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A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IN SELECTED
COUNTIES IN THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

A Thesis

Presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School
Appalachian State Teachers College

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
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May 1958

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This work is dedicated to the boys and girls of Watauga, Wilkes, and Ashe counties whose delinquency during the period of this study necessitated disciplinary measures by the Juvenile Courts of these counties.

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R. L. B.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Juvenile delinquency is a problem of modern society that appears to attract much more attention than it formerly did. Its prevalence in American life has provoked much comment and criticism. It has been growing more acute in the United States, especially since the days of the severe economic depression of 1930-1940. It has been recognized by humanitarian societies, church groups, public welfare boards, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Congressional committees, and law enforcement officers as being one of the most serious problems with detrimental consequences to society today.

The news-gathering and distributing agencies of this country are continually reporting crimes of all natures which are committed by boys and girls. These offenses are reported as being committed by individual persons as well as by organized groups. Organized "gangs" in the larger cities are a serious problem. The activities of these groups are such that youngsters are encouraged in acts of violence which would not be attempted by one of them alone.

The delinquency problem among juveniles is not confined to particular localities. All communities have juveniles, and all communities have juvenile delinquency, some more than others. More publicity seems to come from the

metropolitan areas, but in these communities are found many more people. Many cases are reported in the industrial centers of this country. Reports are also made of delinquency among the juveniles of the middle-income groups. This problem is found among the families of higher-income brackets as well as among the lower-income groups.

American society is made up of people in many walks of life and with varied interests. Since juvenile delinquency is found to exist among all groups, it has become a problem of concern for everybody. Students of social phenomena have studied many problems associated with delinquency, including contributing causes, but, as yet, no one has been able to find a satisfactory solution to them. Congressional committees have studied this problem but have not been able to recommend legislation which adequately deals with it. The only statistics available for the country as a whole are those of the juvenile court cases which are reported to the Children's Bureau of the Federal Security Agency. These courts report on a voluntary basis; in 1947, for example, only 313 courts in sixteen states in various parts of the country reported. Many larger cities, which undoubtedly have had a large number of delinquents, have not submitted reports to the Bureau. For the group reporting, thirty-one courts served larger cities with a population of 100,000 or more, and 282 served communities with fewer than

100,000.¹ Information for a thorough and exhaustive study of this problem is not available.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It was the purpose of this study (1) to determine the number of delinquents brought before the juvenile courts in Watauga, Wilkes, and Ashe counties, North Carolina, during the period of 1937-1956; (2) to identify the most common offenses committed by juveniles in these counties; (3) to compare the incidence of delinquency in the two sexes; (4) to determine any change in the comparison of delinquency of the two sexes between 1937-1956; (5) to compare the condition in Watauga, Wilkes, and Ashe counties with that in North Carolina; and (6) to determine the months of the year when juvenile offenses have most frequently occurred.

Importance of the problem. It is quite apparent that boys and girls have to make more choices and decisions for themselves than formerly, because with modern living in this country as it is, young people are thrown more closely together in a greater variety of circumstances. Society of

¹Mabel A. Elliott and Francis E. Merrill, Social Disorganization (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), p. 65.

today is far more complicated than it was at the turn of the century. The contributions of science have changed the life of each one in so many ways that it is unbelievable unless one stops to analyze the situation.

Students of psychology, sociology, and religion all have different ideas as to the cause of delinquency. The students of psychology have called the attention of the public to the fact that heredity and environment have played important roles in the life of each person. Both are of tremendous importance and consequence and make the individual person what he is. A student of social problems cannot afford to disregard either of these factors.

The study of the origin and constitution of human society and the study of religion have identified many factors which are important to the betterment of society as well as many of those that are detrimental to present-day living. In many respects there is an overlapping between these studies and the study of psychology. None of these, however, should be discredited. Each has contributed and is contributing valuable findings in its particular field. With the problem of juvenile delinquency at its present harassing and demoralizing state, every possible endeavor should be made to alleviate this condition.

The public schools cannot escape being confronted with the problem presented by delinquent young people.

