

# Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology

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Volume 15 | Issue 4

Article 9

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1925

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### Recommended Citation

Charlotte Arnold, Edith Buck, Katharine Merriam, Julia Stockover, Study of Delinquent Girls at Sleighton Farm, 15 J. Am. Inst. Crim. L. & Criminology 598 (May 1924 to February 1925)

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# A STUDY OF DELINQUENT GIRLS AT SLEIGHTON FARM\*

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## INTRODUCTION

No more tangible evidence of a changed point of view toward the problems of delinquency can be found than the contrast between the old parent House of Refuge, an institution built on the congregate plan, situated in the City of Philadelphia behind high brick walls, and the group of attractive gray stone cottages in the beautiful rolling country at Darlington, which is now Sleighton Farm.

Sleighton Farm is the Girl's Department of the Glen Mills Schools which are incorporated institutions financed by a Board of Contributors and state and county appropriations and administered by a Board of Managers. The girls received at Sleighton Farm are delinquents committed by the courts of Pennsylvania. The average number there at one time is about 470. After a period of training, in the institution, which usually covers two years, the girls are turned over to parole visitors who place them in suitable homes and occupations.

The purpose of the institution as defined by the superintendent in the annual report is:

" . . . the education and development of the child committed to its care. The word education is used in a threefold sense to include, first, the building of character and training for citizenship; second, the development of the intellectual life; third, the training to earn one's livelihood."<sup>1</sup>

Plainly the aim of Sleighton Farm is rehabilitation in society of the delinquent girl. What chances of success has the institution? What is the character of the human material with which it deals? What are the probable causal factors in the delinquency of girls? What results have been gained by the methods used? It was with the hope of throwing some light on questions such as these that the present study was undertaken.

\*Prepared under the direction of Amy Hewes, Mount Holyoke College, May, 1924, South Hadley.

<sup>1</sup>*Ninety-sixth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Glen Mills Schools* (1923) p. 34.

The inquiry is based on the records of 375 girls admitted to Sleighton Farm during 1922 and 1923. About a quarter (23.7 per cent) of the girls were colored. All but 12 were native born, and nearly three-quarters of them (73.8 per cent) were natives of Pennsylvania. Sixty-six were born in Philadelphia and 211 in Pennsylvania outside of Philadelphia. The 12 foreign-born represent the countries of Italy, Poland, Canada, England, and Russia.<sup>2</sup>

## AGE AND RACE

Sleighton Farm is primarily concerned with adolescent girls although a small group of younger girls is included. Table 1 gives the age distribution according to nearest birthday at the time of admission. The median age of the group as a whole and of the white girls was 16. For the colored, it was 15, indicating influences at work to cause colored girls to become delinquent at an earlier age. The age range for the whole group was from 9 to 20, and the average age 15.

TABLE 1  
COLOR AND AGE AT ADMISSION

Age in Years	Race					
	Total		White		Negro	
	Num-ber	Per Cent	Num-ber	Per Cent	Num-ber	Per Cent
Total .....	375	99.8	286	99.7	89	100.1
9 .....	2	.5	1	.3	1	1.1
10 .....	2	.5	2	.7	..	..
11 .....	8	2.1	5	1.7	3	3.4
12 .....	9	2.4	6	2.1	3	3.4
13 .....	29	7.7	18	6.3	11	12.4
14 .....	43	11.5	35	12.2	8	9.0
15 .....	80	21.3	60	21.0	20*	22.5
16 .....	87*	23.2	63*	22.0	24	27.0
17 .....	51	13.6	47	16.4	4	4.5
18 .....	39	10.4	29	10.1	10	11.2
19 .....	18	4.8	15	5.2	3	3.4
20 .....	2	.5	1	.3	1	1.1
Not Specified .....	5	1.3	4	1.4	1	1.1

\*Median.

## MARTIAL CONDITION AND NUMBER OF CHILDREN

A small number of both the white and colored girls had married previous to their court sentence. (See Table 2. This was the

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 1922, p. 42; 1923, p. 40.

case with 4.9 per cent of the white girls and a larger per cent (7.9) of the colored girls, although the latter were younger. Twenty-seven girls had already borne children or were pregnant and in the larger number of cases the children were illegitimate. The colored girls showed a higher percentage of illegitimate children than the white, 7.9 per cent as contrasted with 4.9 per cent.

TABLE 2  
MARITAL CONDITION AND NUMBER OF CHILDREN

Marital Condition and Number of Children	Race					
	Total		White		Negro	
	Num- ber	Per Cent	Num- ber	Per Cent	Num- ber	Per Cent
Total .....	375	100.0	286	100.0	89	100.0
Unmarried .....	353	94.1	271	94.8	82	92.1
One child .....	10	..	5	..	5	..
Two children .....	2	..	1	..	1	..
Pregnant .....	8	..	7	..	1	..
Married .....	21	5.6	14	4.9	7	7.9
One child .....	4	..	2	..	2	..
Two children .....	2	..	1	..	1	..
Illegitimate child ..	1	..	1	..	..	..
Not specified .....	1	.3	1	.3	..	..

#### MENTAL STATUS

There is general agreement today that defective mentality is one of the most common if not the chief factor associated with delinquency.<sup>3</sup> Opinions differ as to how far the intelligence quotient is an adequate index of mental ability. If the I. Q. does no more than locate mental defect it has significance in a study of this kind, for mental defect brings in its train a whole set of intricate problems concerning the character of the treatment.

