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Relationship of program to group cohesiveness among a group of four emotionally disturbed boys

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RELATIONSHIP OF PROGRAM TO GROUP COHESIVENESS
AMONG A GROUP OF FOUR EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED BOYS

A thesis

Submitted by

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CHART MEASURING MOVEMENT TOWARDS OR AWAY FROM GROUP COHESION
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Problem to be Investigated

The writer, a student group worker at Longview Farm, was interested in finding out what types of program aid in the development of group cohesiveness among four high school boys who are members of the House Committee at Longview Farm.

The main focus in this research report will be on the development of group cohesiveness, but the writer will also be looking for the development of leadership roles in the group.

When a disturbed boy comes to Longview Farm he does so because it is thought that Longview can afford him the opportunities for personality development that he can obtain nowhere else. While a boy is at Longview it is hoped that he will be able to gain insight into his problems and be able to reenter society as a normal, healthy member. Can Longview help these boys? Do the boys find the solution to their problems and make the desired adjustment or do they leave unaffected by treatment? The student group worker was interested in finding answers to these questions, but will attempt to maintain the focus of the study around the types of program that aid in developing group cohesiveness among four high school boys who are members of the House Committee at Longview Farm. When the writer speaks of types of program that aid in developing group cohesiveness he refers to anything the group does. It might be a discussion on any subject. The

group might be planning a party for all the boys at Longview. Program may include gripe sessions or the boys may meet and just sit around listening to music. Some types of program will be planned and initiated by the writer. When this is the case the writer will clearly indicate that he was responsible for the program. At other times program will be spontaneous. It will come about because of group needs at the moment. The writer will indicate to the reader whenever program arises spontaneously. The reader should keep in mind that program is anything the group does.

Justification

When parents fail in their duty to their children through lack of interest or through emotional problems of their own, it becomes the responsibility and obligation of society to give these deprived children an opportunity to develop as normal, healthy social beings. Longview Farm attempts to give children the opportunity to develop into normal, healthy social beings.

Children who have been emotionally and economically deprived gain great satisfaction from the permissive and nurturing atmosphere in therapy groups... It would be difficult to overestimate the value in emotional guidance and treatment of children that the feelings of acceptance, status and personal worth arouse in them.¹

By attempting to discover the types of program that aid in the development of group cohesiveness among four high school boys, the student group worker hopes to bring to light specific types of programs that will be beneficial to the immediate staff of Longview Farm and to future group workers who may work at Longview. To the best of the writer's knowledge

¹ R. S. Slavson, An Introduction to Group Therapy, (New York, The Commonwealth Fund, 1943), p. 28.

there have been no previous studies done around the area of types of program that aid in the development of group cohesiveness among the boys at Longview Farm.

Sources of Data

A specific group of four high school boys which act as a House Committee at Longview will be studied. The House Committee represents the total group. They make rules, i.e., how late the group may stay up, how long each boy may use the telephone, et cetera. The House Committee act as a liason between the total group and the administration of the agency. The writer, a student group worker, acts as leader and advisor to this group.

A brief, but complete history of each of the four boys will be presented. This information was obtained from agency records.

The staff at Longview was a source of information for the writer. Whenever possible interviews with caseworkers, school teachers and other people who have contact with the group were utilized.

The staff, the House Committee group itself and the writer periodically rated the group. The individual case records will give the reader a picture of the boys at the beginning of the study. The writer will attempt to let the reader know how the boys feel about their group at the initial meeting. As time passes the writer will be looking for evidence of group cohesiveness. Staff and the group itself filled out the scale that attempts to measure group cohesiveness. From these measures the writer attempted to determine what movement, if any, has taken place. It is hoped that there will be definite movement toward group cohesiveness and away from complete isolated, individual feeling.

Method

When the writer attempted to examine the relationship of programming to group cohesion he used a typical group record for each month. The reader should keep in mind that the writer of this study also worked with the group and he kept the recordings that are used in the study. Some degree of validity was derived from the staff and House Committee group as they filled out the group cohesiveness scale. They acted as a check on any bias the writer may have unknowingly entered into the study.

It should be noted here that when the writer presented the individual case records of each boy, his purpose was only to give the reader some indication of the problems each boy had as he entered the group. The study was not concerned with the emotional problems these boys presented; however, when it seemed that certain problems disappeared or were alleviated as time passed, the writer made note of this.

During the study the writer drew on his experience and observations while a student group worker at Longview Farm and used the academic knowledge obtained from Boston University School of Social Work.

Scope

The scope of the study was limited to the four boys on the House Committee. The writer began his work with the group in October, 1957, and concluded in April, 1958. Past case histories of each boy were used as a starting point for the study.

In Chapter II a description of Longview Farm will be presented. Longview Farm's aims and philosophy will be discussed, its relationship to the New England Home for Little Wanderers and to the community of Walpole, Massachusetts.

Chapter III will focus on the individuals in the House Committee group. Their case histories will be presented. The writer will attempt to determine from the case record and from those individuals who were familiar with the boy the kind of individual he is, the feelings and attitudes each boy brought to Longview Farm and to the House Committee group.

Chapter IV will focus on the House Committee group. The writer will examine a typical group meeting for each month in the study. Staff people, the group itself, and the writer will periodically fill out the group cohesiveness scale. The writer will be looking for the relationship of program to group cohesiveness. For example, if there seems to be a rise in group cohesiveness from one month to another, an examination of the program will be made. Conversely if there is no movement in the direction of group cohesiveness an examination of the types of program will be examined. If it seems that because of certain types of program the group cohesiveness is higher or lower, the writer will want to note this.

Ultimately, movement hopefully will be observed. It is hoped the movement will be from isolated individualistic feelings and attitudes toward group cohesiveness. If no significant amount of group cohesiveness is achieved, and this is a possibility, there still may be some degree of individual movement. The emotional problems and symptoms (nail biting for example) of the problems may disappear or be alleviated by the group experience. The writer will be looking for such movement away from problems and symptoms towards the disappearance of them that might be a result of the type of program the boys participated in while in the group.

Chapter V will include the conclusions drawn from the findings of the study and the implications, if any, for the future treatment practices for

the future groups at Longview Farm.

CHAPTER II

THE PRESENT LONGVIEW FARM

The present Longview Farm is a result of nearly twenty years of hard work and far-sighted administrative planning. In August, 1957, a new building was completed to better serve the purposes of Longview Farm. The new building has been designed to serve eighteen boys, ranging from twelve through sixteen years of age. It is located on one hundred and sixty acres of scenic ground approximately two miles from the town of Walpole, Massachusetts. Longview offers its boys playing fields, a swimming pool and farming opportunities.