Gordon W. Lovejoy, reporting on the youth survey of North Carolina, 1938-1940, made the following statements:

With the family steadily giving up its functions of vocational guidance, education for leisure-time, and training in health, thrift and ethical character, the burdens placed upon the schools are increasing. As the one agency drops a function, the other is expected to pick it up until today schools are called upon to subject their pupils to a high pressure orientation in nearly all conceivable life situations. And they have such a few years in which to do so!²

.....

The out-of-school youths were very explicit about their reasons for leaving school. For most of them one of three reasons was the answer: first, they were needed at home; second, they were tired of school; third, they lacked the money to continue. That such a large percentage of them leave school because they are tired of it is not a glowing tribute to the manner in which the schools are functioning.³

.....

To the adolescent youth--boy or girl--the future is a time of high hopes and rosy dreams, a period in which he confidently expects to conquer all opposition and "to make his mark on the world."⁴

Commercialized recreational facilities that are made available for the youth of today are not, in many instances, as wholesome as might be desired. In many families both

²Gordon W. Lovejoy, "Paths to Maturity," Findings of the North Carolina Youth Survey, 1938-1940, N. Y. A. Official Project Number 1-10934 (Chapel Hill: Cooperative Personnel Study, University of North Carolina, 1940), p. 45.

³Ibid., p. 63.

⁴Ibid., p. 73.

parents work, and the children are left at the mercies of these commercialized places.

American society is demanding more and more in physical fitness from the youth of today. The defense program of this country is a challenge to the young men. Schools are emphasizing more strongly the various athletic activities as well as profitable use of leisure time. Another statement by Lovejoy is worthy of consideration in this connection:

Playing outdoor sports, social activities, going to the movies, or listening to the radio--these are principal ways in which the male high school youths spend most of their leisure time. Female high school youths follow practically the same pattern except that they spend considerably more time reading or writing letters and improving their personal appearance than do the males.

.

It is discouraging to probe further into the ways which high school youths spend most of their leisure time, for when we do so we find that pitifully small numbers of them are devoting leisure time to music, art, or dancing lessons, or to private instruction in subjects not included in the school curriculum.⁵

It is during leisure hours that boys and girls get into trouble. When one is busy, in a profitable way, he has no time in which to become involved in delinquent activity. Leisure time can and should be used in a profitable manner. The home and school must understand and emphasize the principle that boys and girls should utilize their spare time

⁵Ibid., pp. 145-147.

in a worth-while way. This is particularly necessary in the urban districts where little is provided for young people when school is over in the afternoon. Provision can be made without difficulty in the agricultural areas where the farm chores are to be done. Fine opportunities are available on the farm for 4-H projects, which are profitable from both economical and training standpoints.

The two situations mentioned above are prevalent in the counties selected for this study. Many people live on farms in Watauga, Wilkes, and Ashe counties. Children there may have various responsibilities and thus develop a feeling of security. The problem in the towns of these counties is not so easily solved. Where people live closer together, the problem is multiplied.

Young people need to be guided into the realization of the need for their improvement and development through cultural and educational activities. The Greeks developed the attitude that liberal education was for the leisure class. They felt that it freed man to do highly abstract reasoning and prepared him to be free from drudgery. Aristotle thought of the cultivation of the intellect as the highest goal in life. The American idea of education differs from that of the ancient Greeks in that it does not advocate knowledge for knowledge's sake. Education is regarded as being a means of helping the individual live a fuller life, and of assisting

in his life work.

The greatest privilege that a parent has is not necessarily to provide the most in a material way for his child, but to help that child to feel that he is loved and needed in the home and family, and to provide as wholesome an atmosphere as possible in which the boy or girl may grow up and develop into manhood and womanhood. The church and school can do many things to teach the child and help him to become adjusted in society, but the place of the home cannot be filled by any other institution.

