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AN EXPLORATORY INVESTIGATION OF THE "HOBO JUNGLE"
AND SOME OF ITS MEMBERS

By

Floyd William Howell

B. A. University of Montana, 1961

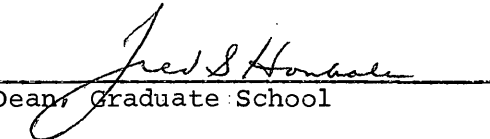
Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

1968

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CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The individual in American society is subject to many conflicting cultural expectations. Some groups expect him to act in one way, others in another. "His family may have one set of expectations while his school, his church, and his business have others. In some respects, these expectations coincide; all, for example, will agree on the sanctity of private property. But in many other respects they may disagree; the church may emphasize spiritual values above those of the market place, at the same time that business is organized about monetary values. Many other contradictions mark the pattern of American culture. The individual absorbs these contradictory attitudes, and they become part of his personality."¹

Most people are able to reconcile these conflicting expectations; "some" are not.

This research material is about the "some" who are unable to reconcile the conflicting American cultural expectations. This type of individual is often called the "wandering man," "hobo," "professional tramp," or given a stereotype name similar to these. In this report an attempt will be made to explain some of the "hobo's" attitudes and reasons for living in his own special society. The information herein contained was extracted from interviews with hoboes from numerous

¹Francis E. Merrill, Society and Culture, (Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J.).

states who were currently "traveling through" Montana. One thing that should be noted in the report is that "hoboes" have a language terminology of their own and common only to themselves.

The problem of the homeless transient man is as old as human history. It can be traced back many centuries before the beginning of the industrial revolution. Social concern has been manifested about this problem since at least the sixteenth century.

The homeless man is generally defined as a male who is completely cut off or has no relatives or friends (other than fellow homeless men). Though he may be receiving some form of outside support, he has few independent resources other than the clothes on his back, has no immediate means and in some cases has little future prospect of self-support. He is without a home and lacks most of the social or economic supports a home normally provides.²

The constant reference to the homeless man against the "homeless woman," reflects the negligible number of homeless women.

"An extensive literature exists, dating back to the sixteenth century, on the vagabond, beggar and the community problems relating to the poor. From the years 1524 to 1676 no less than 49 works on the poor and the homeless were published in England alone."³

A study was published in London in 1806 by P. Colquhoun, under the comprehensive title of: "A Treatise of Indigence: exhibiting

²The Canadian Welfare Council, Homeless Transient Men, 1961, p. 2.

³Tenants Relocation Bureau of Chicago, The Homeless Man on Skid Row, September, 1961, p. 3.

a General View of the National Resources for Productive Labour; with Proposition for Ameliorating the Conditions of the Poor, and Improving the Moral Habits and Increasing the Comforts of the Laboring People, Particularly the Rising Generation: By Regulations of Political Economy, Calculated to Prevent Poverty from Descending into Indigence, to produce Sobriety and Industry, to Reduce the Parochial Rates of the Kingdom, and Generally to Promote the Happiness and Security of the Community at large, by the Diminution of Moral and Penal Offenses and the Future Prevention of Crimes."

The following section draws heavily upon H. Warren Dunham, Homeless Men and Their Habitats, Wayne University, as reported in the Tenants Relocation Bureau Publication, The Homeless Man on Skid Row.

Although Colquhoun's reasons for the existence of indigence, "vivious and immoral habits," are unacceptable to the contemporary social scientist, he was concerned with questions which are still being raised today.

Colquhoun estimated that in 1806 there were 80,000 paupers,⁴ medicants, vagrants, idle and immoral persons in England and Wales. A number of other reports followed his work, including a paper published in 1862 by P. Mayhew entitled, London Labour and the London Poor. This work was perhaps the most famous scientific statement on this subject in the nineteenth century, and included statistical material and case studies.

⁴See Appendix C -- Terminology, p. 80.

Mayhew's encyclopedic account develops a classification of workers and non-workers which might be applied usefully to homeless men of our time. His categories are: "those that will work," "those who cannot work," and "those who will not work."

As Professor Dunham succinctly notes, the various attempts to examine the problem of homelessness, from the very earliest times until the end of the nineteenth century, were couched in terms of specific character traits with specific moral connotations. (Today, we have returned to dealing with the subject in specific trait forms, although without the moral connotations.) Dunham explains, that to Mayhew, the logic was inescapable: "those who will not work" have moral defects.⁵

Arrests and jail sentences (in very early days even the death sentence) were instituted in an effort to suppress homelessness and vagrancy. The "travel ticket" by which a vagrant or beggar was pushed out of the parish into the next was the next technique used to deal with the problem.

Suppression was popular until the middle of the nineteenth century (and to this day some smaller American communities still employ the policy of "running the beggar out of town"), until it was recognized that arrest and punishment were no solution to the problem of vagrants.

By the mid-nineteenth century the ebb and flow of the homeless was related to the business cycle. While historically the homeless

⁵Tenants Relocation Bureau of Chicago, op. cit., p. 3.

man was thought to be a wanderer or vagrant, today he is considered a by-product of the industrial revolution.

The movement of population from settled agricultural life to less secure industrial work, the needs of the primary and transportation industries for mobile seasonal and casual labor, continuing changes in demands for labor (business cycles), and technological changes have all been factors in the displacement of men from their place of birth and upbringing or accustomed domicile. Increasingly the homeless transient man has turned to the large cities where opportunities for work or resources to meet his needs in times of emergency are most likely to be available.

Homelessness during this time was considered the result of certain character deficiencies, and programs for individual treatment and reform were instituted. First developed by the religious agencies, their programs were later supplemented by the more secular approach of the social welfare agencies. Even in early nineteenth century in England, shelters and night refuge places offered sustenance (generally coupled with religious sermons) to the homeless.

The shelter program idea reached the United States and the first Municipal Lodging House was opened in New York in the beginning of the twentieth century. The program of shelters was criticized for aiding and abetting dependency, and consequently enabling the weaker and more unfit members of society to survive. However, by the 1920's the shelter program was widely established in the United States, usually under the auspices of religious agencies.⁶

⁶Ibid., p. 4.

At the end of World War I there was an increase in the number of homeless men and a growth of homeless men's areas. Also, at this time, the pattern of care by religious agencies was extended to include the techniques of the social welfare agency and the caseworker. Implicit in this program of individual treatment was the assumption that the homeless men suffered from some mental, emotional or physical defect, and that once the type of defect was made clear, it would respond to appropriate treatment.

The depression of the 1930's caused an increase in the number of homeless men and stimulated a third policy. This was the policy of giving mass relief to the growing number of homeless and destitute men. The number of men was so large during the depression years, and the difficulty in classifying them so great, that only provisions for a low level of shelter and sustenance could be provided. Programs of mass care were supplemented by work relief programs and by governmentally created jobs which provided some employment for those who would and could work.

During the 1940's rising economic prosperity gradually reduced the number of homeless men and the federal government withdrew its assistance from these mass programs. The care of the homeless reverted to the local communities.

Homeless men is a descriptive term that elicits a stereotyped picture of men with no hopes and no ambitions, of drunks content to live in the filth of the flop houses bumming meals and drinks along the waterfronts and railroad tracks of our American cities. This stereotype of the men who live on Skid Row is constantly reinforced.

by observations of men slumped in doorways, staggering along the sidewalks, sleeping in railroad stations, freight cars, and packing boxes. The impression is furthered by popular articles in our newspapers and magazines pointing to these serious conditions. The stereotype is but a partial and misleading picture--reflecting a serious lack of knowledge about, and understanding of, the homeless man.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Literature pertinent to the problem of the hobo is found in the area of the homeless man.

Although search of the literature reveals no studies directly focused on the problem, there have been a number of studies and articles on the homeless man and other related areas that were very helpful in developing this research.

One of the first comprehensive analyses of the homeless man was Alice W. Solenberger's One Thousand Homeless Men, published in 1911. It estimated that 40,000 to 60,000 men lived in Chicago's skid rows. According to the study, this number increased at election time when the "word went out" that free food and lodging were available to the unemployed. Mrs. Solenberger stated that during 1907-1908, the number of men served by the Municipal Lodging House and its annexes was almost 80,000.

Following the wake of World War I, the skid row population was about 25,000 to 30,000 according to Nels Anderson's classic study, The Hobo, published in 1923. Anderson also estimated that a like number lived on the docks, in parks, in engine houses, or in "flop houses" elsewhere in the city. Chicago was then the greatest labor exchange for migratory workers in the world. Probably no other city furnished more men for railroad work and it was common to see large gangs of men shipped from 400 to 1,000 miles away to work as "gandy dancers,"⁷ or track-laborers.

⁷See Appendix C -- Terminology, p. 80.

More than 200 private employment agencies operated in Chicago in August 1922, 39 of which operated in the skid rows. During the same period, there were 25 missions in the homeless men's areas which can be classified as follows: the permanently established local mission; the migratory national mission; and the local missions which sprang up during crises and periods of unemployment. There also were established religious centers of the Salvation Army and the Volunteers of America.

The Chicago Municipal Lodging House opened during the winter of 1901 and provided free food and shelter for destitute homeless men. In 1907, it provided 23,672 lodgings, 103,564 in 1908, 78,392 in 1913, and 452,361 in 1914.