The boys who come to Longview Farm have encountered problems in adjusting to family and community life. These adjustment problems may have come about because of difficulties in their families or because their homes have been broken either by illness, death, or strife. These youngsters may also come because of emotional disturbances which hinder adjustment in their home situations.

Longview's aim has been and continues to be to make itself a haven where boys acquire a sense of security and experience growth within themselves and in their social adaptability so they will be equipped to withstand the pressures of modern life and to make their contribution towards the betterment of that life.¹

To achieve its aims and goals with the disturbed boys that come to Longview, a free, understanding home-like atmosphere is provided for these

¹Francis Albers Wellinghoff, The Success and Failure in Adjustment of Twenty Emotionally Disturbed and Maladjusted Boys in a Resident Treatment Home. (Thesis, M.S.W., Boston College School of Social Work, 1949), p. 10.

boys. Each boy is accepted on his individual merits and is allowed freedom of self-expression insofar as it is healthful to himself and the group. He is free to form attachments as he would in a normal home and he is exposed to the problems and satisfactions that any normal home environment would give him.

In the attempt to bring about this normal home atmosphere the staff plays a most important part, for it is these people that the group comes in contact with in every day living situations. Presently the staff at Longview Farm is composed of a Director, Assistant Director, two full time counsellors, house mother, cook (female), farm manager, and the writer, a student group worker who is at Longview twenty one hours each week. The house mother, cook, and farm manager are given sufficient knowledge of the individual boy and his problems to enable them to have a sympathetic and constructive relationship with the boys. Each boy is also assigned to a case worker who through scheduled interviews endeavors to guide each boy through insight into his difficulties, to develop a normal social outlook and behavior. Whenever it seems advisable that psychiatric services are needed, a psychiatrist can be consulted and if necessary interviews can be arranged.

All boys with personality and emotional problems who cannot be placed in a foster home or in any of the other institutional resources, are acceptable. No cases of a purely physical nature are accepted but those whose physical problems are contributing factors to the emotional or behavior problems can be accepted. If a study of a case is indicated the boy should be studied before placement as Longview is a place of treatment. Each boy is thought of as an individual and is accepted only if the prognosis is considered good for his particular problems. Some may be too old or have problems that would not be likely to improve in the

Longview setting.²

Applications can be made directly to the New England Home for Little Wanderers at the central office, 16 South Huntington Avenue, Boston 30, Massachusetts. The boy is studied and if placement at Longview Farm is thought to be beneficial, the boy is then afforded the opportunity to visit the farm and decide for himself if he will accept the treatment and care of Longview Farm. It should be made clear that the Director of Longview Farm has a strong influence in the decision of whether or not a boy can benefit from the group experience he receives while at the Farm.

After the boy is found acceptable the signed consent of the parents or legal guardians is secured. They must agree to the boy's entrance and promise not to withdraw him against advice for at least two years. Longview Farm, however, retains the right to discharge him before that time if it seems necessary. When a disturbed boy is placed at Longview Farm he becomes a member of the Longview family and as such is accorded the privileges and duties that come with membership. Each boy attends the public schools at Walpole as arrangements have been made for that. At the present time Longview Farm is represented in both the junior and senior high schools. Participation in school activities is encouraged as it is the hope of the Farm that the boys acquire social as well as academic experience while at school.³

Within the limited facilities of the Farm special tutoring is given to those boys who are retarded in their school work. Special help is also afforded the boys each night with their homework if such is desirable. However, because of the inadequate teaching facilities of the Farm, a boy expelled from school is almost certain to be discharged from the Farm. It is felt that since school work is so important in a boy's life it would be unfair to him if he were kept in a situation where this phase of life would not be available in the fullest extent.⁴

²Longview Farm, Manual of Policies and Regulations, p. 3. (Loose Leaf, unpublished).

³Ibid., p. 3.

⁴Ibid., p. 12.

The spiritual development of the boy is not neglected. Attendance at religious services is mandatory and transportation is made available on those days the boy should attend church. Close cooperation exists between the local clergy (priests, ministers, rabbis) and the Farm supervisors. In general, unless other instructions are given by parents or legal guardians, each boy shall attend the church of the particular faith of his parents.⁵

Longview is responsible for the boy's physical welfare while he is there. Whenever a boy is accepted it is ascertained whether he has had a recent physical examination. If not, he is taken to a physician attending the Farm for examination. In cases of long hospitalizations or cases of a serious nature the boy is sent to the infirmary at the New England Home for Little Wanderers or one of the Boston hospitals.⁶

The boy, while he is a member of the Farm, is allowed visitors and is permitted to visit, however, such visits are at the discretion of the Director who has the right to withhold such permission. If the boy is allowed a vacation or an extended visit the proper persons are notified and arrangements are made.⁷

As he would in a normal home, each boy is asked to take some responsibility. He is expected to perform certain chores which are equivalent to those he would be asked to perform in a normal home. Each boy receives an allowance with which he may buy odds and ends that meet his fancy. The allowance each boy receives varies in proportion to his cooperation in doing the work required. The boy can supplement his allowance by requesting special work which will add to the money earned. Examples of the type of work done around the Farm are caring for the farm animals, pigs, sheep, or chickens. When the allowance is given the boy is advised to spend it wisely and is encouraged to develop the habit of saving a part of the allowance.

⁵Ibid., p. 5.

⁶Ibid., p. 9.

⁷Ibid., p. 10.

Training in all the social graces is an integral part of the Longview Farm policy. Table manners, personal cleanliness and all forms of social etiquette are taught to the boys.

Discipline and authority are a problem in any group and even more so in a group of emotionally disturbed boys. The use of discipline or authority at Longview is used primarily to help the boys. Each act of discipline or authority is made clear to the boy. Corporal punishment is not used. Punishment usually consists of taking away a privilege. Fortunately the present staff at Longview is patient and skillful in their handling of authority and discipline. Through their careful handling of the boy they can help develop a sense of trust and understanding.

The townspeople of Walpole have accepted Longview Farm and allow the Farm boys to use the schools, churches, and recreation facilities to their fullest extent. For the most part the Farm boys are accepted on an equal basis with the local peer group. The Farm boys are encouraged to make the fullest use of all the town facilities. It almost goes without saying that in light of Longview's aim to provide a home-like, normal atmosphere, it is of tremendous value to have a community receptive and willing to accept the Longview boys.