The intelligence test used at Sleighton Farm and in the comparisons made was the Stanford Revision of the Binet-Simon for which Lewis M. Terman is chiefly responsible. The I. Q. distribution of 305 of the girls at Sleighton Farm is shown in Table 3. The median lies in the 70-79 group. The significance of the grouping is shown to better advantage when the table is condensed as in Table 3a where the grouping is made according to Terman's classification.

<sup>3</sup>Rudolph Pintner, *Intelligence Testing* (1923), p. 299.

TABLE 3  
INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENTS OF DELINQUENT GIRLS ENTERING SLEIGHTON  
FARM 1922-1923

I. Q.	Total		White		Colored	
	Num-ber	Per Cent	Num-ber	Per Cent	Num-ber	Per Cent
Total .....	305	100.0	251	100.0	54	100.2
40- 49 .....	8	2.6	6	2.4	2	3.7
50- 59 .....	52	17.0	39	15.5	13	24.1
60- 69 .....	84	27.5	69	27.5	15	27.8
70- 79 .....	75*	24.6	64	25.5	11	20.4
80- 89 .....	49	16.1	43	17.1	6	11.1
90- 99 .....	29	9.5	24	9.6	5	9.3
100-109 .....	6	2.0	5	2.0	1	1.9
110-119 .....	2	.7	1	.4	1	1.9

\*Median group.

TABLE 3a  
INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENTS OF DELINQUENT GIRLS GROUPED ACCORDING TO  
SIGNIFICANCE GIVEN TO RATINGS BY TERMAN

I. Q.	Total		White		Colored	
	Num-ber	Per Cent	Num-ber	Per Cent	Num-ber	Per Cent
Total .....	305	100.1	251	100.0	54	100.0
20- 49 .....	8	2.6	6	2.4	2	3.7
50- 69 .....	136	44.6	108	43.0	28	51.9
70- 79 .....	75	24.6	64	25.5	11	20.4
80- 89 .....	49	16.1	43	17.1	6	11.1
90-109 .....	35	11.5	29	11.6	6	11.1
110-119 .....	2	.7	1	.4	1	1.9

Significance of the ratings, as given by L. M. Terman, *Measurement of Intelligence* (1916), p. 79.

Below 20—Idiots.

20- 49—Imbeciles.

50- 69—Morons.

70- 79—Borderline deficiency, sometimes classifiable as dullness, often as feeble-mindedness.

80- 89—Dullness, rarely classifiable as feeble-mindedness.

90-109—Normal or average intelligence.

110-119—Superior intelligence.

120-139—Very superior intelligence.

Above 140—"Near genius" or genius.

If Terman's interpretation of the I. Q.'s is accepted, we may describe nearly one-half (47.2 per cent) of the delinquent girls as mentally defective. It is true that Terman's interpretation has been

criticised as too severe.<sup>4</sup> It may be that the group studied is not as poor mentally as it appears from Table 3a, but the significance of the following comparisons is unmistakable. The group at Sleighton Farm compares very unfavorably in mental equipment with Terman's group of 905 unselected children and also with Healy's group of 1,212 juvenile court repeaters. (See Tables 4-6 and Diagram A.)

TABLE 4

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENTS OF SLEIGHTON FARM GIRLS AND TERMAN'S 905 UNSELECTED SCHOOL CHILDREN

I. Q.	Percentage Distribution by Groups	
	Sleighton Farm Group	Terman's Group
Total .....	100.0	100.1
36- 45 .....	.3	..
46- 55 .....	10.5	..
56- 65 .....	22.3	.3
66- 75 .....	31.1*	2.3
76- 85 .....	20.3	8.6
86- 95 .....	10.2	20.1
96-105 .....	4.3	33.9*
106-115 .....	.3	23.1
116-125 .....	.7	9.0
126-135 .....	..	2.3
136-145 .....	..	.5

\*Median.

TABLE 5

DISTRIBUTION OF INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENTS OF WHITE AND COLORED GIRLS ACCORDING TO TERMAN'S DECILE GROUPS

I. Q.	Total		White		Colored	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Total .....	305	100.0	251	100.1	54	100.2
36- 45 .....	1	.3	..	..	1	1.9
46- 55 .....	32	10.5	23	9.2	9	16.7
56- 65 .....	68	22.3	54	21.5	14	25.9
66- 75 .....	95*	31.1	81*	32.3	14*	25.9
76- 85 .....	62	20.3	55	21.9	7	13.0
86- 95 .....	31	10.2	24	9.6	7	13.0
96-105 .....	13	4.3	12	4.8	1	1.9
106-115 .....	1	.3	1	.4	..	..
116-125 .....	2	.7	1	.4	1	1.9

\*Median falls within group.