The tremendous shift in the needs of skid row is emphasized by the fact that only four years later, in 1918-1919, the Municipal Lodging House closed its doors. The lack of applicants was caused by wartime.

The third decade of the century saw a steady increase in the population of Chicago's skid row and the 1930's brought with them a veritable flood of the homeless and destitute.

In 1936, Edwin H. Sutherland and Harvey J. Locke, of the Sociology Department of Indiana University, published their, Twenty-Thousand Homeless Men, an analysis of the shelter program on Chicago's skid rows. During those years, municipal shelters operated in skid row. From 1931 to 1935, more than 100,000 men passed through these shelters, most of them unemployed casual and low skilled laborers. However, the study estimated that about 40 per cent of the men in the

shelters were "stiffs," men who had lived on the skid rows for a relatively long period of time.

In classifying the men for admittance to the shelters, examinations of the background of these shelter men revealed that most of them had come from low standard rural homes, had inadequate schooling, were unskilled laborers, and were isolated from normal personal and group contacts. The booming economy of the pre-World War II, wartime and postwar years brought the greatest reduction in the number of skid row inhabitants.

In this research the adaptations of classifications from Dr. Reitman⁸ and definitions from the Canadian Welfare Council led this author to three classifications of homeless men; the bum, the hobo and the tramp. (Explanation of classifications appear in Chapter III--Methodology, page 20).

Since Reitman's three classifications and definitions were formulated before 1908 they need modification in order to fit the concepts applicable to this study. However, they do merit consideration.

Reitman says, "the tramp, hobo, bum, vagrant, etc., are terms which are generally used synonymously, but there are three distinct types of itinerant vagrants tramping about the country, these I shall call tramp, hobo, and bum. They are three species of the genus vagrant."⁹ Reitman also gives definitions for his "three species."

⁸Dr. Reitman's classifications appear in the book by Edmond Kelly, The Elimination of the Tramp.

⁹Edmond Kelly, The Elimination of the Tramp, (New York: The Kinickerbocker Press., 1908), Appendix B.

He said the tramp, dreams and wanders; the hobo, works and wanders; and the bum, drinks and wanders.

The Canadian Welfare Council in its study, presents much valuable information on characteristics and factors underlying the problems of homeless transient men.

In its study, the Canadian Welfare Council, elaborates upon the three types of homeless men, which this author has chosen to call the bum, hobo, and tramp. Because this study is concerned with transients, (Hoboes) the resident homeless (bums) will be excluded as well as the tramp because their consideration is insignificant.

The Canadian Welfare Council said that the hobo is "... one type of marginal worker, is almost always transient because of the kind of industry or occupation which offers employment to them. Because of their employment, they are also, or when unemployed frequently become, homeless. Migratory seasonal or casual workers seldom have much, if any, equity in unemployment insurance. During a period of full employment they usually can find jobs and are likely to need only short-term assistance between jobs or while seeking work in a new community. During periods of recession or depression, the welfare problem of migratory workers is much more serious. Without close friends or family support, they are forced quite rapidly to look to public assistance or private charity. If, as current trends indicate the demand for unskilled workers is slackening, the difficulties of the migratory worker may become chronic rather than seasonal or cyclical. By modern standards most migratory workers are underprivileged in terms of family

background and support and in opportunities for training and advancement."¹⁰

The hobo is creating an increasing economic strain on welfare institutions. The following figures from the report of the Toronto Social Planning Council illustrate this point: "In 1948 the Toronto Salvation Army provided some 15,000 free lodgings and 97,000 free meals. Between 1957 and 1960, the number of nights of free lodging provided during the period from January to March rose from 9,989 to 37,458. In the winter of 1948-49 Scott Mission provided 50,000 meals; for the whole of 1959 they served 180,000 meals. In 1948 Holy Trinity Church was helping between 100 persons per week. From 1956-59, cases of assistance at the Yonge Street Mission increased from some 18,000 to 24,000. Men in Municipal hostels increased from 236 in January 1951 to 1,124 in January 1959. Department of Public Welfare figures showed a considerable increase in 1958. The number of men in city hostels in January of that year was 1,150 compared to 155 in January 1957."¹¹

The Canadian Welfare Council also points out that a large percentage of the hoboes have been arrested and jailed. They report that "...of the Winnipeg group 42 per cent had had previous jail convictions; of the British Columbia group 67 per cent and of the Toronto group 90 per cent."¹²

¹⁰The Canadian Welfare Council, op.cit., p. 3.

¹¹Ibid., p. 5.

¹²Ibid., Appendix p. 6.

In general, convictions appeared to be for petty crimes and drunkenness with some indication that those with a crime record had had repeated convictions.

The Canadian Welfare Council stated that "a reasonable conclusion to be drawn from this information is that those 'marginal' men,¹³ who are either unwilling or unable to secure and hold employment, become a nuisance element in the community and are often dealt with by moving them in and out of jail. Some cities even designate these men as 'floaters', sentence them to jail, but give them twenty-four hours to get out of town before carrying out the sentence. This is costly negative action, more expensive than positive welfare or rehabilitative services. It is damaging because it creates or confirms negative or apathetic attitudes towards society, and limits the ability of the man to secure employment. The short-term nature of much of the imprisonment even precludes the use of after-care services."¹⁴

In a recent publication by the Tenants Relocation Bureau of Chicago, it recognized that the living conditions of the homeless man were among the worst to be found in the nation. It said that infectious diseases, crime, mental disorders, alcoholism, and other evidences of personal and social disorganization are more prevalent among the homeless men than anywhere else.

This investigation of the hobo has its theoretical framework:

¹³See Appendix C -- Terminology, P. 80.

¹⁴The Canadian Welfare Council, op. cit., Appendix, p. 6.

based on two sociological concepts; that of a social system as pro-
founded by Charles Loomis, and the theory of undersocialization
expressed by Robert Straus in his article on "Alcohol and The Homeless
Man."

Loomis said, "the social system is composed of the patterned
interaction of members. It is constituted of the interaction of a
plurality of individual actors whose relations to each other are
mutually oriented through the definition and mediation of a pattern of
structured and shared symbols and expectations..... Any level of inter-
action furnishes examples of social systems: the direct, face to face,
personal interaction of two actors, or the indirect, enormously inter-
linked, impersonal interaction of a society..... Society is constituted
of reciprocal activity which is structured and differentiated into a
variable number of systems, some of them quite distinct, highly
structured, and persistent; others are not so directly visible, are
more amorphous, and more transient. All are interlinked in such a
manner that one sees different systems according to the perspective
taken."¹⁵

That a social system exists among the transient homeless man
is suggested by a number of studies which deal with homeless men per
se. Jackson and Connor said, the homeless man, "...like other types
of deviants, have tended to seek out social relationships with others
who share their particular pattern of deviant behavior. On Skid Road

¹⁵Charles Loomis, Social Systems, (New York: D. Van Nostrand
Company, Inc., 1960), pp. 4-5.

they find a congenial atmosphere where the condemnation of their behavior by the larger society is missing, and a group which enables them to survive. Once they have become members of such groups they become isolated from the larger society; the new group reinforces their deviant tendencies and all those characteristics which are useful to the group."¹⁶

Straus said, "Homelessness is a much more complex condition than either a specific occupation such as plumbing or a geographical location such as the city of Bangor. It includes a constellation of behavior patterns, attitudes, and social situations."¹⁷

Not only does Straus in his writings support Loomis's theory of the existence of a social system among the hobo, but he elaborates a great deal on the sociological concept of undersocialization. He said, "A broad sociological concept which seems to fit nearly all homeless men is that they are undersocialized. Undersocialization can be considered a syndrome which includes a wide variety of atypical conditions and relationships with normal society. Men do not usually become undersocialized because of any specific environmental condition but rather as a result of their failure to adjust to society which is in turn frequently the result of a deficient process of socialization. The concept 'socialization' is used to describe the conditioning of

¹⁶Joan K. Jackson and Ralph Connor, "The Skid Road Alcoholic," Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol, Vol. 14, 1953, pp. 468-486.