Longview Farm is one of the three group resident homes operated by the New England Home for Little Wanderers. It is represented by an advisory committee. There is a constant exchange of ideas between Longview and the New England Home for Little Wanderers. Longview benefits from the New England Home's long experience in the child welfare movement.

CHAPTER III

THE BOYS AS INDIVIDUALS

In the previous Chapter Longview Farm, its aims, its personnel structure and its policies were discussed. In this Chapter the writer will present the case history of each boy on the House Committee. With each case the writer will present the attitude of each boy when he came to Longview Farm. These attitudes were expressed verbally to the writer by each boy in October, at the start of the writer's field work.

Albert: A seventeen year old boy of normal weight and height, with black hair and a pleasant physical appearance. Albert was born in a small New England town. Albert's mother died when Albert was four years old. Father and Albert moved to another state. Father remarried and a daughter was born in 1944.

Father had financial difficulties and placed Albert in a foster home. Albert's difficulty was first brought to light in 1946. He was referred by a Child Welfare House near Boston.

The problem: Albert appeared to be happy in the foster home, but since his return from a visit in the natural home at Christmas, he has shown marked destructive tendencies, so that foster mother feels unable to keep him, although she will gladly take him back if this phase is overcome. Albert was returned to his natural home where he remained for nine months. Father was unable to control him and returned Albert to the care of the Child Welfare House.

Albert was placed by the Child Welfare House with successive families.

Disobedient, dishonest behavior brought the first placement to an end. Albert expressed a desire to be adopted and belong to a real family. He was placed with prospective adoptive parents, but continued his dishonest, disobedient behavior. Albert was doing poor school work. Albert felt the adoptive parents favored their natural children and discriminated against him. The adoptive parents became aware of their growing negative feelings toward Albert and gave him up.

The next placement for Albert was on a small farm located near Boston. This placement lasted two years. The same problems that had caused previous foster parents to give Albert up presented themselves again. Albert was disobedient, and dishonest. He was stealing from the foster parents.

Child Welfare House felt that Albert needed a more structured formalized setting and placed him in a private school near Boston. Albert was at this school for six years. He adjusted well at first but in 1954 he started to slump in his school work. He expressed a wish to be adopted so that he might belong to a real family.

Albert was again placed with prospective adoptive parents in 1955. Albert failed to adjust successfully in this placement. He continued his disobedient, dishonest behavior and was failing in his school work. He was referred to the New England Home for Little Wanderers, given psychological and psychiatric examinations, and placed at Longview Farm. The results of Albert's psychological and psychiatric examinations are as follows:

Albert has average intelligence. He is a verbal, organized, sensitive youngster. He has good insight and understanding but is unable to utilize it. Albert has been hurt badly and repeatedly and resents this.

The examining psychiatrist sums up Albert's case by saying his needs are great, his tension high, and that Albert acts impulsively, without thinking.

When the writer met with Albert for the first time and told him that he would be the advisor to the House Committee group, Albert seemed unimpressed. Further questioning by the writer disclosed that Albert thought Longview Farm was a "pretty good place" but it had been better when he first came there. He seemed to think that the counsellors were not strict enough and that there was a general lack of discipline in effect. Albert expressed a desire to leave Longview Farm and to be independent. He mentioned to the writer that the boys at the Farm are disturbed and have problems and that he did not belong with them. Albert is anxiously awaiting the day when he will be allowed to leave Longview Farm.

Bob: A tall, well built, eighteen year old boy. Bob was born near Boston, Massachusetts. His mother died in 1949 by suicide. The father remarried and Bob lived with his father, step-mother and three step-sisters. Bob has an older natural brother.

Bob was referred to the Juvenile Court in 1951 by a probation officer. He was truanting from school, and staying out late nights. The Juvenile Court ruled that Bob was a delinquent and committed him to the Youth Service Board. The Youth Service Board in turn referred Bob to the New England Home for Little Wanderers and Bob was placed at Longview Farm in 1951.

Bob was given psychological and psychiatric tests and interviews. The results are as follows:

Bob has an I.Q. of 94. His comprehension is good but his reasoning powers are poor. Bob is impulsive and unreflecting. He dislikes his

stepmother very much. She set her standards of behavior quite high and Bob felt he could not live up to them.

Bob feels his mother deserted him and is not sure why or how she died. The only family relationships Bob has are with his older natural brother whom he cares for a great deal.

When the writer talked with Bob for the first time, Bob was very friendly. He expressed his desire and eagerness to be on the House Committee. Bob revealed that he had been at Longview Farm longer than any other boy and liked the farm. He felt that the farm was his home. Bob was anxious to participate on the House Committee because it could help the farm boys.

Cary: A seventeen year old boy, tall, a little stocky and gives the impression of being heavier than he really is by the way he walks. His walk is heavy and determined.

Cary was referred to the New England Home for Little Wanderers by a Juvenile Court. He had been discovered stealing and was unmanageable at home. At the time of referral Cary was living with his mother. His father was dead.

The history of Cary is incomplete. Little is known about the background of the boy. At the time of referral he was thirteen years old.

The results of the psychological tests and psychiatric interviews disclose that Cary has a full I.Q. of 91. He is an impulsive, confused and withdrawn boy. He is extremely cautious about becoming involved with any person on an emotional level. He is quite impersonal and there is a question of his ability to adjust to people. At the time of referral to Longview Farm, the examining psychiatrist thought that Cary had a schizoid type of personality and it could become psychotic.

During the first interview with the writer, Cary was cold and impersonal. He had no interest in the House Committee, but said he would meet with the group if he had to. Cary was happy at Longview Farm. He said it was much better than his own home. Cary told the writer he didn't like to be bothered by anyone. He knew what he had to do at Longview and would do the chores expected of him if people would leave him alone.

David: David is a sixteen year old boy. David's father left the home and David lived with his mother and younger brother. David was referred to the New England Home for Little Wanderers in 1954 by his mother. She said David was a chronic truant from school. He had a poor selection of companions. She described David as extremely sensitive but "fresh" and unmanageable.

The results of psychological tests and psychiatric interviews disclosed that David was a boy of superior intelligence. David was bored by school. He loves adventure and prefers to associate with tough youngsters. David gives the impression of being capable of loyalty and relationship. He loves his mother but his home holds no interest for him. He displayed anxiety about family problems.

David impressed the writer as being an intelligent youngster. He talked about the House Committee as a means to help out all the Longview Farm boys. David himself liked the farm, but did not care for some of the boys. He expressed a desire to be with his mother and was anxious to leave Longview Farm so he could return to his mother.