<sup>4</sup>In respect to children under 16, for which the test is considered more accurate than for adults, it is considered that 96-105, the group in which Terman places the median, for a group of unselected school children is too high. In this connection, Francis N. Maxfield, Director of the Bureau of Special Edu-

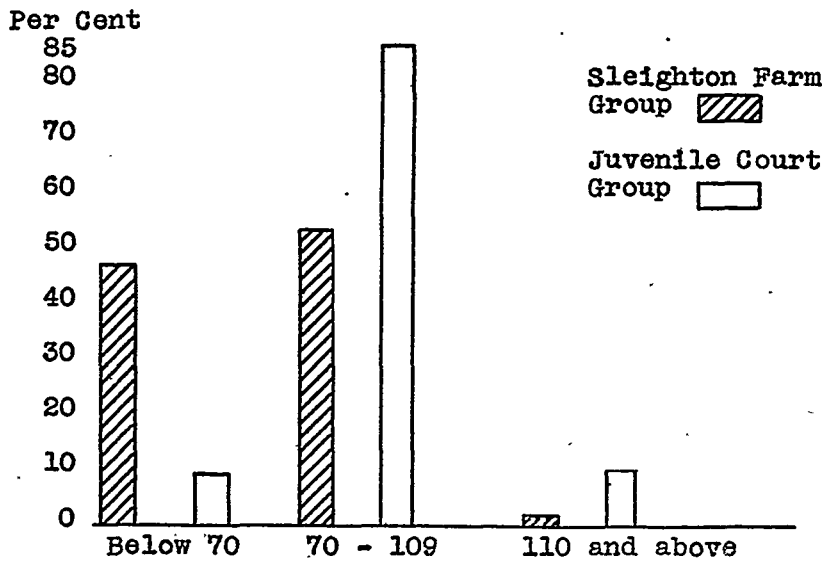
TABLE 6

COMPARISON WITH HEALY'S I. Q. DISTRIBUTION OF 1212 JUVENILE COURT REPEATERS

I. Q.	Per Cent	
	Sleighton Farm Group	Juvenile Court Group (*)
Total	100.1	100.0
Below 70	47.2	7.0
70-109	52.2	85.0
110 and above	.7	8.0

\*Figures from W. Healy, *Practical Value of Scientific Study of Juvenile Delinquents*, Children's Bureau, Publication No. 96 (1922), p. 18.

DIAGRAM A



Both of these groups are comprised of younger children than the girls at Sleighton Farm, but they are comparable since the I. Q. is

comparable to that of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, in an unpublished letter says: "Unselected school children in our eastern cities will show a median I. Q. between 90 and 96. . . . Instead of Terman's 1 per cent under 70 in I. Q., we find 5 per cent to 10 per cent in many of our city schools." Terman uses 16 as the divisor in obtaining the I. Q. for adults on the assumption that the average adult mental age is 16. The tests made on army recruits during the war show that the average adult mental age is much nearer 14. E. A. Doll, whom Maxfield quotes in the letter referred to above, says that 25 per cent of the population of Pennsylvania would be feebleminded if Terman's standard for adults were to be used as a basis of classification.

assumed to be constant, that is, to remain the same throughout the life of an individual.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, since the majority (83.0 per cent) of the Sleighton Farm group is under the age of 18, it is a better comparison than army data because as Bailey and Haber state:

" . . . we know that mental defect, by reason of the high mortality incident to it, especially in youth, has a greater frequency in groups under 18 years than in those over that age."<sup>6</sup>

Table 4 shows the median for the Sleighton Farm girls falling three decile groups below Terman's—that is in 66-75 instead of 96-105. The picture is skewed more than it would be without the colored girls as is proved by comparing the distribution of the whites and colored separately in Table 5. There is not, however, as much difference between whites and colored in the matter of intelligence as is frequently assumed. The median for both falls in the same group.

Table 6 and the accompanying Diagram A show a marked difference between the Sleighton Farm group and Dr. Healy's group of juvenile court repeaters. Nearly half (47.2 per cent) of the former have I.Q.'s below 70 as compared with only 7 per cent of the repeaters and 1 per cent of the school children.

Sleighton Farm is not a home for the feebleminded; it is not equipped to deal with the problems that mental defect involves. This fact raises the question of the wisdom of the courts of Pennsylvania in committing the girls who are clearly subnormal mentally.

#### PHYSICAL CONDITION

It is assumed today that behavior problems are associated with physical condition as well as mental defect. The fact of generally poor physical condition or of some specific disease may have been a considerable factor in causing delinquency. It is also recognized that physical condition may be a result of delinquency rather than a cause of it.

Upon entrance to Sleighton Farm each girl receives a thorough physical examination from the resident physician. Record is made of the results of the examination and in a majority of cases the general physical condition is denominated by the physician as good, fair, or poor. This classification has been used in Table 7, in the cases where complete records were available.

<sup>5</sup>E. B. Skaggs, *An Elementary Textbook of Mental Measurement* (1923), pp. 137-138.

<sup>6</sup>P. Bailey and R. Haber, "Mental Deficiency," *Mental Hygiene*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (1920), p. 566.



Less than half (43.7 per cent) of the girls were considered in good physical condition while more than a fifth (22.2 per cent) were in poor or very poor condition. The colored girls were less robust than the white girls for only slightly more than a third (37.2 per cent) were in good condition and more than a quarter (28.0 per cent) were in poor or very poor health.

The classification used is not sufficiently objective in kind to be independent of the particular examining physician or to make possible comparisons with similar groups of non-delinquent girls. It does suggest, however, that the problems of delinquency are further complicated to a serious degree by problems connected with health.