¹⁷Robert Straus, "Alcohol and The Homeless Man," Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol, Vol. 7, June 1946 - March 1947, pp. 360-404.

the individual to the ways of society, i.e., the behavior which is expected or is desirable, the social taboos and prohibitions--in short, the ways of getting along with other people and sharing social experience.... Deficiently socialized persons are usually deprived of the opportunity of sharing experiences with others, of belonging to social groups and participating in social activities. They are deprived, also, of certain important personal satisfactions, such as affection, prestige, the feeling of security, the rewarding aspects of identifying with others, and the like. The satisfaction of these personal needs usually comes only through association with other people. Because they have not learned the ways of society, undersocialized persons are insecure, and acts of sharing become difficult, distasteful and even dangerous to them. They, therefore, choose a way of life which avoids associations of sharing. Such associations are normally found in the parental home, in the marital family, in schools, in employment situations, in church participation and in community life. These are the very institutional situations in which the experiences of the homeless men are incomplete and unsatisfying and which are, therefore, the criteria of his undersocialization."¹⁸

Other works suggest that the theory of social disorganization may be relevant to this study of the hobo. Robert Farris states, "Social disorganization can occur in varying degrees, from a very slight amount which has little noticeable effect on the unity, to greater amounts which produce confusion and impair the efficiency of

¹⁸Ibid.

the activity of the organization, and on to complete dissolution of the organization. A system experiencing total disorganization ceases to exist as a unit; its members may live on and pursue their various activities but they are no longer parts of the particular social unit. In certain degrees of disorganization, there is a partial failure to achieve the function of the organization and a consequent sense of frustration on the part of those persons who are interested in the function."¹⁹

He also goes on to say, "A society which is on the whole sound can tolerate a certain amount of disorganization in certain localities, institutions, and segments of the population. A moderate amount of such disorganization may not substantially weaken the society, although it is possible that it may always involve some kind of cost--in inefficiency, inconvenience, unhappiness, and the like."²⁰

In essence, this is what the hoboes are in our society...disorganized persons who have failed to achieve the function of society as we see them. According to Faris, the unemployed, or casually employed, wandering, homeless men are among the least responsible members of society, and some of them are scarcely members of society.

The concept of deviant behavior, as expressed by Marshall B. Clinard, also helps to provide some insight to the hoboes actions.

Clinard says many people look upon deviants as "...strange

¹⁹ Robert E. L. Faris, Social Disorganization, (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1955), p. 34.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 61.

varieties of human beings whose behavior arises in an entirely different way from that of the more balanced and respectable members of society. This attitude is built upon a series of false assumptions, for all deviant behavior is human behavior. By this is meant that the same fundamental processes which produce the 'normal' person also produce the 'abnormal,' for both of them are human beings. Differences in subprocesses exist; if they did not there would be no way to account scientifically for deviant behavior. The subprocesses affecting deviants, however, must operate within the general framework of a theory of human nature. The units of analysis, as well as the fundamental social processes in all human conduct, are the same whether the end products are inmates of correctional institutions or wardens, mental patients or psychiatrists, habitual criminals or ministers."²¹

It is from many readings like the ones cited above that lead this author to believe that the hobo is best explained by the two sociological concepts expressed earlier, undersocialization by Straus and a social system by Loomis.

A summary of available literature seems to indicate that:

- (1) Homeless men in this country are historically related to locales which make great demands for unskilled and casual labor pool.
- (2) Technological advancement have reduced the demand for unskilled labor and today the population of the homeless man is on the increase again.
- (3) A rising incidence of homeless men demonstrates personal and health

²¹Marshall B. Clinard, Sociology of Deviant Behavior, (New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1957), p. 29.

needs and problems which cause them either to be rejected by society or unable to compete in its economy. (4) Any effective program designed to cope with homeless men must take into consideration the factors dealing with welfare, housing and undersocialization.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

It is generally understood that a transient is a person who is passing through a community or staying in it for a short time. Also he is a person who generally is unable to establish a legal residence for public welfare purposes.

Homeless persons fall into three distinct classifications as defined by this study:²² (1) Unattached men, resident in urban centers, who are often inhabitants of Skid Row, will be classified as--bums. (2) Transient seasonal or casual workers, and also perhaps single men who have been employed but have been laid off work, will be classified as--hoboes. (3) Unattached men who generally "dream and wander" but seldom work, will be classified as--tramps.

Besides the three types of homeless men on Skid Row, there are also many kinds of groups; the dehorn, the wino, the chisler, the petty thief, and the small time racketeer are all a part of Skid Row. They belong to groups which are neither mutually exclusive or clearly differentiated. As a consequence, our knowledge of the homeless man has been increased by many studies, but these studies deal mainly with the homeless man on Skid Row.²³ Hoboes are mentioned in many of the writings as constituting a particular segment of the population of homeless men, but little has been done to clarify their position.

²²For discussion of homeless persons classifications, see Chapter II, page 10.

²³See studies of Homeless Transients on Skid Row.

To contribute to the understanding of the transient hobo and his culture in the "hobo jungle"²⁴ is the goal of this study.²⁵ In view of the need for an understanding of this type of social system, the fact that this area has been somewhat neglected and the author's interest in the hobo's attitudes toward public assistance, this study is devoted to an investigation of the social organization of the "hobo jungle" and a social-psychological study of some of its individual members.

Specifically, this research investigates, but is not limited to the following: What is the normal behavior in this so-called "deviant" social system, the economic situation of the men, pension status, work life, attitudes toward public assistance, aspirations, if any, and to determine the organizational patterns that exist in a "hobo jungle," if any.

This investigation is an exploratory study focused on a problem for which there is no empirical data. Therefore, this study will attempt to generate hypotheses from which it is hoped other research may evolve. Although no concrete hypotheses can be stated at this time, there are a number of working hypotheses this author feels will be substantiated by the research. The following are by no means all the characteristics or factors involved, but merely working hypotheses:

1. The hobo jungle is not a tightly knit social system.
2. Hoboes are generally suspicious and do not interact freely with outsiders.

²⁴See Appendix C -- Terminology, p. 80.

²⁵See Photo (1), Appendix B, p. 68.

3. There is no large degree of personal interaction among fellow hoboes.
4. No one in the hobo jungle has higher status than anyone else.
5. A hobo is expected to act in a certain manner; a great degree of deviance will cause him to be an outcast.
6. Hoboes residing in the jungle longest will pass to incoming hoboes information regarding the outside community, such as jobs available, places to acquire food, train schedules, etc.
7. Hoboes have a special language common only to themselves.
8. Most hoboes consume large amounts of alcoholic beverages.
9. Hoboes are distinguishable from the general population by a high incidence of marital separation and divorce.
10. Hoboes have an unstable employment history.
11. Most hoboes depend on private assistance sources for a portion of their livelihood
12. Occupational status will be concentrated in the lowest-paying, most irregular and most disagreeable tasks.
13. Hoboes are expected to score highly on Anderson's public dependency scale.

Since this non-parametric study investigates a limited population of homeless transient men, it is only intended to be a self-selected sample of those traveling through Montana during 1964-65 and not the entire hobo population. It was geographically impossible to sample the hobo population of the country. Despite limitations,

however, it seems probable that the findings of this study should have some relevance to hobo behavior elsewhere in the United States.

Before any findings are presented, it is necessary to take note of some limitations of the survey-type interviews as a means of developing valid data on the personality traits of individuals.

The basic personality characteristics of individuals cannot be discovered and measured in a refined way by simple, direct questions of the type common in social surveys. They assume a kind and degree of self-knowledge which individuals seldom possess. They also assume a degree of frankness which respondents are sometimes unwilling to give. In the one-shot, survey-type interview, the researcher need not be limited to such simple, direct questions. When he does use the direct questions, he does not need to take the answers at their face value. In any event, the researcher should not depend upon any one or two questions to provide a basis for assessing the more complex and often subtle aspects of a respondent's personality.²⁶

In the interview conducted on hoboes, a formal research instrument²⁷ was used. Some questions were direct and some indirect, some open and some closed, and some designed merely to open up a field of inquiry which was then explored through intensive, but non-directive probing conversation when possible. With the above problems and

²⁶Donald J. Bogue, Skid Row in American Cities, (Chicago: University of Chicago, Community and Family Study Center, 1963), p. 372.

²⁷See Appendix A -- Formal Research Instrument, p. 59.

limitations in mind, the method used in obtaining this research material represents a compromise with the realities of the situation.

The non-participant observation - partial participant observation method, accompanied by interviews, a questionnaire and photography were used to gather the data for this investigative study.

Observation as a research technique is based on the principle "that measurable interpretations can be made in terms of the behavior expression but not in terms of the behavior mechanisms."²⁸ Observation assumes that by noting the behavior reactions over a period of time of a person, particularly if he is caught off guard, and is not "acting," a great deal can be learned about his attitudes, and hence about his personality.

Non-participant observation aims to get away from some of the fallacies of the question-answer method. This is not to say the question-answer method is altogether non-valid. A non-participant observer is one who looks on but does not take part. His presence is made as inconspicuous as possible. The non-participant method is an attempt not to control the experiment but the observer.²⁹

In studying the behavior of children this method is very adequate. But in the case of adults, such as this study, the situation is different. The non-participant is likely to be conspicuous by his very non-participation. "Under normal circumstances, however,

²⁸ William I. Thomas and Dorothy Swain Thomas, The Child in America, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1928), p. 558.

²⁹ Emory S. Bogardus, Introduction to Social Research, (Los Angeles: Suttonhouse Ltd., 1936), p. 66.

the non-participant observer of adult behavior must become a partial participant, perhaps to the extent of 10 or 20 percent participation, or at least a formal participant."³⁰

This partial participant method was used in this study in order to establish rapport with the hoboes in their environment. Once rapport was established the non-participant method was employed when possible. Occasionally a few questions were asked to continue the conversation.

From previous experience it was learned that dress of the observer was a factor in establishing a favorable relationship with the hobo. When dressed in casual clothes such as white shirt, tie and slacks, rapport was very difficult to establish. But on the other hand if one was dressed in old hunting clothes or those that represented a common laborer, acceptance was much easier to obtain. This was true even though the hoboes knew that a study was being conducted. It seemed as if they didn't want to be seen or identified with anyone with social status above their own. Naturally, a "sympathetic ear" on the part of the observer also was a deciding factor in establishing the rapport. Hoboes enjoy telling someone of their problems and troubles.