Edward: Edward is a thin, almost anemic looking, sixteen year old boy. He had been living with his mother. Edward's mother made exces-

sive demands on him which he could not meet. Edward became unmanageable in the home and his mother referred him to the New England Home for Little Wanderers. Following examination, he was placed at Longview Farm with his mother's permission.

The results of psychological tests and psychiatric interview reveal Edward has a normal I.Q.

He is a restless boy with excellent comprehension and gives the impression of being very clever. Edward is alert and has good verbal reasoning. His memory is unreliable and he shows classic signs of brain damage. Edward is introverted but has a capacity for relating. Edward's response to reality is slow and negativeness is shown. His emotional control is poor and his reasoning is impaired. The examining psychiatrist believes that Edward relates to people much too easily and superficially to be healthy.

Edward was one of the easiest boys for the writer to interview. He related well and was very friendly. Edward was interested in becoming a House Committee member. He thought it was a position of importance and prestige. Edward is glad to be at Longview Farm, away from his demanding mother. He has felt that his mother has always held him down socially and that he can amount to something away from her. Longview Farm allows him the opportunity to be with youngsters his own age. His position on the House Committee will help him gain the favor of the other boys. When he first came to the farm, no one liked him but he has advanced socially during his stay at Longview Farm.

The writer would like to point out that complete, individual records are often difficult to obtain. It might have been beneficial to present

background material on each boy, but because of the existing circumstances, broken homes, incomplete reporting by social workers, the police and parents, it was not possible to obtain more information.

CHAPTER IV

GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL MOVEMENT

In this Chapter the writer will analyze the group cohesion scales that have been kept by the staff, the House Committee group and the writer. To supplement the findings on the scale, samples of actual recorded material from group meetings have been used. Again the writer wishes to point out that he is the person who kept the group records.

The amount of group cohesion in the House Committee group was given a rating on the scale on the last day of each month starting on October 31, 1957 and continuing through April 30, 1958. There were a total of seven marking periods.

On October 31, 1957, the staff, the House Committee group, and the writer all rated the House Committee group at the lowest point on the scale. There was unanimous agreement that there was a low degree of group cohesion in the House Committee group. To give the reader a picture of how the House Committee was functioning in October and in succeeding months, the writer will present recorded material from one typical group meeting for each of the seven marking periods.

Example of a typical meeting in October, 1957, follows:

The group sat around the table looking at the worker, waiting for him to speak. Worker took the initiative and started the conversation by reviewing the highlights of the last meeting. At the last meeting, Albert had mentioned the possibility of granting the older boys special privileges. When the worker came to the point about special privileges, he turned to Albert and asked him to tell the group more about his idea. The boy began to speak freely about the fact that as one of the older boys, he should be allowed to stay up later and be treated as an older boy. "I don't see why I should have to go to bed with the young kids."

Bob started talking about how things used to be at Longview Farm. "When I first came here I had to go to bed earlier than the older guys." Worker wondered why the rule had been changed. Cary said: "The rule was changed because some of the guys were slow getting up in the morning." David suggested some sort of punishment for those boys who were slow risers in the morning.

The worker asked the group who should receive the privilege of staying up later at night. The question started an argument between Cary and Albert. Cary accused Albert of being lazy and never getting up on time, therefore, Albert should not be allowed to stay up. The two boys began to argue violently. Worker was forced to interrupt the boys and remind them that they were on the House Committee to help the boys of Longview Farm and not to argue.

The worker suggested that all boys of high school age be allowed to stay up later than the younger boys. The group agreed with the worker's suggestion, but they argued and shouted at each other when an attempt was made to decide on a suitable punishment for boys who abused the privilege. Finally it was the worker who settled the argument by offering his own ideas. The group was willing to follow the worker's plan. Without further hesitation the meeting ended.

Comments: This meeting was typical of the October meetings. There was a great deal of arguing and bickering among the boys. The worker played an extremely active role. He had to initiate discussion, stop arguments and make decisions for the group.

There was a noticeable lack of thought about any other farm boy. Each group member was concerned only with himself. Group members did not get along with each other. The only apparent basis for identification with the group was the members' relationship with the group leader.

Everyone who rated the House Committee for the month of October rated the amount of group cohesion among the group at 1.0, the lowest point on the scale.

The types of program for the month of October were primarily of one type which the writer will call "gripe sessions." A gripe session is defined by the writer as a meeting where there is a great deal of arguing,

criticism of House Committee members by each other, criticism of Longview Farm, its policy and the staff.

On November 30, 1957, the worker, the staff and the House Committee group again rated the amount of group cohesion among the House Committee boys. The average staff rating for November was 1.5. The worker rated the amount of group cohesion at 2.5. Interestingly enough the four House Committee members rated themselves at 1.0 indicating that they felt that there was no increase in the amount of group cohesion. A typical meeting for the month of November follows:

Bob suggested that the group go down town for coffee and have the meeting at the same time.

Upon arrival at the restaurant and after the order had been given, Bob asked the worker if the farm was going to have a Thanksgiving party. The other three boys were interested in Bob's question. Albert said: "Yes, let's have a party. We can invite the high school football team, the cheerleaders and all our friends." Bob added: "We'll hire a band." Worker was in favor of a party but felt the boys were planning things too fast without giving everything serious consideration. Realizing the limitations of the farm facilities the worker slowed the pace up by offering the suggestion that perhaps the first party should be a small one. David agreed with the worker. Cary and Bob then told Albert that perhaps the worker was right. The first party should be a small one. Albert grudgingly consented to go along with the wishes of the other three boys. The group then quickly decided to hold the party on November 27.

On the return trip to the farm the boys directed questions to the worker. They wanted to know all about him. Why he came to Longview Farm? Did he like it? Will he stay at the farm after graduation? Worker answered all the questions directed at him. When the group arrived at the farm everyone was in fine spirits.

Comments: The plan for a party arose spontaneously from the group and they were able to settle their individual differences with a minimum of disagreement.

A developing relationship between the group and the worker seems to

be taking place. The boys questioned the worker, they wanted to know more about him. They are better able to focus their attention on someone else rather than themselves.

The type of program that was characteristic of the month of November was quite informal. The group itself chose to meet outside of Longview Farm. It may be assumed that there was some pleasure associated with the trip. The informal atmosphere of the restaurant and the automobile ride made it easier for the group to get acquainted with the worker. This implies to the worker that the concept of relationship is extremely important when working with boys who have little, or no, group cohesiveness among them. An informal, relaxed setting such as a restaurant or an automobile can allow for more verbal interaction between group members and a group leader.