TABLE 7  
GENERAL PHYSICAL CONDITION OF GIRLS WHEN ADMITTED

General Physical Condition	Total		White		Colored	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Total .....	149	100.1	106	100.0	43	100.1
Excellent .....	1	.7	1	.9	..	..
Good .....	64	43.0	48	45.3	16	37.2
Fair .....	51	34.2	36	34.0	15	34.9
Poor .....	29	19.5	19	17.9	10	23.3
Very poor .....	4	2.7	2	1.9	2	4.7

The particular diseases of the 263 girls are shown in Table 8. By far the most frequent difficulty was diseased or enlarged thyroid. This occurred in 115 cases or more than two-fifths of the girls examined. Its prevalence may be due in part to the emphasis which endocrine trouble receives in diagnosis today, or in a small degree to the few girls who came from that part of Pennsylvania within the goitre region. This disease may have many and varied effects on the individual. When the sufferer is an adolescent, one of the most frequent results is an interference with mental development. It also may affect the individual's nervous stability, and in the cases under consideration is probably a factor in explaining the low mental status of the group. It is to be noted, however, that a much smaller percentage of the colored girls contributed to the total for this disease. The presence of enlarged tonsils or adenoids, found in over one-third of the girls, is another condition associated with retarded mental development and dullness.

Venereal disease is found to have been fairly prevalent. This is to be explained in part by the fact that many of the girls have had promiscuous sexual relations. Less than a tenth (9.1 per cent) of the girls had syphilis and 6.5 per cent had gonorrhoea. This does not include cases which were known to have existed but which failed to give positive tests on entrance to Sleighton Farm. The colored girls had very much higher percentages for both syphilis and gonorrhoea than the white girls.

The other diseases enumerated seem to have little direct connection with delinquency except that the girls were in some way handicapped in leading a normal life.

TABLE 8

DISEASES OF GIRLS DIAGNOSED ACCORDING TO EXAMINATION AT ENTRANCE TO SLEIGHTON FARM\*

Diseases	Total		White		Colored	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Thyroid enlarged or diseased .....	115	43.7	96	49.2	19	27.9
Tonsils or adenoids enlarged or diseased .....	92	35.0	86	34.9	24	35.3
Heart impaired .....	46	17.5	38	19.5	8	11.8
Lungs impaired .....	37	14.1	27	13.8	10	14.7
Syphilis .....	24	9.1	12	6.2	12	17.6
Skin diseases .....	19	7.2	15	7.7	4	5.9
Gonorrhoea .....	17	6.5	10	5.1	7	10.3
Teeth diseased .....	16	6.1	15	7.7	1	1.5
Undernourished .....	10	3.8	8	4.1	2	2.9
Enuresis .....	9	3.4	5	2.6	4	5.9
Vision impaired .....	8	3.0	4	2.1	4	5.9
Hearing impaired .....	6	2.3	5	2.6	1	1.5
Nervous diseases .....	6	2.3	6	3.1	..	..
Glandular trouble .....	4	1.5	2	1.0	2	2.9
Mastoid .....	4	1.5	3	1.5	1	1.5
Other .....	12	4.6	6	3.1	6	8.8

\*Physical condition was specified for only 195 white and 68 colored girls.

#### SEX HISTORY

There are many difficulties in the way of an attempt to secure trustworthy information regarding the nature and extent of sex experience. The girl's own statement may be contradicted by the report of the physician's examination and more often than not the court record conceals the fact of "sex offense." It has been found to be the case generally that girls are not usually brought into court until

other methods of correction have failed and unless there is a serious charge against them. This is most often a sex offense, though it may be hidden under the more general term, incorrigibility. A large majority (84.8 per cent) of the Sleighton Farm girls had had sex experience. The records show all degrees of sex immorality, from small girls who "just tried it once" to older girls who were extremely promiscuous. With some of them the practice began at a very tender age, and half of those reporting committed the first sex offense before they were 15. (See Table 9.) The girls were also asked to report on the age at which they had received their first sex instruction. In some cases this was given as early as six. For the most part this was received from friends and acquaintances or from parents. There was a good deal to indicate that such instruction was not received from persons qualified and that it often came from other sex offenders.

TABLE 9  
AGE OF GIRLS AT FIRST SEX EXPERIENCE

Age	Total		White	Colored
	Number	Per Cent		
Total .....	318*	100.0	241	77
6 .....	6	1.9	4	2
7 .....	5	1.6	3	2
8 .....	6	1.9	3	3
9 .....	6	1.9	5	1
10 .....	14	4.4	10	4
11 .....	9	2.8	2	7
12 .....	26	8.2	20	6
13 .....	49	15.4	37	12
14 .....	60†	18.9	46	14
15 .....	51	16.0	37	14
16 .....	27	8.5	23	4
17 .....	18	5.7	15	3
18 .....	2	.6	1	1
Not specified .....	39	12.2	35	4

\*Forty-five white girls and 12 colored reported no sex experience.

†Median.

#### FAMILY HISTORY

More than two-thirds of the girls (67.6 per cent) were native-born children of American parentage, so that in their case it cannot be said that unfamiliarity with American customs and standards was the explanation of the delinquency.<sup>7</sup> The largest number of foreign-

<sup>7</sup>*Ninety-fifth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Glen Mills Schools, 1922, p. 41, Ninety-sixth Report, 1923, p. 39.*

born parents came from Poland, Italy, Germany, Ireland, and Lithuania.

A family condition always associated with social maladjustment of the individual is the "broken home." Information was lacking in a number of cases but the reports showed that a large majority (71.2 per cent) came from homes where one or both parents were either dead or absent. Of these 37 had neither parent living and 160 reported either the mother or father dead. In the case of 196 girls whose parents were living, 66 had parents who had separated or who had not married, and in 4 cases, one parent was in a hospital for the insane. This type of family background has been found characteristic of other delinquent groups and is generally accepted as the source of many influences which lead to the child's failure to make a successful start in life.