By using the non-participant observation--partial participant observation method and considering the type of research involved, it was necessary to carry out an unstructured study. It was impossible to conduct a structured study using mail questionnaires, house to house interviewing, etc.

³⁰Ibid., p. 67.

The interviews and scale scores were obtained from 50 hoboes in their own habitat, "hobo jungles," in various towns throughout Montana during 1964-65. "Hobo jungles" are generally found in larger towns that are railroad centers or "switch points." Fifty interviews and dependency scores were obtained because it was felt that this number would supply the material needed for this study. The data were collected from hoboes who would willingly attempt to complete the questionnaire. There were about 20 who would not participate in the study. Because of these refusals, it is possible the data collected may be bias.

The main body of the formal research instrument used in this study was developed by C. LeRoy Anderson. In addition, other questions were included that would provide data desired in this research. Each hobo was asked to complete the questionnaire to the best of his ability. If he was unable to write, the interviewer filled in the proper data from the hobo's verbal answers.

Anderson's instrument was used because it was easy to administer, it differentiated between dependence and independence toward public assistance and it had been tested and proven valid on several different groups.

This "Likert-type Public Dependency Scale" was developed to measure the orientations of adults, either dependent or independent, along a continuum toward public assistance programs.³¹ The scale³²

³¹A further discussion on the "Likert-type Public Dependency Scale" may be found in Chapter IV, pp. 35-36.

³²See Appendix A -- Formal Research Instrument, p. 59.

includes "16 items with a reliability coefficient of .89 corrected to .94. The validity of the scale was demonstrated by applying it to five groups with known dependency orientation."³³

"The relationship between value orientations concerning individual initiative, self-reliance, and economic independence and scores on the Public Dependency Scale need further testing. However, the higher scores of welfare applicants and the significantly lower scores of Mormons and Farm Bureau members would tend to support the hypothesis that there is a direct relationship between economic dependence value orientations and scores on the Public Dependency Scale. In the absence of contrary evidence, it is tentatively proposed that the Public Dependency Scale not only provides a specific measure of orientation toward public assistance but that it might also be used as an objective, reliable, and valid measure of general value orientations concerning individual initiative, self-reliance, and economic independence."³⁴

³³C. LeRoy Anderson, "Development of an Objective Measure of Orientation Toward Public Dependence," Social Forces, Vol. 44, No. 1, September 1965, p. 107.

³⁴Ibid., p. 112.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND CASE STUDY EXCERPTS³⁵

A knowledge about the nature of the hobo is a prerequisite to dealing with his problems. He obviously is not a typical citizen as evidenced by observations which have been made throughout the years.

In this and subsequent sections, the data obtained in interviews with 50 hoboes are tabulated, and in many instances supported by empirical findings. The fact that minimal analysis and classification has been done is due to the uncertainty of the representativeness of the sample, rather than doubt about the reliability of the answers.

Age

The following table compares percentage distribution by age range of hoboes in this study.

TABLE I

AGE RANGE OF FIFTY HOBOES

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
Below 19 years ¹	0	0
20 years to 24 years	0	0
25 " " 34 "	8	16
35 " " 44 "	15	30
45 " " 64 "	25	50
65 " and over	2	4
TOTAL	50	100

¹From date of birth to 19th birthday.

³⁵Some of these case studies were recorded prior to collecting field data for this thesis.

It is evident that hoboes are by no means a phenomenon of youth or of old age. The table shows that of the 50 men, 25 were between the ages of 45 and 64, i.e., 50 per cent. In fact, 96 per cent of the sample was between 25 and 64 years of age. This indicates that all of these men are in the prime of life and in their best working years.

The youngest age group, 25-34, representing 16 per cent of the sample, was from either a farm or a small town.

Since there are really only three age groups and the spread is so small, the correlation between age and other data is not significant.

The average of the hoboes who were raised on a farm or in a small town was 36.8 years, while those raised in the city were 41.3 years.

It is interesting to note that most men who become homeless today, do so between the ages of 25 and 34. For those who have been on the "road" for sometime, this is not generally true. In fact, homeless men who are over 50 years of age, generally "hit the road" during their teen years.

This was the case with Pete,³⁶ a shepherd by trade. He said that family problems and economic difficulties at home caused him to run away when he was 13 years old. Pete spends his winters in California and comes to Montana or Wyoming in the summer to herd sheep.

Pete has been on his own for some 40 years and claims he has had little trouble providing for himself. With only a sixth grade

³⁶ See photo 2, Appendix B, p. 69.

education, he speaks like a more learned man. Pete's interests include history and geography. While talking, he proceeded to name all 50 states and their capitals.

Traveling is another of Pete's pastimes. He has toured much of the United States. "When you're traveling like I am," he said, "a lone wolf,³⁷ you have to be careful who you take up with. You just can't trust anybody."

Pete recalled one trip he had taken years ago. "I'd been riding that train for many days, and finally it pulled into Chicago and I decided to get off and look around. When I got off, three of them 'bulls'³⁸ came running after me, so I decided it was time to get out of there. I had enough money, so I bought a ticket the rest of the way to New York City."

"That's a place I'll never go back to. I wanted to see one of those subways. Well, I saw it. You know those are more dangerous than a charging band of sheep. With all those people running around, someone could get hurt."

Marital Status

Table two gives marital status of the 50 hoboes by age range. Nineteen have never been married, and of the 31 who have been married, four now state they are married. The remainder, that is 88 per cent, state separated, divorced or widowed.

³⁷See Appendix C -- Terminology, p. 80.

³⁸Ibid.

Because four hoboes claimed to be married, perhaps they should not be included. Since the questionnaire did not go into detail about their family life, it's possible that if the four hoboes had been questioned further, their answers would have indicated that they were really separated rather than married.

TABLE II

MARITAL STATUS OF FIFTY HOBOES BY AGE RANGE

Marital Status	25-34 Years	35-44 Years	45-64 Years	65 and Over	Total
Single	4	5	10		19
Married		1	3		4
Separated	2	3	1		6
Divorced	2	5	4		11
Widowed		1	7	2	10
TOTAL	8	15	25	2	50

There were more single persons in the 45-64 age group, although the younger age groups had their share, 47 per cent.

There was only one widowed in the two youngest age groups. Widowers were confined primarily to the oldest age groups.

All of the married, separated or divorced except five were from the farm or small town. Of the 19 members in the single group, eight were from the city. Five out of 10 in the widowed group were also from the city.

Although these statistics show that hoboes don't have much family life and very little prospect for one, this does not mean that some of them do not think about the future, and in some cases plan for it. Many persons think hoboes live from day to day, being content with what they have. In the case of Butch,³⁹ a short thin man, one could not be more wrong. He had his future planned.

³⁹ See photo 3, Appendix B, p. 70.

Butch said he had been working on the west coast as a timekeeper for a lumber company until he lost his job eight months ago. He readily admits losing the job was his own fault, but says it was because of the three evils that exist in the world. "If you want to succeed in this world," Butch said, "you have gotta leave wine, women and whiskey alone or you won't amount to a hill of beans. Life as a hobo is only temporary for me though," he said.

One of Butch's hobbies is reading and keeping up with what goes on in the world. He showed me an article he had clipped from a local newspaper which will affect his future plans. According to this article, President Kennedy had signed a bill which would give additional money to retired railroad workers who have already received their allotted retirement income.

After I read the article, Butch thought for a moment and said, "Since I'm 64 years, 6 months and 24 days old, this will be a great help to me. I'll get seven checks, one every two weeks, which I'll have held 'general delivery' at the post office. The first will be for \$101.30 and the seventh one will amount to \$74.93. This should tide me over until October 31--(1961) when I'll be 65. Then, I'm going to put in for old age retirement and World War I benefits. I have already made a down payment on a little section of land in Lincoln County, Montana, which has a little shack and running water. As soon as I start getting my old age checks, I'm going to go up there on my land and be a man of leisure. You may think I'm lying to you, but I'm not." Butch then proceeded to show me a receipt for the \$25 he had paid as down payment for the land in Lincoln County.

Butch sat back and chuckled, "Most fellows would go out and be a 'millionaire for a day' if they had my luck, but not me. I'm going to be a man of leisure."

Birthplace

TABLE III

BIRTHPLACE OF HOBOES AND WHERE THEY WERE RAISED AS A CHILD

	Farm	Small Town	City Over 10,000 Population	Did Not State
Born in the United States	15	9	16	3
Born Outside United States	4		3 ¹	

¹One of the hoboes born outside the United States was a negro, the only interviewed in the study.

Forty-three of 50, 86 per cent, were born in the United States. The other 14 per cent were born outside the United States. Their origin was unknown except for one; he was from Norway.

Thirty-five per cent of those born in the United States were raised on the farm, 21 per cent in a small town, 37 per cent in the city with a population over 10,000 and 7 per cent did not state where they spent their childhood years.