A few words should be said about the ratings the group received. The average staff rating was 1.5. The staff felt that a small amount of cohesion took place. When asked by the worker to explain the small amount of movement in the direction of group cohesion, most of the staff persons felt that the four boys appeared to get along better. The fact that they accomplished something, securing television privileges for the older boys, has given them a feeling of importance and has drawn them together.

The House Committee group did not feel that there was any more cohesion between them than there was at the beginning. The group felt that they were not democratic and that there was still too much disagreement among group members.

The worker rated the amount of group cohesion among the House Committee members at 2.5 on the five point scale. The 2.5 rating gets its

strength from the attendance at meetings and the increased ability of group members to get along with each other.

The next rating was administered on December 31, 1957. The month of December was marked by the departure of a House Committee member. David returned to his natural home and the House Committee functioned with only three members during December.

A typical meeting for this month was held on December 11.

Worker and the three remaining group members met to discuss the departure of David. Bob said he was sorry David had left because he felt that David was a good group member. Cary and Albert were surprised that David had left and wondered what the House Committee would do. Bob asked: "Will we get someone to take his place?" The three boys and the worker spent the remainder of the meeting discussing the possibility of adding a new member. Discussion centered around the qualifications a new member should possess. Before concluding the meeting the worker asked the boys to think about adding a new member to their group. Following the Christmas vacation the boys would pick a new member.

Comments: The degree of group cohesion among the House Committee group as determined by the ratings received from the staff, the actual House Committee group, and the worker for the month of December is as follows:

The staff average was 2.0, which was midway between a low degree of group cohesion and a moderate degree of group cohesion. Staff felt that the remaining three group members were getting along well and that the boys did a fine job of organizing the Thanksgiving party. Erratic attendance on the part of David seems to be a obvious reason the staff did not rate the group higher.

The House Committee group also rated themselves at 2.0. This figure represented an increase of one full point over the previous month while the staff rating of 2.0 represented an increase of .5. The worker thinks

that the success of the party elevated the prestige and importance of the House Committee in their own eyes. As Bob said: "We really did something."

It should be noted that David left Longview Farm before rating the group cohesiveness for the month of December. It is possible that if David had rated the group the results might have been different.

The worker rated the degree of group cohesion at 3.0, an increase of .5 over the previous month. The increase was attributed to the group's ability to pull together and take complete charge of arranging the party. Personal differences between group members are not as evident as they were. The boys appear to get along with each other better than they did in previous months.

Characteristic of the program this month was a party and a meeting which were completely run by the House Committee. The boys took the initiative for planning the party and the group meeting.

A typical meeting for the month of January was the meeting where the three remaining House Committee members picked a new boy to replace David. Portions of that meeting follow:

At 8.00 p.m. the three remaining House Committee members and the worker sat down to pick a new group member. Cary immediately pulled out a comic book and began reading it. Worker initiated the discussion by reviewing the situation of the House Committee since the Christmas vacation, specifically the departure of David. The worker then turned the discussion over to the boys, asking them who they thought would be a good member, and who might benefit from the group experience. There was a brief moment of silence, then Bob said slowly: "We were kind of thinking of Edward. He isn't a member of anything, and he could be a good worker if he makes up his mind to it." Worker asked Cary, who was still engrossed in his comic book if he thought Edward was a good selection. Cary thought that Edward would be fine if he "would get over his laziness." Albert added: "Yes, that guy is really lazy, but maybe we can help him." Worker then told the boys that he would leave

it up to them to let Edward know of his appointment to the House Committee. Bob volunteered to act as spokesman for the group.

Comments: Worker had the impression that the three boys had given a good amount of thought to the selection of a new House Committee member. The group was thinking in terms of helping Edward, indicating that they are becoming more sensitive to other people.

The degree of group cohesion among the House Committee group as determined by the ratings received from the staff, the actual House Committee group, and the worker for the month of January is as follows:

Staff rating average: 2.5 - an increase of one-half point

Group rating average: 3.0 - an increase of one point

Worker's rating: 3.5 - an increase of one-half point

The staff rated the group lower than either the group itself or the worker. A typical remark made by a staff member was: "The boys seem to enjoy going to meetings and are getting along better with everyone, but what are they doing? They haven't had any activities all month."

The group feels that they have achieved a moderate degree of group cohesion but were frank in admitting that they often thought only of themselves and not always of all the boys at Longview Farm.

The worker's rating of 3.5 is based on the group's ability to pull together. There was very little argument. Disagreements usually were settled in a democratic manner. Attendance was good and the four boys were frequently seen associating with each other outside of group meetings. Real friendships seemed to be developing in January.

Program for January was primarily discussion. The worker initiated much of the discussion, but the group took it upon themselves to bring

topics of their own to meetings.

A typical meeting for the month of February follows:

Once in the meeting room Albert began talking very rapidly. "Let's get down to business." Worker knowing Albert's need for immediate gratification called on him. "What's on your mind Albert?" He said: "Well, I want to bring up the automobile deal again and get the Director in here so I can ask him why we can't have an automobile especially when the Junior Prom is so near." The worker turned Albert's suggestion over to the rest of the group. Bob and Edward did not care for Albert's idea. As Bob said: "You know we can't have cars. It's a rule and that's all there is to it." Cary and Edward agreed with Bob. The attitude shared by the three boys only served to frustrate Albert. He blurted out: "The hell with you guys. My social worker says that I should try to get a car for the Prom and I'm going to."

Edward brought out the fact that Albert's social worker was new to Longview Farm and perhaps she was not familiar with the rule which prevents farm boys from obtaining driving licenses or automobiles. Albert admitted that he had not explained the rule to his social worker, but also reminded the group that he still needed a ride to the Prom.

The group became involved in a discussion over how to solve Albert's problem. Bob suggested that all the boys talk to their friends at school and try to secure a ride for Albert and his date. Bob's suggestion drew approval from the group. Albert appeared very grateful to the boys for trying to help him.

Comments: The group displayed real sympathy for Albert and were quite willing to go out of their way to help him. At this point in the group's development the worker feels that the group is able to lend support to each other. The tense, anxious feeling that was present in October has all but disappeared. Discussion is free and easy. The group appears to regard the worker as an advisor rather than an initiator of discussion.

The degree of group cohesion among the House Committee group as determined by the rating received from the staff, the actual House Committee group, and the worker for the month of February is as follows:

Staff rating average: 3.0 - an increase of one-half point
Group rating average: 3.0 - no change over previous month
Worker's rating: 4.0 - an increase of one-half point.

The staff admits that the House Committee boys get along very well but believe if they were a group with a high degree of group cohesion they would have sponsored more activities for all the Longview boys.