An attempt was made to measure the hereditary factors which might partly explain the delinquency. (See Table 10 and 10a). A difficulty was encountered here because the statements of the girls were incomplete and inaccurate, so that the picture presented in all probability omits many of the defective strains. Another difficulty lies in the fact that it is not known to what extent the tendency for many diseases and defects is hereditary. More than a quarter of both the white and colored girls came from families characterized by serious mental or physical defect. Those which appeared most often were tuberculosis, in 27 families, and alcoholism and insanity, each in 18 families.

A comparison with a similar table made by Fernald<sup>8</sup> dealing with 522 delinquent women in New York State indicates a decidedly poorer family background for that group, for a defective strain of some sort was found in the families of 49 per cent, or nearly twice the percentage in the families represented at Sleighton Farm, but alcoholism and tuberculosis again stand out as the defects encountered in the largest number of cases. Here again it should be emphasized, however, that the information in the present study rests upon the girls' statements and has not the authority of Miss Fernald's material.

A more detailed study (unpublished) was made of Sleighton Farm cases in 1912 and 1913 by Miss Ruth Wanger, under the direction of Dr. Charles B. Davenport of the Eugenics Record Office at Cold Spring Harbor. In this study there were charted 4,327 individuals belonging to fifty-seven families represented by commitments

<sup>8</sup>M. R. Fernald and others, *A Study of Women Delinquents in New York State* (1920), p. 242.

of girls to Sleighton Farm. This investigation showed a much higher percentage of abnormality. Nearly three-quarters (74.05 per cent) of the persons in the families studied exhibited clearly marked defects.

TABLE 10  
DEFECTIVE STRAINS IN FAMILY

Character of Strain	Total		White		Colored	
	Num-ber	Per Cent	Num-ber	Per Cent	Num-ber	Per Cent
Total .....	375	100.0	286	100.0	89	100.0
No defective strain specified .....	277	73.9	212	74.1	65	73.0
Defective strains ...	98	26.1	74	25.9	24	27.0

TABLE 10a  
SPECIFIED DEFECTIVE STRAINS IN FAMILY

Defective Strain	Total	White	Colored
Tuberculosis .....	27	18	9
Insanity .....	18	13	5
Alcoholism .....	18	16	2
Heart disease .....	12	11	1
Feeble-mindedness .....	11	8	3
Sex irregularity .....	8	6	2
Cancer .....	8	6	2
Epilepsy .....	7	7	..
Suicide .....	4	2	2
Venereal disease .....	2	1	1
Congenital deafness .....	1	1	..
Criminal record .....	1	1	..

SCHOOL HISTORY

In so far as the school is an agency making for the attainment of good citizenship, the failure to secure an adequate amount and the right kind of school training may make delinquency more probable. Less than half of the white girls at Sleighton Farm had gone beyond the sixth grade in school and nearly three-quarters (74.8 per cent) had failed to reach the grades usual for their ages at the time they left school. (See Table 11.) The number of girls who had made a grade corresponding to their age is indicated in the table between the heavy lines and those retarded to the right and above them. This is more than twice the retardation percentage found in the public schools (33.7 per cent)<sup>9</sup> but it is seven per cent lower than was found

<sup>9</sup>Leonard P. Ayres, *Laggards in Our Schools* (1909), p. 48.

to characterize the boys and girls in the Idaho Industrial Training School.<sup>10</sup> Plainly the Sleighton Farm group was unable to master the public school curriculum, and this way may be largely attributed to the mental deficiency which characterized the group as a whole.

The largest number of white girls left school at the legal minimum, 14 years, although nearly a third (30.7 per cent) managed to evade the law and to do so before they became 14. This per cent leaving school before 14 was almost the same as that for delinquent women in New York (31.6 per cent) studied by Dr. Mabel Fernald.<sup>11</sup>

TABLE 11  
GRADE REACHED AND AGE OF WHITE GIRLS AT LEAVING SCHOOL

Grades	Total	Number of girls leaving school at specified ages									
		8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Total .....	254	1	.....	4	8	14	51	92	55	26	3
1.....	2			1		1					
2.....	6	1		1	4						
3.....	10					5	1	3	1		
4.....	21			2	1	2	8	2	4	2	
5.....	42				2	1	9	20	7	3	
6.....	62					3	17	25	10	7	
7.....	53				1	2	11	22	14	5	
8.....	31						4	13	10	4	
9.....	1							1			
High school.....	26						1	6	9	7	3

Although public opinion as indicated in legislation has now reached the point at which any earlier age than 14 is regarded as inconsistent with the proper minimum education, it remains true that a large number in the general population leave school before 14. Thorndike's estimate<sup>12</sup> for the number of children leaving school be-

<sup>10</sup>Arthur A. Hauck, "Report of Sensory and Mental Tests at the Idaho Industrial Training School," *School and Society*, Vol. 4 (Sept., 1916), p. 414.

<sup>11</sup>M. R. Fernald and others, *A Study of Women Delinquents in New York* (1920), p. 295.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 261.

fore 14 is 30 per cent, a proportion practically identical with the Sleighton Farm figure.