Those who live in Watauga, Wilkes, and Ashe counties and have boys and girls in the home should be anxious that their children have the best of everything wholesome that society can provide. A study of this kind should tend to point out to parents some of the weaknesses of our social order and also serve as a challenge and guide toward making the community a better place in which to live. Parents should endeavor to give their children the best possible opportunities for proper growth and development.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Mores. Mores have been designated as being customs, folkways, unwritten laws of conduct, or the ways of human behavior having the sanction of usage. For a study of this type the most suitable definition seemed to be "folkways with

a philosophy of social welfare attached."⁶ In the introduction to his book Wiley Britton Sanders had the following statement:

Sometimes a child who has broken no law, but has behaved contrary to the mores and folkways of the community is declared delinquent. In a former generation girls were brought before juvenile courts for being "flappers," for night riding, for wanting to get married, etc., and quite recently others have been handled by the juvenile courts for peeping and for violating "Jim Crow" regulations. It is quite evident that there are conflicting folkways and mores within the community itself, depending upon the make-up of the population. The mores of the older people of the community are far stricter regarding behavior of children than those of the children themselves regarding their own behavior. Children declared delinquent by their elders may not agree that they are delinquent. It is a matter of different viewpoints.⁷

Elliott and Merrill had the following statement in regard to mores:

Individuals may violate certain of the folkways and still retain their status as reputable members of the group. If their behavior runs consistently counter to the mores, however, they are condemned and ostracized by their fellows. The mores remain as the absolute standards to which the individual must conform if he is to remain a respectable member of the group. The compulsive power of the mores is strong in all societies and tends to approach the character of absolute social norms which must be obeyed without question.⁸

⁶William Graham Sumner, Folkways (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1906), pp. 30-45.

⁷Wiley Britton Sanders, Juvenile Courts in North Carolina (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1948), p. 5.

⁸Elliott and Merrill, op. cit., p. 13.

While considering the above discussion and quotations and also realizing that Watauga, Wilkes, and Ashe counties are located in the western part of the state, folkways in this area are considered in many respects as being different from those in the more easterly part of North Carolina.

Juvenile delinquency. Juvenile delinquency is a term that is extremely difficult to define adequately. Persons who have attempted a study of this subject have found that only the group of individuals who have been brought to the attention of the juvenile courts are customarily identified or counted as delinquents. This classification alone is not broad enough for a complete study, for there are many offenses which are never reported, and many offenders are never apprehended or brought to justice. Many cases of delinquency, especially among the more cultured groups and higher-income brackets, are handled within the family. If effectively dealt with there, no one should be condemned because of this disposition. The disheartening condition is found when, because of wealth or prestige of the family, youthful violators are permitted to go undisciplined while the more unfortunate ones are punished.

The different states in the United States have their individual laws covering juveniles, and the ages designated by law vary from one state to another. They do not usually

specify the earliest age at which a child can be brought before the courts, but the maximum age is designated all the way from sixteen to twenty-one years of age, a difference of five years.

North Carolina laws, by which the counties of the selected area for this study are governed, set the maximum age at sixteen. Sanders defined a juvenile delinquent in North Carolina as:

. . . a child who, as a result of violation of law or custom of the community committed before he has reached his sixteenth birthday, is brought before a juvenile court, is given an official though an informal hearing, and is found to be in need of the guidance, protection and guardianship of the state.⁹

As implied above, this term can be defined from various standpoints. From a broader view it is impossible to collect information that would substantiate a more worthwhile conclusion. For all practical purposes in this study the definition given by Sanders seems to be best.

Juvenile judge. The General Statutes of North Carolina, 1943, Chapter 110, Section 44, provide and require that cities of this state with a population of ten thousand and above maintain a city juvenile court with the recorder to serve as judge, or that a separate judge be appointed. In the same statute, provision is made whereby towns with a

⁹Sanders, op. cit., p. 9.

population of as many as five thousand and not county seats may have an option of maintaining a juvenile court in the same manner as the larger cities. North Carolina is not a state with many large cities; therefore, most of the counties have the county juvenile court with the County Clerk of Superior Court serving as the judge, as provided by law. Arrangements have been made in a few of the counties having larger towns whereby the city court handles the county cases. The Clerk of Superior Court is elected by the people to serve for a term of four years. The position of juvenile judge is a collateral duty; therefore, the term of office is four years.