Certain staff persons, in the worker's opinion, seem to be more concerned with activity and accomplishments and if the group does not have a record of activity and accomplishments will rate the group cohesiveness low.

The House Committee rated themselves as having a moderate degree of group cohesion. Cary and Bob felt that there was still too much self-centered thinking. "We don't do much for the other farm boys," was a comment Cary wrote.

The worker's rating of 4.0 was the highest given to the group. A reason for this may be the difference in goals and expectations that exists between the staff, the House Committee group and the worker. As previously mentioned some staff members believe that the group should accomplish something concrete.

The group sees itself as a representative body, whose function is to serve all the farm boys. They feel they cannot give themselves a high rating because they are not accomplishing things for all the farm boys.

An example of a typical meeting held in March is as follows:

Cary opened the evening's discussion by asking if the House Committee could sponsor a swimming trip for the farm boys. "We could go on a Sunday," he added. Edward immediately said: "We have to go to church on Sunday." Bob joined the discussion: "The

hell with church. We can cut it." Bob sounded so bitter when he mentioned church that the worker decided to explore this area further. "What do you mean the hell with church? What have you got against going?" Bob responded with: "What good are all those fancy words they hand you. Look at me, I have no family, nothing." Cary supported Bob: "He is right. Look at us, what have we got?" Edward joined in with: "I've got a mother, but who would want to live with her."

The boys started talking about what it meant to them to have no family or to have a family that was not functioning because of divorce, separation or death. The worker made no effort to change the subject. He allowed the group to express their feelings. Worker believed that the topic of family was very important to these boys.

As the group talked on about families, they drifted into talking about the reasons why they were placed at Longview Farm. Bob sarcastically said: "We're supposed to get help with our problems. They send us to a psychiatrist and he just sits there. What kind of help is that? Anyone who goes to see a psychiatrist is nuts." Edward didn't agree with Bob. "Hey, wait a minute," he said, "I see a psychiatrist every week and I'm not nuts. He helps me to see what my problems are." Bob answered: "Well, I don't know about you but I've been here for a long time. What kind of help am I getting?"

The tone of the meeting subsided as it went along. At the start the group seemed bitter and hostile, but they settled back and began to speak in moderate tones about the problems each of them had. Bob and Edward each related a history of their personal backgrounds. When it seemed time for Cary to say something about himself he changed the subject by saying: "Hey, this isn't House Committee business. If there isn't any more business, I'm going to bed." Cary stood up and left the room. Bob and Edward followed. The meeting was over.

Comments: The group was able to share their personal feelings, but when Cary was expected to speak he changed the subject as he had done previously.

There was no plan on the worker's part to talk on this subject. The discussion arose spontaneously. The worker took no part in the evening's discussion except at the beginning when he asked Bob to explain his remarks about going to church.

The degree of group cohesion among the House Committee group as determined by the rating received from the staff, the actual House Committee group and the worker the the month of March is as follows:

Staff rating average: 3.0 - no change over previous month

Group rating average: 3.0 - no change over previous month

Worker's rating: 4.0 - no change over previous month

The staff did not notice any significant change from the previous month. The House Committee group finally held a party for the Assistant Director and his wife but the staff felt the group had to be prodded to do it.

The House Committee boys also rated themselves on the same level as they had the previous month, but there was wide variance among individual members. Bob and Cary rated the group high on the scale. Albert rated the group at 1.5. Edward also rated the group lower than Bob and Cary. He gave a 2.5 rating which averaged out to a 3.0 for the total House Committee group. The worker is unable to explain Albert's low rating. His attendance has fallen off. Albert has recently been reassigned to a new case worker and the group worker can only guess that perhaps Albert is being threatened by some of the material the House Committee is discussing.

The worker continued to rate the degree of group cohesiveness at 4.0, the highest rating given to the group. The worker sees the group pulling together. They are friendly and willing to share their experiences and feelings. Attendance has been generally good. Albert missed one meeting during the month but he had a legitimate excuse.

April was the final month included in the study. During April the House Committee group made plans to hold a Longview Farm field day. The

The group also took a trip to Boston to see a basket ball game.

During the entire month of April the worker attempted to prepare the group for his departure and to move a new leader into his position. A typical meeting held in April follows:

When all the boys were seated the worker reminded the group that he would be leaving in a few weeks. Edward wanted to know what the worker would be doing when he left Longview Farm. Worker told the group he expected to enter the army shortly after leaving Longview. Cary asked if the worker could stay on at the farm for a few weeks after his field work was over. Worker explained to the boys that he had to return home before getting drafted.

When the questions were exhausted the worker asked the group how they felt about continuing until the end of the school year with a new leader. Everyone was in favor of continuing the House Committee but they wondered who the new leader would be. Worker suggested that Jim, a new staff person, might take the group over. Again the boys gave their approval. Jim had been at Longview Farm only a short time but had made a fine impression with all the boys. Worker told the boys that he would invite Jim to the next meeting to acquaint him with the House Committee.

Worker closed the meeting earlier than usual. He didn't want to get involved in any discussion or problem that couldn't be worked through. He wanted the new leader to enter the situation when the group was not emotionally involved in any discussion so that an easy adjustment could be made.

Comments: The House Committee wanted to continue on until the end of the school year. One interesting comment came from Albert after the meeting. He said that he was glad the group was continuing because he felt he was getting a lot out of it. Albert didn't elaborate, but the Director informed the group worker that Albert had asked if he can undergo psychiatric care once more. Previously Albert had stopped seeing the psychiatrist.

This was the final group meeting that will be included in the study being presented.

The degree of group cohesion among the House Committee group as

determined by the rating received from the staff, the actual House Committee group, and the worker for the month of April is as follows:

Staff rating average: 2.5 - a decrease of one-half point
Group rating average: 3.0 - no change over previous month
Worker's rating: 4.0 - no change over previous month

When the worker received the rating from staff members, they explained the lower rating by saying that they had not seen the group do anything. It seems that the staff continued to rate the House Committee group on performance.