The colored girls showed a much higher retardation than the white; four-fifths of them (81.6 per cent) failed to reach the appropriate grade. One-half (50.0 per cent) had not reached the sixth grade. (See Table 12.) This discrepancy is doubtless due to poorer educational facilities for colored girls as well as smaller mental capacity. The lower educational equipment of the colored girls was also reflected by the fact that a larger proportion could not read and write English. (See Table 13.) The illiterate colored girls were 8.3 per cent of the total number as contrasted with 3.2 per cent of the white girls who were illiterate. The percentage for delinquent girls, however, is practically the same as that for illiteracy of all females in Pennsylvania.<sup>13</sup>

TABLE 12  
GRADE REACHED AND AGE OF COLORED GIRLS AT LEAVING SCHOOL

Grades	Total	Number of girls leaving school at specified ages										
		7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Total.....	76	2	.....	1	1	.....	6	17	18	22	6	3
1.....	3	1						2				
2.....	1								1			
3.....	5			1			2	1	1			
4.....	16	1		1			2	6		4	1	1
5.....	13						2	2	2	7		
6.....	19							1	11	7		
7.....	11							5	2	2	2	
8.....	3								1	1	1	
9.....	1										1	
High school....	3									1	1	1
College.....	1											1

<sup>13</sup>Statistical Abstract of the United States (1921), p. 79. The Statistical Abstract shows 4.5 per cent of the females of Pennsylvania illiterate. However, the percentage of negro illiterates for the whole state is 6.1 per cent, over 2 per cent lower than the fraction of negro illiterates at Sleighton Farm (8.3

TABLE 13  
LITERACY OF WHITE AND COLORED GIRLS

Literacy	Total		White		Colored	
	Num-ber	Per Cent	Num-ber	Per Cent	Num-ber	Per Cent
Total .....	363*	100.0	279	100.0	84	100.0
Able to read and write English .....	347	95.6	270	96.8	77	91.7
Not able to read and write English .....	16	4.4	9	3.2	7	8.3

\*Twelve not specified.

#### WORK HISTORY

If delinquency is to be understood in the light of environmental factors, the kind of work which the girls did must be considered. The manner in which they first became wage earners is especially significant. The largest number of girls (more than one-third) began wage earning as domestic servants. (See Table 14.) Factory work took the second largest number and only a scattered few were found in other occupations. More than one-half of the colored girls went into domestic service and factory work gave employment to only nine.

It is not easy to say whether domestic service furnishes a disproportionately large per cent of delinquents. According to a study made by Miss Conyngton in 1911: "Workers in domestic service, constituting 24.1 per cent of the bread winners, account for 70.3 per cent of the offenders, or very nearly three times their proportionate share. With practically the same number in each group the servants and waitresses furnished more than four times as many offenders as those engaged in manufacturing and mechanical pursuits."<sup>14</sup>

It would be rash to assume that domestic work explains the delinquency. It must be remembered that the domestic workers are usually poorly educated, and that the nature of the occupation permits mentally deficient to perform it.

per cent). Since the group at Sleighton Farm is almost entirely native-born, the white girls should be compared with the native white group, which shows an illiterate group of .8 per cent for native white with native parents and of .6 per cent for native whites with foreign or mixed parentage. The Sleighton Farm figure for illiteracy of white girls is 3.2 per cent, considerably higher than the figure for the whole state. This would seem to indicate that the Sleighton Farm group is a less literate group than the state as a whole.

<sup>14</sup>Mary Conyngton, "Relation Between Occupation and Criminality of Women." *Report on Conditions of Women and Child Wage Earners in the United States* Vol. XV (1911), p. 30.



TABLE 14  
KIND OF WORK IN FIRST JOB

Kind of Work	Total		White		Colored	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Total .....	375	100.1	286	100.0	89	100.0
Domestic service ....	142	37.9	91	31.8	51	57.3
Factory work .....	106	28.3	97	34.0	9	10.1
Restaurant and hotel.	12	3.2	7	2.4	5	5.6
Clerical .....	6	1.6	6	2.1	..	..
Farming .....	5	1.3	4	1.4	1	1.1
Charwomen .....	5	1.3	1	.3	4	4.5
Work in stores.....	4	1.1	4	1.4	..	..
Home work .....	3	.8	..	..	3	3.4
Miscellaneous .....	7	1.9	6	2.1	1	1.1
Never worked .....	85	22.7	70	24.5	15	16.9

Delinquent girls do not make good employees. The study of the industrial histories of the Sleighton Farm group shows this fact plainly. These girls who were too young to have worked for a long time held numerous positions, and in a majority of cases the tenure of each position was short, so that long periods of unemployment must have been common. It is true that the delinquency itself may have caused the girl to be discharged, and the irregularity in work was doubtless associated with instability and other characteristics of the individual which led to wrong-doing.

The number of positions held by white and colored girls is considered in Tables 15 and 16 respectively. Only 21.8 per cent of the white girls and 28.4 per cent of the colored girls held but one job. The greater stability of the colored girls may have been partly due to the fact that they have little choice of work outside of the field of domestic service and so are less tempted to give up a job.

The tenure of a position is a better index of the instability of these girls. Over half of the girls had not held any job as long as six months, although the majority of them had worked over a year. Industrial instability is a recognized fact among adolescent girls, but this group seems to have had more than its share. (See Tables 17 and 18.)