No town located in either of the counties selected for this study has sufficient population to require a city juvenile court; therefore, the Clerk of Superior Court in each county serves as juvenile judge. For the selected area during the twenty years included in this study, seven persons have served in this capacity: two in Watauga, two in Wilkes, and three in Ashe.

In the provision for the position of juvenile judge a weakness is noted. Any person who is able to secure nomination and election to the position of Clerk of Superior Court serves as juvenile judge regardless of whether he is qualified or not. In order to deal effectively with young people, a judge should be required to have some specific qualifications which would insure the effectiveness of the court.

III. ORGANIZATION OF THE REMAINDER OF THE THESIS

This thesis was written as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts at Appalachian State Teachers College. The topic was chosen because of the writer's interest in unfortunate boys and girls and because of his desire to contribute something that might be of value to the teachers in the public schools of Watauga County and elsewhere.

There are four additional chapters. Chapter II reviews briefly some of the writings in the field of juvenile delinquency, with special emphasis on the work in North Carolina.

In Chapter III, an attempt has been made to describe the problem in Watauga, Wilkes, and Ashe counties for the period from 1937-1956, giving the number and frequency of cases, as well as the charges and comparisons of the various age groups and the two sexes. The description is made county by county. Chapter IV is concerned with the conditions found in the area as a whole, as compared with that in the state of North Carolina. An effort has been made to find the answers to the questions listed in the statement of the problem in this chapter. Tables have been compiled which set forth many important as well as interesting facts in a concise form. In studying these tables, the reader may be able

to arrive at conclusions that have not been mentioned in this work.

In Chapter V, the summary, findings, and recommendations have been made. The writer has not intended to give the answers to all questions arising about juvenile delinquency in these counties. He has merely tried to summarize his findings and point out the factors which he feels should be emphasized.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

No writings on juvenile delinquency in Watauga, Wilkes, and Ashe counties, individually or as a unit, have been published; therefore, there is nothing to review from a local standpoint. Much research, however, has been done on the subject in other localities. The purpose of this chapter is to call the attention of the reader to some of the many good publications available on this subject.

I. GENERAL STANDPOINT

J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States Department of Justice, in writing on crime in the United States reported that:

Arrests of young persons, aged seventeen and under, increased 2.3 per cent, while arrests of people of age eighteen and over decreased 1.9 per cent in 1953-54. These facts were derived from a study of 1,005 cities having a total population of 32,633,967.

On the basis of a study of crime in 1,389 cities having a total population exceeding thirty-eight and one half million, it was ascertained that persons under eighteen years of age represented 57.6 per cent of all persons arrested for auto theft, 49.0 per cent of all arrested for burglary, and 43.6 per cent of those arrested for larceny in 1954.¹

¹John Edgar Hoover, "Frightening Facts," The Sunday School Builder, 36:3, November, 1955.

A few years ago a study was made by Maud A. Merrill in the state of California. Five hundred delinquent children and five hundred non-delinquents were observed in this particular study. Various tests, follow-ups, and case studies were made of these children, and the following excerpt summarizes briefly the findings:

We have noted the inadequacies of such of our clinical tools for measuring various aspects of behavior, the possibilities and limitations of others that have been tried. We have found that, while there are more unfavorable social factors in the home environments of delinquents than in the homes of non-delinquents, it is the social frame of reference to which the individual is responsive that is important for his adjustment. We have found many personal ways in which the delinquent differs from the non-delinquent and that there are even more ways in which he is like the non-delinquent. We found that children's ways of reacting to frustrations and conflict are much the same whether they are delinquent or non-delinquent, but that the delinquent is more likely to be a specialist in his selection of ways of resolving his conflicts. We found that delinquent behavior sometimes offers a way of resolving the tensions created by conflict of motives. We found delinquent behavior functioning in a makeshift fashion in the service of self esteem. We found delinquency to be purposive and that it is necessary to recognize this goal-directed character of delinquent behavior in order to deal understandingly with delinquent children. We have found many traits to be factors of adjustment, many that serve to differentiate delinquent from non-delinquent children.