Education

TABLE IV

WHERE HOBOES WERE RAISED AND NUMBER OF YEARS OF EDUCATION

	4 Years or Under	5-6 Years	7-8 Years	9-10 Years	11-12 Years	13-14 Years	15-16 Years	Total
City	1	2	7	2	6		1	19
Farm	1		2	9	5	1	1	19
Small Town			2	3	3	1		9
Did Not State			2		1			3
TOTAL	2	2	13	14	15	2	2	50

The hoboes that were raised in the city had the most variation in education. This group also had the largest deviation from the mean in regards to education. There were three with education below 7 years and one with 15-16 years of schooling.

The modal education for the group raised on the farm was 9-10 years. This group and those raised in a small town have about the same average education, 10-11 years. Average education of the city group was lowest with 8-9 years.

Religion

TABLE V
NUMBER OF HOBOES BY EDUCATION AND RELIGION

	4 Years or Under	5-6 Years	7-8 Years	9-10 Years	11-12 Years	13-14 Years	15-16 Years	Total
None		1	4	1	4		1	11
Catholic	1		5	3	4			13
Protestant		1	3	10	5	2		21
L D S	1				1		1	3
Other			1*		1**			2

* Gave religion as Episcopalian

** Gave religion as Lutheran

Most of the hoboes who were single professed protestant religion. Among the protestant group, 11 were single, 1 married, 3 separated and 6 divorced. Also, this group had an average education of plus 9 years.

In the Catholic group, 3 were single, 3 married, 3 divorced, 2 separated, and 2 widowed. This group had the lowest educational attainment level, about seven and one-half years.

Fifty per cent of the group that professed no religion were single, 10 per cent separated, 20 per cent divorced and 20 per cent widowed. They had an education attainment level of about nine years.

Out of the protestant and non-religion groups, 32 hoboos, only 1, or about 3 per cent, was married. In the Catholic group, 3 out of 13, or 23 per cent, said they were married. Although many of the hoboos said they often relied on different organization for help, such as missions, Salvation Army and small religious sects (Holy Rollers, etc.), they were nearly always critical of such institutions.

One hobo, who gave his name as John,⁴⁰ had very strong feelings about such organizations. "You don't realize it because you don't have to live this way, but these places that are supposed to help us are 90 per cent graft. One mission (in a western state) is run by an ex-con. I don't have anything against him; it's just that he isn't what he claims to be. He brings in clergymen to give us 'ear poundings'⁴¹ before we can get anything to eat. Once I had to take three hours of 'ear poundings' before I could get three bowls of soup. This isn't too bad but when churches give money or clothing to the mission, he turns around and sells the clothing and keeps the money. We who need it get little."

This is the feeling of many men who go to the places where the needy are supposed to be helped. In reality, they claim, they get little from these organizations.

Public Dependency Scale Scores

In developing his "Likert-type Public Dependency Scale,"

⁴⁰See photo 4, Appendix B, p. 71.

⁴¹See Appendix C -- Terminology, p. 80.

Anderson,⁴² measured the orientation of adults, either dependent or independent, along a continuum toward public assistance programs.

He tested the scale on five groups whose orientation toward public dependence was inferred from objective criteria. Each group's mean scale score⁴³ fell in its predicted relative position on the public dependency continuum.

The "independent" validating group consisted of officers of the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation. The mean public dependency score of this group was 20.37.

There were two "independent-intermediate" validating groups. One was a group of Mormon farmers in Idaho whose mean score was 31.05. The second was a group of Mormons in Ohio who produced a mean score of 33.75.

The "intermediate" validating group consisted of 200 Ohio State University students used in the scale construction. They had a mean score of 40.56.

The dependent validating group was Franklin county, Ohio, public assistance applicants. The mean score of this dependent group was 52.64.

The self-selected sample of 50 hoboes had a mean public dependency score of 39.34. This score places them in the intermediate

⁴²Anderson, op. cit., p. 111.

⁴³The score of each answer ranged from 0 to 5, with a total score of 80 possible on the scale. High score indicates high orientation. See Appendix A, p. 50, for individual questions and scored answers.

category along the continuum. The range was from 0 to 70. This would tend to indicate that they are orientated toward public assistance, but not nearly as dependent as the validating dependent group. They are more toward the middle of the road.

It is interesting to note the relationship of the mean scores of hoboes that spent their childhood on the farm, small town and city. The group that was raised in the city has a mean score of 36.05 nearly that of the group raised in the small town which was 37.66. But, the group that was raised on a farm had a mean public dependency score of 45.21. This is considerably above the average for the 50 hoboes and more nearly the score of the dependent validating group. It's quite possible that since these persons are living like itinerants, they have rejected their rural values, thus they rate higher on Anderson's scale. However, this would be an area for future research on a larger group.

There is a very slight correlation between education and the total dependency score of the hoboes. In very liberal terms, this means that the more education a hobo has, the more likely he is to have a higher orientation toward public assistance. This was the only correlation between the total public dependency score and any of the data.

Winter Residence

When the hoboes were asked the question, "Where do you spend your winters?"--a variety of answers were given. California was the state mentioned most frequently; fourteen hoboes said they spent their winters there. California was followed by Montana and Oregon, each

with five. The other 26 hoboes gave 12 other answers ranging from Florida, warm climates, Northwest, Idaho, Washington, etc.

Despite not having any automobiles for transportation, hoboes are very mobile. According to them, travel is very important in order to find work. They take seasonal work from state to state as do many other migrant laborers.

An interesting note came from one hobo⁴⁴ who had just made his way from the South. He said, "It's all right to spend the winters in the South, but you don't want to be caught there when planting season comes. If you're in many of them areas, the sheriff will arrest you and then some big landowner will pay your fine (to the sheriff for personal pocket money) and you have to work many days in them fields for no pay. That just ain't right."

Most of the men from the "jungle" agree that riding the rails is far easier in the West than in the East. Generally, the "yard men"⁴⁵ in the western states are helpful, telling the hoboes which direction the trains are going and what time they are leaving and arriving. In the East, they say, you don't dare let anyone see you on a freight or the "bulls" will soon be after you.

Symbology

The literature⁴⁶ revealed that hoboes used signs or symbols⁴⁷

⁴⁴ See photo 5, Appendix B, p. 72.

⁴⁵ See Appendix C -- Terminology, p. 80.

⁴⁶ Erwin Van Swol, "The Hoboes Secret Code," Cronet, V. 48, August 1960, pp. 35-38.

⁴⁷ James A. Maxwell, "Hobo Symbology," Symbology, (New York: Hastings House, 1960), pp. 31-39.

in the 1920's and 1930's--a language all their own. One of the objectives of this study was to determine if such a code was used in the "jungle" today.

A list of 24 symbols was included in the questionnaire⁴⁸ to see if the code had been passed down from the 20's and 30's.

Only three hoboes out of 50 attempted to identify any of the symbols. Not one of the symbols was correctly identified. Some of the hoboes who had been "on the road" since the 20's and 30's said they had never seen such symbols. It could be that the symbols are not valid, or they might be common only in another part of the country. But, the hoboes say, symbology is a thing of the past. All communication is verbal.

Typical Day in the Life of Several Hoboes

All of the hoboes were asked to describe a typical day in their life. As can be expected, many different answers were given and some didn't reply at all. The following are selected excerpts from several of their answers describing a typical day as they see it: "...Up at 6:00 a.m. in the morning. Eat the food we have and bum the rest of the day.... In general, eat breakfast in the jungle, lunch on highways, evening meal either on skid row or on train traveling. During the daytime, I am self-employed cleaning windows in towns....⁴⁹ Up at daylight, look for dinner, wash, clean up camp, swap lies and go to bed....⁵⁰ Up at 5:00 to 7:00 a.m. in the morning. Eat anytime I

⁴⁸See Appendix A -- Formal Research Instrument, p. 59.

⁴⁹See photo 6, Appendix B, p. 73.

⁵⁰See photo 7, Appendix B, p. 74.

have it. The hours are inconsequential. I'm scavenging constantly.... Get up at one end of the U.S.A. and eat at the other end. There is no consistency.... Get up at 6:00 a.m. Drink coffee and what have you for breakfast. Go look for work or where to make my next meal. Lunch in some quiet place or park etc.; supper usually over a camp fire or at a mission. Evenings I sit around the fire or take my dog for a walk....⁵¹ Get up at 5:00 a.m. Eat wherever I can. Look for work and travel....⁵² Up at 5:00 a.m. Look for work anyplace I can. Look for dinner, read or drink.... Bum in jungle all day. Relax before going on to Washington to work in orchards...."

Although not all of the above excerpts show it, many of the hoboes say the first thing on their mind is looking for some type of work in order to pay for their next meal.

The Hobo Subculture

While visiting the jungle, I had many interesting experiences which I will attempt to relate in the following pages. Some of these happenings give a little insight to the norms and lives of many of these men.

People generally think of hoboes as being thieves, exconvicts and men who are running from the law. This is not always true. As one fellow put it, "you just hear about the bad ones." But even in the "jungle" there is a sense of justice which not one of them dare

⁵¹See photo 8, Appendix B, p. 75.

⁵²See photo 9, Appendix B, p. 76.

defy for fear of not waking up the next morning. The following is an account of how hoboes who are friends one hour can be bitter enemies the next.