TABLE 15  
NUMBER OF POSITIONS HELD BY WHITE GIRLS BEFORE COMMITMENT

Length of employment in years	Total number of girls working	Number of jobs held						
		1	2	3	4	5	6 or over	Not specified
Total.....	216	47	48	44	22	18	18	19
Less than 1 yr.....	57	20	15	12	4	1	.....	5
1 yr. and less than 2.....	46	7	15	12	7	1	2	2
2 yrs. and less than 3.....	29	2	5	7	4	3	5	3
3 yrs. and less than 4.....	24	2	7	5	.....	5	5	.....
4 yrs. and less than 5.....	13	.....	3	2	2	3	3	.....
5 yrs. and over.....	4	1	.....	.....	1	1	1	.....
Not specified.....	43	15	3	6	4	4	2	9

TABLE 16  
NUMBER OF POSITIONS HELD BY COLORED GIRLS BEFORE COMMITMENT

Length of employment in years	Total number of girls working	Number of jobs held						
		1	2	3	4	5	6 or over	Not specified
Total.....	74	21	20	16	5	2	1	9
Less than 1 yr.....	23	14	6	3	.....	.....	.....	.....
1 yr. and less than 2.....	15	2	5	4	2	1	.....	1
2 yrs. and less than 3.....	4	.....	2	.....	.....	1	1	.....
3 yrs. and less than 4.....	6	.....	2	3	1	.....	.....	.....
4 yrs. and less than 5.....	4	1	1	1	1	.....	.....	.....
Not specified.....	22	4	4	5	1	.....	.....	8

TABLE 17  
LONGEST TENURE OF POSITION—WHITE GIRLS

Length of employment in years	Total number working	Longest tenure					Not spec- ified
		Less than 1 month	1 mo. and less than 6	6 mos. and less than 1 yr.	1 yr. and less than 2	Over 2 yrs.	
Total.....	216	28	106	34	16	14	18
Less than 1 yr.....	57	18	37	2	.....	.....	.....
1 yr. and less than 2..	46	5	25	11	3	.....	2
2 yrs. and less than 3..	29	1	10	6	6	2	4
3 yrs. and less than 4..	24	.....	9	8	4	2	1
4 yrs. and less than 5..	13	.....	2	2	2	5	2
5 yrs. and over.....	4	.....	1	1	1	1	.....
Not specified.....	43	4	22	4	.....	4	9

TABLE 18  
LONGEST TENURE OF POSITION—COLORED GIRLS

Length of employment in years	Total number working	Longest tenure					Not spec- ified
		Less than 1 month	1 mo. and less than 6	6 mos. and less than 1 yr.	1 yr. and less than 2	Over 2 yrs.	
Total.....	74	11	32	7	4	3	17
Less than 1 yr.....	23	8	11	.....	.....	.....	4
1 yr. and less than 2..	15	2	7	2	.....	.....	4
2 yrs. and less than 3.	4	.....	2	.....	.....	1	1
3 yrs. and less than 4.	6	.....	3	.....	1	1	1
4 yrs. and less than 5.	4	.....	.....	2	.....	1	1
Not specified.....	22	1	9	3	3	.....	6

#### INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY

Sleighton Farm's contact with most of the girls did not take place until they had already experienced institutional life. More than half (57.1 per cent) had been in other institutions of one kind or another. (See Table 19.) Non-penal institutions of all kinds were included in the classification, though the greatest number were correctional. All of the 28 colored girls and 22 of the 42 white girls who had been in an institution for less than a month had been inmates of the House of Detention connected with the municipal court. The other institutions were chiefly houses of refuge of various kinds and orphan asylums. Only one-third of those who had been in institutions had remained for more than a year. A few weeks, however, are often enough to affect a girl's whole life, and the effect of many of so-called "Homes" and "Houses of Refuge" is sometime more for evil than for good. In the case of penal institutions the girl must have committed some offense previous to being sent there, so that in these cases the institutional experience cannot have been the primary cause of her delinquency, but it is not unlikely that it contributed to some extent to her further wrong-doing.

TABLE 19  
PREVIOUS INSTITUTIONAL EXPERIENCE

Time spent in institutions	Total		White	Colored
	Num-ber	Per Cent	Num-ber	Num-ber
Total .....	214	100.0	160	54
Less than 1 month.....	70	32.7	42	28
1 month and less than 1 year.....	73	34.1	58	15
1 year and less than 2.....	19	8.9	18	1
2 years and less than 3.....	9	4.2	9	..
3 years and less than 4.....	7	3.3	5	2
4 years and less than 5.....	4	1.9	2	2
5 years and less than 6.....	4	1.9	4	..
6 years and less than 7.....	..	..	..	..
7 years and less than 8.....	2	.9	2	..
8 years and less than 9.....	1	.5	1	..
9 years and less than 10.....	2	.9	2	..
Over 10 years.....	5	2.3	4	1
Time not specified.....	18	8.4	13	5

#### HISTORY OF DELINQUENCY

The particular reasons for committing the girls to Sleighton Farm are not shown clearly in the records. In over two-thirds of the cases (68.3 per cent) incorrigibility was the designation used, a term which may refer to any number of offenses, and is used by the courts for that very reason. (See Table 20.) "Immorality" was the offense named in only 13.6 per cent of the whole number. Larceny and breaking probation together accounted for nearly all of the remainder.

The two races present no important contrast in the frequency with which a particular offense was committed. The "incorrigible" and "immoral" cases in the colored group formed a slightly higher per cent of the whole, and more white girls broke probation. It is possible that the colored girls responded more readily to probation, but equally possible that fewer were given probation.

