy and delinquency extended to resentful youth. Analyzing the grouped proteges by dissociation there can be noted untrained, unwilling children and the undesirable companions of our modern youth. Here socialized education, intelligent and patient teaching with adequate recreational facilities are vital. Only by these methods will the school eventually have the setting it deserves.

Around and beyond the home and school spreads out for a distance the neighborhood -- typical or representative of conflicts between present and former culture in regard to generation. The antagonistic attitude of various immigrant groups. The break-down or undermining of the immediate spiritual and social institutions and lastly, the populated area in active demonstration because of the enforced effects of a

gripping poverty ... the inadequate housing conditions, unfit physical environment and the complete absence of recreation under proper direction for the masses of youth. This coloring of poverty only slightly overshadows dependency and juvenile delinquency with the fine lines of physical and mental powers of resistance diminishing, temptations and disease somewhat more marked and the family itself is set down in this center.

Children from these homes and this neighborhood set forth daily in search of a livelihood ... the very sources of which are perilous indeed. The newsboy on the street contacts evil associates -- remains idle for periods awaiting new issues -- is made aware of city night life by his very occupation and is deprived of rightful recreational enjoyment. Forever then may it be said that the newsboy is beyond the available line of wholesome supervision.

The newspaper itself is held aloft as a potent agent carrying in its columns and front sheets the elements of crime and delinquency -- procedures for youth to adopt on its wayward trends.

Throughout may be seen that the social determinants are various and innumerable in juvenile delinquency ... the variability lying in extent and intensity. As yet, it is obvious that the desirable means of measuring them is still undevised and to attempt isolation of each causative factor from closely woven ones is extremely difficult if not wholly impossible. Detection of these factors, however, is sufficiently objective to be discernible and thus conducive to analysis and prevention. Knowledge which you now possess of the modifications necessary for the improvement of external conditions presented and in the various potent features within the home itself suggest tremendous possibilities for the future. It has been deduced by those vitally interested in the cause of youth that if a reasonable part of the enthusiasm, energy and funds devoted to other fields of civil and social improvement were directed toward research and constructive means of prevention of delinquency in our youth, results would truly be fruitful.

.....

The history in detail of this Experimental Project with our youth was explained in its course

of development, organization and program to demonstrate clearly the enormous amount of work involved in any such undertaking. In addition, it was my intention to illustrate that this undertaking ... now known as the Boys' Neighborhood League is a separate and distinct agency with individual objectives and goals. Although it established headquarters in the well-known West End House there is no connection between them but merely coordinated with the various settlement houses and clubs. In their consideration of the entire project and in the process of work due and respective interest was accorded the home, church, school, court and social agencies.

This particular neighborhood ... the West End of Boston was selected primarily for its contribution of the greatest number of delinquents in the city in comparison to its area. About the initial set-up and eventual steps taken by this Delinquency Movement the following facts were issued from headquarters:

Parents expressed their appreciation for its prominent part in keeping children off the street. At no time was it their intention to convey the com-

plete cessation of delinquency but the directing powers were convinced that quite generally youthful activity which otherwise might have been expressed in delinquent trends was utilized in the various clubs in well organized and supervised play. Every child played a vital part in the activity which might induce development of speed, accuracy, mental alertness and sportsmanship. Idlers were not wanted. Invitation not coercion called club meetings. In short, this experimental period of the project carried with it the conviction or corroborated the suspicion that a normal child definitely prefers normal recreation properly directed. It was found that all classes of children by some process or other can be taught to play and that the highest ideal of morality, citizenship and good sportsmanship can be taught to the very lowest immigrant types. It offered without fear of dispute:

That lack of wholesome well directed use of leisure time was one of the chief determinants in juvenile delinquency ... on the other hand, and of paramount importance it proved: That properly directed play was a preventative of juvenile delinquency.

By experience this movement found that all forms of activity must be kept on the highest possible plane in the community ... that it is of vital importance in planning an effective preventative work with delinquents to know that companionship could be regarded as a causative factor. And further, all efforts to elevate the standards of human living are proving fruitless in that no definite standard has been made or measured by which the values of life are meted. All too true, laws are enacted, commissions are created and societies formed for the purpose of bettering the standards of life, but no thought is expended on the question: ... What is the ideal by which the values of life are to be measured?

After my investigative study of this Experimental Undertaking from all angles I have reached the self-conviction that the project in the guise of the Boys' Neighborhood League has approached closer to the ideal set-up than ever before. However, because its leaders and workers are employed by the Works Progress Administration on a relief or non-relief basis I feel that despite their efforts and energies their positions are insecure because of frequent alterations

and lay-offs. To my mind, these individuals seem to have some direct or indirect connection with the unemployment situation and rather than elected for the appeal of the cause and their interest in the youth, they carry on however commendably for the prime purpose of the sight or jingle of the weekly remuneration which partially aids a pride that would crumple in defeat were they unemployed. Whether this be true or not, I offer it simply as my personal view.

Interest, appeal, financial resources and above all willingness to work unselfishly for youth itself should be combined in a tremendous driving force backed by the necessary legal pressure to carry on the cause of delinquency prevention under private auspices.

Inasmuch as the problem in its entirety is relatively new, all individuals whether pushing on with the cause or those on the sidelines must remember to accent on youth if worthwhile accomplishment is desired. To this end family backgrounds are essential in protecting their offsprings from the combination of forces seeking to undermine that which is theirs. We

as individuals have the frontier ... we have the challenge and we have in the Experimental Project -- The Boys' Neighborhood League, a powerful single force for good ... offering youth partially that which was lost, something they believe in, something to work for and something to further democracy. With the pace already set the necessary reinforcement will give youth that which rightfully belongs to him Youth who today will be our Democracy tomorrow.

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