One evening as I was making the rounds in the "jungle," five hoboes⁵³ asked me to have a drink with them. I went over and they showed me how they were making their "home brew."⁵⁴ They were straining "canned heat" through a cloth to obtain the wood alcohol and eliminate the paraffin. Then they mixed the potion with ginger ale. Although this drink is tasty, it is dangerous as continual drinking of this home brew can cause loss of sense perceptions--sight, taste, hearing and ability to take care of oneself.⁵⁵ And obviously, too much of this drink at once can cause you to become intoxicated.

This is what happened. A few personal possessions of one man came up missing and this caused an argument and a fight. The results were: One man in jail for knifing and charged with second-degree assault and one man in the local hospital in serious condition. These men were friends when they started drinking, but bitter enemies once the mixture took hold of them.

After reading about this in the newspaper, I went to the hospital to see the man in serious condition. He said that the guy who stabbed him had gone to town to get more canned heat. When he returned, the other three hoboes had taken his belongings and hopped

⁵³See photo 10, Appendix B, p. 77.

⁵⁴See Appendix C -- Terminology, p. 80.

⁵⁵See photo 11, Appendix B, p. 78.

a freight going through. Naturally, when the guy came back from town, he was already drunk, and when he saw his belongings missing, he beat up on the remaining "friend" and in his rage, stabbed him.

After hearing his story, I went to the jail to see what the other hobo had to say for himself. While visiting with him, he showed a lot of concern and said he only wished it hadn't happened. He didn't know what was going to happen to him, but he was very sorry his "friend" was hurt.

I tried to keep track of the men as best I could and finally the hobo in the hospital was released and went his way. I went to see the man in jail a few times but one day when I went he was gone. When I inquired where he was, the night jailer said he had been released and given 24 hours to leave town.

This attitude seems to be a carry-over from years ago when the unwanted hobo would be given so many hours to leave town. Law enforcement attitudes in many of these cases are questionable.

Also, it is interesting to note that one of the hoboes told me the sheriff in Missoula County got a set number of dollars per day to feed the prisoners. Occasionally then, when the jail population was low, there would be raids on the hobo jungle to help maintain a number of inmates. The story goes that it is just as cheap to cook for 8 or 10 men as it is 4 or 5. This way there is some money that was paid to law enforcement officials that went into their pockets. Since the man who had done the stabbing was held for several days and then released, it could be true. This might be an area for additional research.

Life as a hobo is not always chosen. It sometimes is forced on these men. As one hobo said, "It's not because I want to; its because I have to." When questioned further, he said, "Most of us don't have to stay in one place if there is no work. We travel around looking for work. When we come to a town and go to the employment office, they naturally give the first jobs to the men who are from this town and who have families. That leaves us out. So what can you do but move on some place else?" He said the next best thing was to turn to charities as the local relief agencies helped very little. The reason he gave was that hoboies are traveling men and are never in one spot long enough to establish the required length of residency to be eligible for local relief. Because of this, he said, these agencies are of little help and they have to go to the Salvation Army or local "soup houses."

Although this man, who gave his name as Joe, was very critical of the world, he said, "I can't really complain. Life could be a lot worse. It's just human nature to complain so that's what you hear all the time." But again you meet men who are on the road because "it's the path of least resistance." Many of these men dislike society's regulations so they retire to their own way of life.

Notes, markers and other items are left, according to rumor, to inform incoming hoboies of the likeliest spots to bum something to eat. But, the hoboies say this is a thing of the past. All communication is verbal.

A person thinks of a hobo as a man who has little money. This is not always true. The wages of a hobo vary considerably. As Jim,

another hobo, said, "Last year was a bad year; I made about \$1,000. Three years before, when I was working in them mines in Butte, I made nearly \$4,400." The hoboes agree that work is diminishing because of mechanization. They also cite inflation as a problem. As one said, "Now we get a job as a laborer and are lucky to get 75 cents per hour. Two years ago this same job would have paid one dollar and four years ago it would have paid two dollars per hour. It's all because of those damn machines."

Many hoboes who are not over 45 work on the "gandy gangs."⁵⁶ After a man makes \$500 in the summer, he is eligible the following fall for the "rocking chair."⁵⁷

Contrary to popular belief, all hoboes are not illiterate. Although many admit having just a sixth grade education, some are college graduates.

One evening when I was visiting, I met a man who claimed to have a bachelor's degree in engineering.⁵⁸ I checked his background and he had graduated from the University of Idaho in 1934 with a degree in civil engineering. He claimed alcohol, or booze as the hoboes more commonly call it, caused his downfall.

Alcoholism is a problem among the hoboes. This particular disease has caused many of these men to be where they are and most will readily admit it. One hobo said, "We may drink a lot, and even get

⁵⁶See Appendix C -- Terminology, p. 80.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸See photo 12, Appendix B, p. 79.

into arguments, but we will help each other if we can. We haven't got any racial or religious prejudices. If a Negro wants to share my fire, he is as welcome, if not more so, than any member of high society. We don't try to outdo each other. We know what people think of us. We're dirty and don't always dress properly, but it is because society doesn't make any provision for us, so why should we care about them?"

On another visit to the "jungle," one of the hoboes who was slightly drunk, decided I was a trouble maker and came looking for me brandishing a knife. I had just finished an interview and was walking over to visit with another hobo when one of my previous interviewee's told me this hobo who was drunk was looking for me and maybe it would be better if I left and came back tomorrow when this hobo with the knife was sober. I heeded his advice and left to return another day. As I left the "jungle," I heard the hobo with the knife hollering for me.

On one occasion my wife asked if she could go along on one of my trips. She did, but stayed in the car which I parked up next to the "jungle" as close as possible. While making this visit, I encountered a man who was completely out of his head (DT's). He was laying on the ground only partly clothed. He was yelling the most foul language that a person could imagine. While doing all of this swearing, he also was fighting off little men that were "going to get me." He kept saying, "Get away from me you little black bastards." All of this time he was frailing around on the ground and swinging at "these little men." The rest of the hoboes said to just leave him alone and

he would finally come around. Also, another man who had passed out had been stripped of most of his belongings. But, no one seemed to be very interested. There seemed to be a policy of "live and let live."

Occasionally as needed, I helped carry on the conversation by asking leading questions. On one such occasion, I was asking one of the hoboes about riding the rails. He said that in the North and West it was very easy to ride the rails, but that in the East it was different matter. He went on to say that the president of the Northern Pacific Railroad had once said that the hoboes had helped build the railroad and that they could ride it. When I inquired about this statement to one of the yard detectives, he confirmed this attitude. He said that as long as the hoboes did not cause any destruction of property traveling on the trains, they were free to ride them anytime they wanted. The detective went on to say there was very little trouble with the hoboes because they knew that if anything came up missing or destroyed, they wouldn't be able to ride the box cars. Since the hoboes depend on the trains as their main source of transportation, there is very little trouble with them.

Many of the hoboes in the "jungle" show little ambition. However, they are human, love life and live it as much, if not more, than a great percentage of other people. These men, young and old, get much out of life. In fact, some hoboes say this is "the only real freedom."

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

One risk in attempting to sketch the characteristics of the hobo is that the picture will be oversimplified. It is important to remember that any classification of people obscures individual tendencies and characteristics. With this caution, however, the findings of this study do warrant a number of general conclusions.

The figures shown for age ranges⁵⁹ indicate that hoboes are not exclusively a phenomenon of youth or of old age. The largest group of men fall in the 35-64 age bracket, and within the bracket the heaviest concentration is from 45-64 years of age.

The study indicates that these men have, on the whole, a low level of education and training leading to lack of skills and good work habits.⁶⁰ More important perhaps are personality factors. The research revealed that these men are distinguishable from the general population because of a high rate of marital separation and divorce,⁶¹ unstable employment history, dependence on private and public assistance sources, use of alcohol above normal, and a lack of insight and inability to plan their future. Their early family environment has frequently been one of neglect and deprivation.

⁵⁹ See Age Range Chart, Chapter IV, p. 28.

⁶⁰ See Education Chart, Chapter IV, p. 34.

⁶¹ See Marital Status Chart, Chapter IV, p. 31.

As a result of these factors, it is extremely difficult for these men to obtain and hold steady jobs except in times of economic prosperity or of national emergency when labor is scarce. Given adequate employment opportunities, some of the men in the group would not have come to the point of homelessness and transiency. Living marginal lives cause them to be vulnerable to changes in employment opportunities, recession, etc.

It should be recognized that the problems of personality and dependency among these men are of basic importance, and must be taken into account if there is ever any attempt to help "socialize" them, or help them return to society as we see it. In essence, the hoboes as a group are a "middle of the road group" in relation to public assistance. This is to say that they are in the intermediate category on a continuum. One of the most interesting discoveries in this study was that the hoboes raised on a farm had a 45.21 public dependency score (high orientation to public assistance).

Anderson's independent validating group with a farm background only had a score of 20.37. This would tend to mean that hoboes who left the farm but had no training in other fields, became oriented to public assistance or would like to use it more than hoboes raised with other environmental backgrounds, such as small towns and cities. However, it could also mean they have rejected their rural values as noted in Chapter IV, page 37.