.....

We can say, at least, in defense of children who have been delinquent that, either because of our treatment, or in spite of it, 82 per cent in our group have been found to be fair or better than fair in their adjustments five years later.²

²Maud A. Merrill, Problems of Child Delinquency (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1947), pp. 318-319.

Harry E. Burroughs³ came to this country as a poor Russian immigrant boy at the age of twelve. As a means of livelihood he sold newspapers on the streets of Boston, Massachusetts. Eventually he took a degree in law and became a successful lawyer. Because of his understanding of and sympathy for the boys on the streets, he established, through his efforts and the help of the wealthy people in and around Boston, a Foundation, as he called it, for these boys. It is a place where they can go during their leisure hours for recreation and training in the various fields in which they are interested. There is no discrepancy made in the treatment of different races or nationalities. Later, through the assistance of his friends, he established a summer camp for these boys in the state of Maine.

Through the years he has had many experiences with boys of all kinds. Many of them have come to him as delinquents, needing help desperately. In his book he gave many examples of how he guided these individuals, and how he was able to help them solve some of their problems. His book is not the report of an organized study, but it is valuable as a primary source.

Burroughs has outlined a fine and adequate philosophy with regard to boys who may be classified as delinquents.

³Harry E. Burroughs, Boys in Men's Shoes (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1946).

He said:

I believe that the ego in any person, especially in a child, has a very important influence in his life; that we are motivated in what we do by our desire to satisfy the ego; and that what we do to satisfy it is what makes us what we are.

.....

I believe that the building of a youth agency should be removed from the area where the boys live, in order to be away from the environment that causes the problem, and that it must be furnished, and the activities of the agency so attractive, that the boys will make an effort to get there. By so doing, they will get more out of it.

.....

I believe that we are in danger of considering gratitude as an old-fashioned virtue.

.....

I believe that, in instilling a sense of responsibility into these boys, I am endowing them with insurance against want. A man with a true sense of responsibility will be a devoted father, a good provider. He will perform his duties as a citizen to the best of his ability. He will feel his obligations to those less fortunate than he.

.....

I believe that there are no bad boys. Boys may be misunderstood, or maladjusted, or puzzling--and the way to help them is to find the cause of their misbehavior and then use methods that will not affect their dignity.

I believe that the present system of punishing juvenile delinquents is outrageous; for it destroys the boy in the attempt to destroy his delinquency. Whatever he doesn't know about crime when he enters an institution, he learns while there, for under the

present system the jails are successful universities for crime.⁴

The worker with young people will find this book to be informative and challenging.

The two books referred to above have been mentioned because they are illustrative of some of the present-day writings in the field of delinquency. Many studies have been conducted throughout the country by educators and sociologists, and the reports of their findings are available. Many articles dealing with the problem of delinquency are being published in current magazines.

II. SITUATION IN NORTH CAROLINA

From a geographical standpoint, North Carolina is different from most of the other states in this country. It has three distinct areas within its boundaries: bordering on the Atlantic Ocean, the Coastal Plain with its beaches and mild climate; the Piedmont section with varied manufacturing industries and varieties of crops; and the Mountain area with truck farming, grazing, and lumbering, as well as the ever-increasing tourist "trade." This fact accounts, in part, for the differences in mores and folkways of the people in the three areas.

⁴Ibid., pp. 352-358.

While Professor of Social Work at the University of North Carolina, Wiley Britton Sanders made a study of juvenile courts and juvenile delinquency in the state of North Carolina.⁵ He analyzed all the children's cases (32,246) officially handled in the juvenile courts in the entire state during two consecutive five-year periods from July 1, 1934, through June 30, 1944. Much valuable information is found in his report of this study.