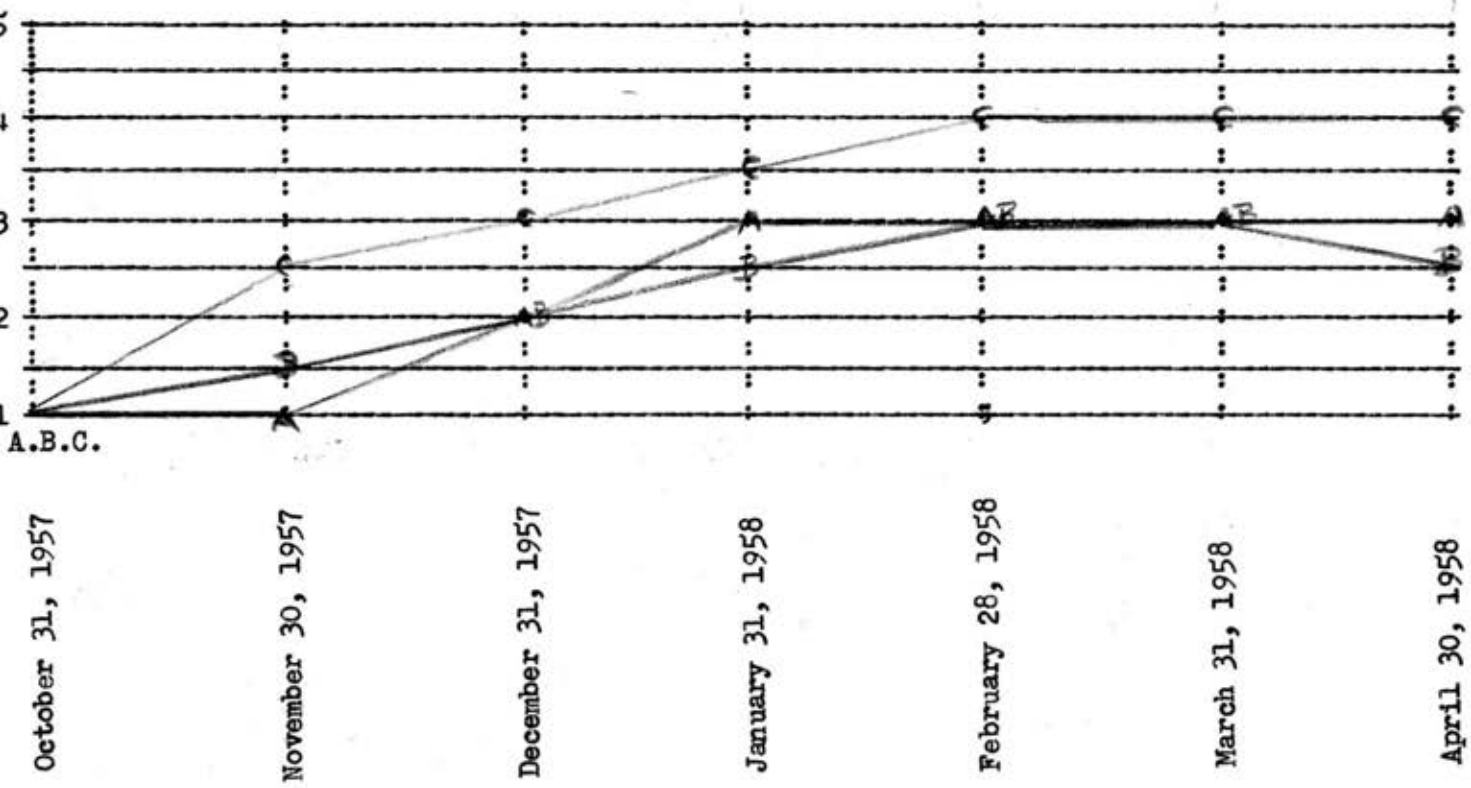
The House Committee group feels that they have not always had the interests of the total group of Longview Farms boys in mind when they made decisions. Albert and Edward said: "If we had more consideration for the other guys, we could have had a higher rating."

The worker sees the group as having reached a level of cohesiveness that is not likely to improve until individual emotional problems are corrected. The worker believes the boys are functioning at their capacity when consideration is given to the individual problems each boy brought to the group.

CHART MEASURING MOVEMENT TOWARDS OR AWAY FROM GROUP COHESION AS DETERMINED BY MONTHLY RATINGS GIVEN THE HOUSE COMMITTEE GROUP BY THE STAFF MEMBERS, GROUP WORKER AND THE HOUSE COMMITTEE GROUP

DEGREE OF MOVEMENT

High Degree of Group Cohesion 5
 Moderate Degree of Group Cohesion 3
 Low Degree of Group Cohesion 1



KEY

A — Group Self Ratings B — Staff Ratings C — Worker's Ratings

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

During the entire study the group worker, the staff, and the House Committee members at Longview Farm periodically rated the amount of group cohesion among the four boys on the House Committee. The group worker was interested in finding out if there was any significant relationship between types of program and the development of group cohesion.

The final averages for the degree of group cohesion among the House Committee group as determined by ratings received from the staff members of Longview Farm, the actual House Committee group, and the group worker, for the period from October 31, 1957 to April 30, 1958, are as follows:

Staff rating average: 2.2

House Committee rating average: 2.3

Group Worker's rating average: 3.1

Examination of the group cohesiveness scale would indicate that the House Committee group had not achieved a high degree of cohesiveness at the termination of the study on April 30, 1958. A cohesive group has been described by Dorin Cartwright and Alvin Zander as follows:

A cohesive group might be characterized as one in which the members all work together for a common goal, or one where everyone is ready to take the responsibility for group chores. The willingness to endure pain or frustration for the group is yet another possible indication of its cohesiveness. Finally, we may conceive a cohesive group as one which its members will defend against external criticism or attack.¹

¹Cartwright, Doris and Zander, Alvin. Group Dynamics Research and Theory, Row, Peterson and Company, Evanston, Illinois and White Plains, N. Y., p. 73.

The group worker would like to stress that there were times when the group would all work together for a common goal. At other times the group displayed the characteristics of a cohesive group, but the boys in the group, with their different emotional problems, had difficulty maintaining a consistent attitude towards the House Committee. There were a variety of external factors that influenced each boy's attitude. A difficult day in school might have so upset a boy that he brought a disruptive, negative attitude to a meeting.

Bob emerged as the leader of the House Committee group. Bob initiated discussions. He acted as mediator during group arguments. When there was a quiet moment during group discussions, it was usually Bob who carried the discussion on. On trips and at social events Bob assumed responsibility for directing other Longview Farm boys.

David was not in the group long enough for the group worker to evaluate the amount of change that took place in the boy. It should be pointed out, however, that the rest of the group did not appear to be very concerned about the departure of David.

Edward was a relatively low status member of the Longview Farm group. His position on the House Committee appeared to raise his status in the eyes of the rest of the group. The personal habits of Edward were modified also. Edward began to take more pride in his personal appearance. He cleaned his room and dressed himself in a neat, socially acceptable manner.