It should be noted, however, that the public dependency scores of the hoboes ranged from 0-70, indicating that some are more

"undersocialized" than others.⁶² Because some are more "undersocialized" than others, there are different degrees of personal interaction. Generally speaking, hoboes do not interact freely within themselves or with outsiders. Of course, there are exceptions and on occasion the author did find a few hoboes who seem to enjoy visiting and "making the rounds of the other hobo fires." This study found that the hoboes are not tied together as a group or as a social system. There is, however, one exception. The hoboes do live in the "jungle" along the railroad track.⁶³ In this sense, they are tied together as a social system and inevitably some interaction must take place. Occasionally if a hobo has some money, he will go to a cheap rooming house but this does not happen often.

The need for more attention to be given to various forms of training and retraining and upgrading of the labor force is well known. However, the special problems faced by this group include the fact that some are, on the whole, less trainable than others. It is likely, therefore, that informal training on the job rather than formal academic, vocational or technical training might be required for some. Tending to be characterized by dependency and personality problems, they may also require individual attention before they can secure and retain permanent employment.

One additional point is also important in this connection. A widely held belief is that most hoboes like their way of life and do

⁶²See Public Dependency Scores, Chapter IV, pp. 35-37.

⁶³See photo 1, Appendix B, p. 68.

not want anything different. For a very few this is true, but the majority thoroughly dislike it. This is evidenced by some of their answers such as: "...In summer yes, but in the winter I don't like it so well.... Rather be employed for eight hours each day; out here you work about 18 hours a day trying to survive.... It will have to do, I have no other way of living without crime.... Make the best of it, a hard life to be sure.... I dislike it very much..."

It was clear in this study that what they disliked most were the things which made them feel different from and inferior to "other people." Only a small proportion of these men were true non-conformists; most of them did not deviate from our normal social patterns by deliberate and conscious choice. Rather, they are would-be conformists who for a variety of reasons have been unable to assume or to sustain the expected role and status of the adult male in our society.

Although the element of aspiration is essential to growth and change, it does not in itself offer sufficient support for these people to take the steps necessary to improve their way of life. Most of them lack insight into the nature of their problems and think of help coming through outside assistance rather than through their own efforts.

A number of additional generalizations can be made. Most hoboos are Americans. Although there are exceptions, the pattern of movement is not restricted to any general area. These homeless transients are generally characterized by a tendency to rely for subsistence on casual work, low paying jobs and on a wide variety of missions

and other charitable organizations. The "hobo code"⁶⁴ is a thing of the past or is common only in another part of the country. These men are transient in the sense of being rootless rather than being consciously migratory and are concerned more with the basic problem of keeping alive than with taking steps to rehabilitate or improve themselves.

Status does not exist in the hobo jungle--no one rules--everyone is on his own. But, there seems to be an unwritten rule that governs the behavior of all the hoboes in the "jungle." They try not to cause any unusual problems in order to stay clear of the law. Things do not always work out this way, as cited earlier in the empirical studies regarding how the alcoholic drink they consume led to a theft, a knifing and a disturbance involving law enforcement officers and jail. Obviously as a result of this, the hobo causing the fracas was an out-cast in the jungle for sometime.

The hoboes seem to be willing to give information about the "outside community" regarding jobs, places to acquire food, train schedules, etc. if approached by fellow hoboes, but they don't voluntarily talk about things. In giving this information and describing many other things, hoboes use a slang terminology⁶⁵ common only to themselves.

The railroads in the West don't bother the hoboes much, in fact, they let the hoboes go and come as they please and even provide them

⁶⁴See Symbology, Chapter IV, pp. 38-39 and also Appendix A, p. 59.

⁶⁵See Appendix C -- Terminology, p. 80.

with information about train schedules when asked. According to the hoboes, this is not true in the East. One hobo said they have been told by the railroad officials that "they (the hoboes) made the railroads, so they can ride them." This seems to be the attitude of the companies as expressed by John Willard of the Montana Railroad Association. He said that the railroads don't disturb the hobo much, that is they don't go out of their way to eject them from a train. "The railroads have come to accept the hobo pretty much for what he generally is, a homeless free loader," said Willard.

Hoboes, as already noted, tend to be overly dependent. Unfortunately, the temporary nature of the assistance available to them in the community, and the lack of services which would help them to take advantage of opportunities for independence, probably encourages such dependency and their related feeling of insecurity and inferiority.

Suggested Additional Research

As mentioned early in the study, this investigation was an exploratory study from which it is hoped other research may evolve. Since there was no empirical data before this study and since this study itself was done on such a limited basis, the need for a much larger study is evident. The group studied cannot be considered representative of the national hobo population. A larger study should be conducted similar to this one on a regional or possibly national level to be sure the findings and problems this study cited are universal and not just local.

More should be known about the hobo's economic status,

background and the type of childhood environment in which he was raised. Additional information into parental background is needed too.

Some of the hoboes said their military service caused many of their problems today--mainly not being able to adjust to society after returning from the service. Research is needed in this area.

Another area where a study would provide interesting data would be a comparison of the migratory worker and the hobo since they both are transient laborers. Both do a lot of traveling to find work, but the migrant laborer looks for full time or seasonal work where the hobo is interested primarily in enough work for livelihood. Since they do lead similar lives, a comparison study of their attitudes and values of each should give relevant data.

A further study into the religious background of some of the men, if possible, might enhance the understanding of the hobo greatly.

Probably one of the most significant studies needed is to determine if the transient hobo problems can be treated the same as those of the skid row bum or alcoholic.

As stated earlier, there needs to be more research to see why the hoboes raised on farms tend to score higher on Anderson's Scale. Is it a rejection of rural values or are other factors involved?

Although the literature indicates the hobo population was decreasing, this author suspects that today the population is on the increase. This needs to be tested.

Since there has not been any studies of the transient hobo in this country, any area of research into his problems could benefit

society in taking steps to rehabilitate this deviant segment of the American population if in truth, society really wants to do anything about the existing problems.

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APPENDIX A

FORMAL RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The following information is necessary for the analysis of the data obtained from the succeeding questions. It will not be used in any other way.

1. What is your age: (1) 19 or below _____ (2) 20-24 _____
 (3) 25-34 _____ (4) 35-44 _____
 (5) 45-64 _____ (6) 65 and above _____
2. What is your marital status: (1) Single _____
 (2) Married _____ (3) Separated _____
 (4) Divorced _____ (5) Widowed _____
3. What is your religious preference? (1) None _____
 (2) Catholic _____ (3) Protestant _____
 (4) Jewish _____ (5) L.D.S. _____
 (6) Other (Specify) _____
4. Where did you live during most of your childhood?
 (1) On a farm or in a small town or village _____

 (2) In a city, 10,000 or over _____
 (3) Name of the city _____
5. Where do you spend your winters? _____
6. Were you born outside of the United States?
 (1) No _____ (2) Yes _____
7. If you were born outside of the United States, where was it? _____

8. Are you presently employed? A. (1) No _____ (2) Yes _____
 B. If yes, are you:
 (1) Self-employed _____
 (2) Employed by someone else _____
 (3) Other (Specify) _____
9. What is the highest number of years of schooling you have completed?
 (1) 4 years or under _____
 (2) 5 to 6 years _____
 (3) 7 to 8 years _____
 (4) 9 to 10 years _____
 (5) 11 to 12 years _____
 (6) 13 to 14 years _____
 (7) 15 to 16 years _____
 (8) 17 years or over _____

ORIENTATION SCALE

Will you please tell what you think about the following statements. You do not need to write your name anywhere.

THE MEANING OF WORDS USED HERE:

Dependent means a person who gets money from someone else. He does not work for it himself.

Public Assistance means the money given to a person by a public welfare agency.

Public Agency means a welfare agency that gets money from the government and gives it to dependent people.

DIRECTIONS

Read sentence number 1 below. See if you agree or disagree with it. Then circle the letters after it that tell how you feel. The letters mean:

SA -- Strongly Agree	TD -- Tend to Disagree
A -- Agree	D -- Disagree
TA -- Tend to Agree	SD -- Strongly Disagree

Do all the rest of the sentences the same way.

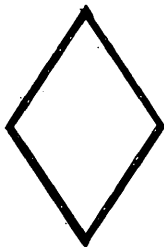
1. Public assistance programs have gone too far in this country.	SA	A	TA	TD	D	SD
	0	1	2	3	4	5*
2. Public assistance to the dependent adult encourages him to become independent.	SA	A	TA	TD	D	SD
	5	4	3	2	1	0
3. Very few dependent adults are getting something for nothing.	SA	A	TA	TD	D	SD
	5	4	3	2	1	0
4. Public aid makes people rely less on their own efforts.	SA	A	TA	TD	D	SD
	0	1	2	3	4	5
5. Most people on public assistance are needy, not greedy.	SA	A	TA	TD	D	SD
	5	4	3	2	1	0

*Values are for scoring purposes. They did not appear on the form given to respondents.