An earlier study of girls in the Idaho Industrial Training School<sup>15</sup> showed a similar preponderance of immorality and incorrigibility, but the western courts had been willing to commit for the more specific offense. More than half of the Idaho girls (57.8 per cent) had committed immoral acts and only 21.8 per cent had been committed for incorrigibility.

Less than half (45.6 per cent) of the girls at Sleighton Farm were recidivists, but if the colored girls are considered separately, it is found that a majority of them had previously committed offenses. (See Tables 21 and 22.) The ages of the 156 girls who were recidivists at the time they first became court cases vary from 5 to 19 years. The

<sup>15</sup>Arthur A. Hauck, op. cit., p. 411.

fact that the largest number of girls established delinquency records when they were 14 and 15 years of age emphasizes the fact that the adolescent period is fraught with the greatest dangers.

TABLE 20  
NATURE OF OFFENSE CAUSING COMMITMENT

Offense	Race					
	Total		White		Negro	
	Num-ber	Per Cent	Num-ber	Per Cent	Num-ber	Per Cent
Total .....	375	100.0	286	100.0	89	100.0
Incorrigibility .....	256	68.3	193	67.5	63	70.8
Immorality .....	51	13.6	37	12.9	14	15.7
Larceny .....	38	10.1	30	10.5	8	9.0
Breaking probation ..	23	6.1	20	7.0	3	3.4
Attempted suicide ..	1	.3	..	..	1	1.1
Not reported .....	6	1.6	6	2.1	..	..

TABLE 21  
RECIDIVISTS AND FIRST OFFENDERS

Offenders	Total		White		Colored	
	Num-ber	Per Cent	Num-ber	Per Cent	Num-ber	Per Cent
Total .....	342*	100.0	259	100.0	83	99.9
First offenders .....	186	54.4	152	58.7	34	40.9
Recidivists .....	156	45.6	107	41.3	49	59.0

\*Thirty-three cases not specified.

TABLE 22  
AGE OF RECIDIVISTS AT FIRST CONVICTION

Age in Years at first conviction	Total	White	Colored
Total .....	148*	102	46
5 .....	1	1	..
6 .....	1	1	..
7 .....	2	..	2
8 .....	4	2	2
9 .....	2	1	1
10 .....	3	2	1
11 .....	4	3	1
12 .....	6	4	2
13 .....	11	7	4
14 .....	34	22	12
15 .....	31	20	11
16 .....	27	23	4
17 .....	16	11	5
18 .....	5	4	1
19 .....	1	1	..

\*Eight cases not specified.

## RESULTS OF TREATMENT.

The final test of any institutional treatment is the degree of success with which the girls can take up their work and life in society outside. Since the girls in the group studied are many of them still in the institution, the only basis for forming a judgment of what the treatment had accomplished was found in the record of the girl's conduct during her stay.<sup>16</sup>

The conduct of the girls was graded and the character of their reactions noted. These reports were not available for 113 of the girls who had been in the institution for a comparatively short time. More than one-half of the girls were found to have improved in conduct. (See Table 23.) Seventy-seven of the 262 for whom reports have been filed were found not to have adjusted themselves as well, and 50 had made no improvement.

TABLE 23  
CONDUCT OF GIRLS AT SLEIGHTON FARM

Improvement in institution	Total		White		Colored	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Total .....	262*	100.0	202	100.0	60	99.9
Increasing .....	135	51.5	107	53.0	28	46.6
Interrupted .....	77	29.4	64	31.7	13	21.6
None .....	50	19.1	31	15.3	19	31.7

\*One hundred thirteen not specified.

## CONCLUSION

It has been made evident that the task confronting Sleighton Farm, that of the social rehabilitation of the delinquent girls entrusted to its care, is a colossal one. This is because the delinquent group has included individuals of serious mental and physical defect as well as those whose social heredity and environment has been poor. Indeed the chief reason for hope in the accomplishment of the task is the fact that the group is composed of girls still young enough to be plastic, and without the complicating factors introduced by foreign stocks.

<sup>16</sup>The records of follow-up work of the girls who had been in residence in former years were not so standardized as to make a statistical summary satisfactory. For the most part they had been compiled for the guidance of the individual parole officers. The Annual Report of the institution for 1923 announced that "a long-wished-for survey is about to be made of former Sleighton Farm girls who are past 21 years of age." It is anticipated that the results of this study will furnish guides for future development.

Their mental inferiority is marked, not only in comparison with unselected school children, but also with other delinquent groups. Their social history has been one of a character to make re-education a problem of great difficulty.

The problems of delinquency can never be solved by institutions which have contacts with individuals only after the bad beginnings have been made. Even the accomplishment which can be reasonably expected from such a progressive and well-managed institution as Sleighton Farm will fail of fulfillment unless we progress in our definitions of delinquency to the extent of recognizing that all human defects cannot be cared for in one institution, but that special needs call for special equipment. Sleighton Farm has already demonstrated remarkable accomplishments through its school facilities, through introducing occupational incentive, and by using the group spirit to encourage and discipline the individual, and it is too much to ask that it should at the same time furnish all highly specialized treatment needed by those with pronounced mental and physical defect. Only if further clinical facilities are provided and its staff increased by the addition of experts can the institution hope to cope with the difficult cases of mental defect.