Despite these changes in individual group members' behavior and habits, the staff and the House Committee group consistently rated the degree of group cohesiveness among the House Committee members lower than the group worker did. There may be logical reasons for this. One possible reason

for the variance in the ratings may have resulted from a misconception of the purpose of the House Committee group.

The group worker was primarily interested in the House Committee members' personal problems and he hoped to help alleviate the tensions and conflicts that arose as a result of these personal problems by offering the boys a group experience. Developing group cohesion among the boys was a secondary objective.

Among staff members there was a difference of opinion as to the actual purpose of the House Committee. One staff member saw the group as a representative body of the total group of boys at Longview Farm similar to a student council group in a high school. This staff person admittedly rated the House Committee in relation to the activities they sponsored that involved all the Longview Farm boys.

Another staff person saw the House Committee as a special interest group. He was concerned with attendance at meetings and measured the group's cohesion by the amount of enthusiasm he observed among the boys.

The boys on the House Committee saw themselves as representatives of all the Longview Farm boys. They rated themselves lower because they felt they were not giving sufficient thought to all the boys at Longview Farm. The House Committee group had not been told that the primary purpose of the group was to be for therapeutic reasons.

Examination of group records leads the group worker to believe that cohesiveness was at its highest level when the program for the evening was primarily concerned with the individual problems and feelings of the group members. During this type of a meeting the group members were very friendly and understanding towards each other. They were able to share their

feelings and ideas with each other. At this type of meeting there was a feeling tone present that is difficult to describe. When the boys talked about their families and the problems they have, a common bond developed between the group members. Following a discussion of personal problems, the group worker observed that the boys were better able to plan and work out details for an activity. There was always a minimum of conflict after a personal discussion.

If the group worker is correct in thinking that the discussion of personal problems is the type of program that leads to a high degree of group cohesion, then perhaps more effort should have been made to have these boys discuss this type of material. The group worker did not attempt directly to lead the boys into a discussion of personal problems and feelings; instead group meetings were kept as unstructured as possible in order to allow each boy an opportunity for free expression.

During the early months of the study, the group worker was an active leader. He made frequent suggestions and directly assisted the boys in planning and carrying out parties and other events. Early group meetings were mainly gripe sessions. The group tested the group worker frequently by making demands for special privileges. The House Committee boys learned to trust the group worker and began to develop trust in each other. Once this feeling of trust was developed the type of program changed. The group began talking more and more about their problems and feelings. Establishment of a relationship between the group and the worker and the development of a sense of trust between the boys and worker, were, in the group worker's opinion, the most important steps in aiding the House Committee members to change the type of program from gripe sessions to therapeutically

orientated meetings.

The staff and the House Committee did not agree with the group worker's opinion that group cohesion was at the highest level when the program was centered around personal problems and feelings. The staff and the House Committee expressed the opinion that the group was most cohesive when they were engaged in the performance of an activity. Performance of an activity was described as participation in a party, participation in a swimming trip, or being engaged in the performance of some other form of physical activity as a group.

It is not difficult for the group worker to understand the tendency of the staff and the House Committee to rate group cohesiveness in relation to performance of an activity. The group worker believes that the staff and House Committee rated group cohesion in relation to the conception each had as to the purpose of the House Committee. The most common idea expressed about the purpose of the House Committee was that it was supposed to be a group of four boys who act as representatives of the total group at Longview Farm. With this purpose in mind, it might be possible that the staff and the House Committee tended to rate the cohesiveness of the group in direct relation to the purpose and objections of the House Committee group.

The performance of activities were the only measure by which the staff could rate the group. Staff persons did not see the House Committee during group meetings. As previously stated, group cohesion appeared to be at its highest level when the program of the evening was centered around personal problems and feelings. Staff members did not see the group when they were engaged in this type of a discussion. Once a group meeting was

ended, there was no significant amount of cohesiveness carried over into the larger, total group. The point that the group worker would like to make is that while group cohesiveness might appear to be high during a particular meeting, the cohesiveness tended to be diluted when the four House Committee boys left the meeting room and mingled with the remainder of the Longview Farm boys.

A final point is that the results of the study might have been different if the group worker had continued his work with the House Committee. Elise H. Campbell has presented the idea that length of membership in a group is a factor associated with personality growth and subsequently, group cohesion.² The individuals in the group were, in the group worker's opinion, making strides towards solving their emotional problems. With the solving of individual emotional problems, the House Committee members might become a highly cohesive group. Only time and improvement of emotional problems would substantiate the group worker's opinion.

Recommendations: One of the greatest difficulties the group worker encountered during the course of this study was the lack of clarity among the staff of Longview Farm as to the role of the group worker and the purpose of his work with the House Committee group. The group worker would recommend that in the future every possible effort be made to orient the staff to the role and purpose of the group worker.

²Campbell, Elise H., Gauging Group Work, National Youth Administration of Michigan, 1938.

Accepted -
David Landy
Research Advisor

APPENDIX

APPENDIX - A

CRITERIA USED BY STAFF MEMBERS, HOUSE COMMITTEE MEMBERS, AND THE GROUP WORKER IN RATING THE DEGREE OF COHESION AMONG THE HOUSE COMMITTEE

I. HIGH DEGREE OF GROUP COHESION

1. Members take real pride in their group, think their group is tops. Never miss meetings.
2. Members have developed real friendships, enjoy each other's company and associate with each other outside of group meetings.
3. Members all try to work in the best interests of all the Farm boys.

II. MODERATE DEGREE OF GROUP COHESION

1. Members attend meetings fairly regularly, but will skip if there is something better to do.
2. Members work well together occasionally, and include all the Farm boys in their thinking but there is still some self-centered selfish behavior.
3. Members get along with each other, but there is still some arguing and griping.

III. LOW DEGREE OF GROUP COHESION

1. Members' relationship with group leader is the only apparent basis for identification with the group.
2. Members do not get along with each other, always arguing and griping.
3. Members' primary desire is to do things for themselves. No thought or consideration is given to the other Farm boys.

APPENDIX - B

CRITERIA WHICH AIDED IN DETERMINING LEADERSHIP AMONG
THE HOUSE COMMITTEE GROUPI. DEVELOPMENT OF LEADERSHIP AMONG THE FOUR BOYS ON THE LONGVIEW FARM
HOUSE COMMITTEE

1. Who initiates discussion?
2. To whom does the group turn for ideas and answers to problems?
3. Who acts as mediator during group arguments?
4. Who carries the discussion when the rest of the group appears to be "talked out"?

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