- | | SA | A | TA | TD | D | SD |
|--|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 6. Most dependent adults desire independence. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 7. Public assistance kills the spark in individuals which made this country great. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Most dependent adults really deserve public assistance. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 9. Dependence upon public assistance becomes a habit. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. The dependent adult is too willing to receive help from others. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. Public assistance to the dependent adult serves to kill his initiative to support himself. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. If I became dependent, I would expect help from public agencies. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 13. Public assistance programs are serving to weaken the very backbone of our nation. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. Most of those who accept assistance from a public agency do so as a last resort. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 15. Most dependent adults would rather receive relief than work. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. The dependent adult is usually dependent because he "has to be," not because he "wants to be." | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
17. If you could get free training to prepare you for a better job, would you be interested in taking it?
- A. IF "NO": Why is that?
- B. IF "YES": What kind of training would you want?
- C. ASK ALL VETERANS OF WORLD WAR II OR KOREA: Did you try to get training under the G.I. bill? (If not, why not?)
18. How do you feel about living like this? In general do you like or dislike it?

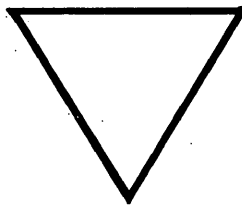
19. How did you come to choose this way of life? Have there been any events or circumstances in your life that caused you to live this way? Would you tell me what they were and what happened?
20. How would you describe your typical day? Take an average day and think of how you spent it--what things do you do? You may start with getting up in the morning if you want.
 PROBES: What time do you get up? Where do you eat breakfast?
 Where do you go after breakfast? What do you do then?
 Where do you eat lunch usually? Where do you eat supper?
 What do you do in the evenings?
21. Have you ever been on public assistance?
 How often?
 How Long?
22. Political preference.
23. During the 1920's and 1930's a number of symbols were used to designate different things for traveling men, such as yourself. I would like for you to identify the following symbols, if possible.

1.



Keep quiet. (In a jail, it could warn against a stool pigeon.)*

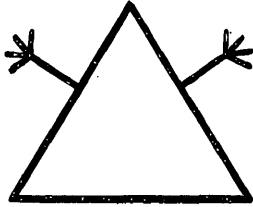
2.



Spoiled--by too many tramps, or series of petty crimes.

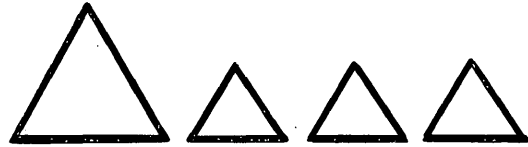
*These answers identify the symbols. They did not appear on the form given to respondents.

3.



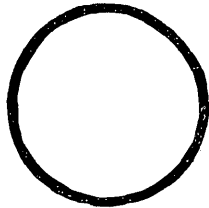
You may be shot!

4.



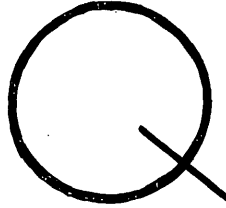
A sob story will win a handout.
(The three little triangles probably once represented children.)

5.



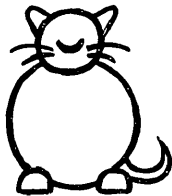
Nothing doing.

6.



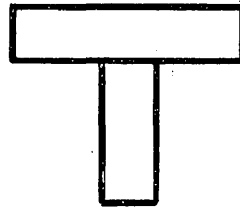
Take this road.

7.



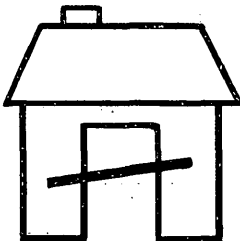
Kind woman.

8.



They'll feed you--if you work.

9.



Bar across door means this is a well-guarded house.

10.



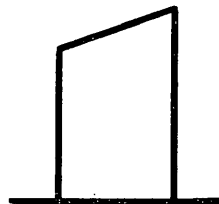
A "screw" (cop) lives here.

11.



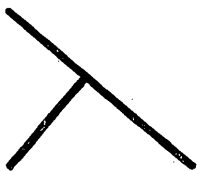
The sky is the limit.

12.



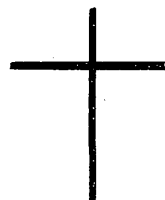
Gentlemen--"a right guy."

13.



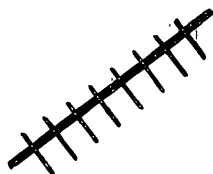
You'll get kicked
or punched.

14.



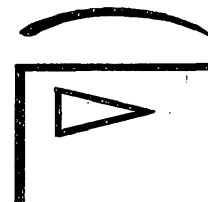
Be sanctimonious, be holy
or Saintly.

15.



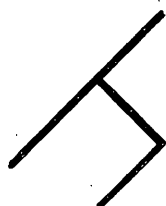
You'll be cursed out. This
guy has many marks against
him.

16.



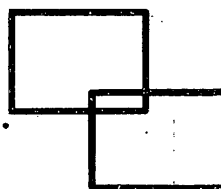
You may sleep in the hayloft.

17.

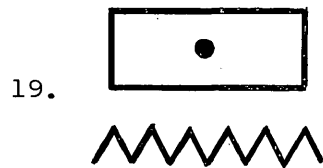


Get away fast! (The symbol
represents a running figure.)

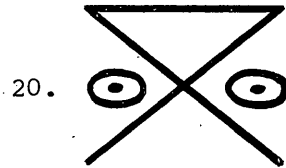
18.



Cowards! They'll give you
something just to get rid
of you.



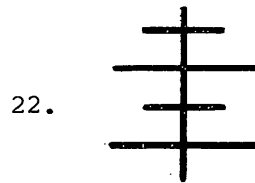
Bad water.



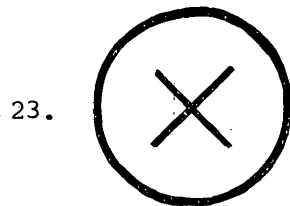
Safe camp. You'll be seen
but not molested.



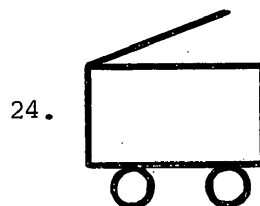
A comb has teeth. So does
the vicious dog here.



Officer of the law is in
residence here.



Okay for handout.



Intra-city transportation--
bus stops here.

APPENDIX B

PHOTOGRAPHS



68

Photo 1--This is a typical scene of a hobo "jungle" located near the railroad yard at Missoula in 1964. As can be seen, hoboes use most everything to build huts for protection against the weather.



69

Photo 2--Pete claims to be a shepherd by trade. He spends his winters in California and comes to Montana or Wyoming in the summer to herd sheep. He left home when he was 13 years old.



70

Photo 3--Butch has his future all planned. New legislation will provide him with an income until age 65, at which time he plans to retire on a small section of land he is buying and "be a man of leisure."



Photo 4--This hobo prepares his evening meal. Frequently the hoboes go to missions for food but they prefer to fix their own meals if they have the necessary ingredients.



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Photo 5--These "tourists" are all packed and awaiting the next through freight. They travel light, but generally have everything needed. In the West, railroad "yard men" cooperate by providing train schedules.



Photo 6--Coffee stew is ready, says this hobo as he looks up from the tin can stewpot boiling over the fire. Coffee stew, a hobo favorite, is made by adding coffee to an already simmering stew.



Photo 7--Long sheets of heavy paper make ideal blankets for denizens of the hobo "jungle." They're all right if the night isn't too chilly, and if they can be anchored as the man sleeping at right has done.



75

Photo 8--These two hoboies have a little more comfort than most as they sit around the fire and swap stories. Wood or metal is generally used to build a windbreak which also reflects the heat from the fire.



76

Photo 9--Hoboes occasionally travel on open flatcars such as this; but more frequently, they travel in empty boxcars for protection against the weather. Usually hoboes travel in pairs, but not always.



77

Photo 10--These hoboes were friends until they drank too much "home brew." Then, belongings were stolen by three of them from the man with the guitar who later fought and stabbed the innocent hobo on the right.



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Photo 11--Too much "home brew" can cause loss of sense perceptions as can be noticed by the glassy look in the hobo's eyes on the left. He can neither taste, hear or see very well as a result of the drink.



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Photo 12--Independence Day is observed in the "jungle" by these two hoboes. They believe in recognizing out past heritage, but say that this type of life is "the only real freedom."

APPENDIX C

TERMINOLOGY

TERMINOLOGY

1. Bulls - this is a term hoboes commonly use when referring to railroad police.
2. Ear poundings - a religious service a hobo must sit through at some missions before receiving anything to eat.
3. Gandy dancer - railroad laborers who worked on road beds and laid track.
4. Gandy gang - railroad labor crew.
5. Hobo jungle - place of residents of several hoboes. This is generally close to or alongside of a railroad freight yard.
6. Home brew - an alcoholic drink the hoboes make. It generally consists of wood alcohol and soft drink. A very potent potion and very harmful to sense perceptions.
7. Lone wolf - a hobo who generally travels and lives alone.
8. Marginal men - those persons who could be good or bad elements in society depending upon what environment they find themselves in.
9. Pauper - a person destitute of means except such as are derived from charity.
10. Rocking chair - railroad unemployment compensation.
11. Yard men - railroad employees who work in the freight yards.