Contrary to popular opinion based on press reports, sermons, and after-dinner speeches, juvenile delinquency on the basis of official statistics is decreasing in North Carolina. For the five-year period ending June 30, 1939, the average annual number of juvenile delinquency hearings was 2,610. For the five-year period ending June 30, 1944, the average annual number of delinquency hearings was 2,406. The average annual decrease in delinquency hearings in the second five-year period as compared with the first five-year period was 204 cases, or 7.8 per cent.

.....

Among white boys delinquency hearings increased by 2.3 per cent, while among white girls it increased 30.1 per cent.

.....

For both five-year studies the rate of delinquency among Negro children was about twice the rate for white children.

.....

A comparison during the second five-year period of

⁵Wiley Britton Sanders, Juvenile Courts in North Carolina (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1948).

delinquency cases handled by the juvenile courts of North Carolina for a period of thirty months before the declaration of war by the United States and for a thirty months period following the outbreak of war revealed that delinquency hearings among white children increased 41.1 per cent after war was declared, while it decreased 2.1 per cent among Negro children. . . . For white boys delinquency hearings increased after war began by 40.0 per cent and for white girls it increased 46.2 per cent. The increase in delinquency after the outbreak of war was primarily a city phenomenon. . . .

.

In general the number of delinquency cases for each race and sex increases for each year of age up to sixteen.

.

The charges on which children were brought before the juvenile courts were classified under thirty-one headings. "Stealing" came first in order of frequency of occurrence in both five-year periods, comprising 36 per cent of all charges in the first five-year period (1934-1939) and 29.8 per cent in the second five-year period. "Delinquency" and "breaking and entering" came second and third in order of frequency in each of the five-year periods. Other charges were widely scattered with no single charge making up more than 5.4 per cent of the total. In both five-year periods white girls greatly exceeded Negro girls in hearings on the charge of "immorality."

.

In 49.5 per cent of the delinquency cases handled by the juvenile courts in the five-year period (1939-1944), it was reported that the child had a "broken home." Among white delinquent children's cases broken homes occurred in 40.8 per cent of the total while broken homes among Negro delinquent children were found in 60.2 per cent of the cases. Apparently, the rate of broken homes among delinquent children in North Carolina is about two and one half times the rate of broken homes in the general population of the same age group.⁶

⁶Ibid., pp. 189-193.

This work by Sanders is valuable because of the data it contains about the juvenile court and juvenile delinquency in North Carolina. The discussion given on the psychological aspects of delinquency is worthy of consideration by the person interested in work with young people.

In 1947, the Committee on Service for Children and Youth of the North Carolina State Planning Board made a study of the tax-supported services which are provided by state and local agencies. The purpose of this study was to develop desirable standards to evaluate these services and, if possible, to discover desirable and practical ways of improving them. This committee was composed of members who were representatives of both public and private child-caring and youth-serving agencies in the state. The report⁷ of this study contributes much to the understanding of juvenile delinquency in the state of North Carolina.

This committee studied the distribution of the population of the state and emphasized the increase of urbanization. It pointed out that in the fifty years between 1890 and 1940 the percentage of population living in towns of 2,500 population or more increased from 7.2 per cent to 27.3 per cent. Throughout the country, juvenile delinquency

⁷"What of Children in North Carolina," Report of a Study by the Committee on Services for Children and Youth (Raleigh: Committee on Services for Children and Youth, 1947). (Mimeographed.)

has been found to be more prevalent in the urban sections. North Carolina is no exception in this respect.

This committee noted the expense of the various youth agencies, both state and local, such as public health, public recreation, public welfare, institutional care for children, public school education, and public libraries. At the time of this report these agencies accounted for more than \$54,000,000 per year. Because of the increase in population and the expansion of these facilities in recent years, the expenditures would be much greater today.

Public welfare care and services for children in North Carolina are centered in the State Board of Public Welfare through legislative enactment, which outlines broad responsibilities that are largely delegated to and administered by the county departments of public welfare. The over-all responsibility for implementing, directing, and supervising public services to children is maintained through the Division of Child Welfare in the State Board of Public Welfare and by other divisions of the State agency and through cooperation with other public and private agencies, offering services which are directly or indirectly related to the security and welfare of children throughout the State.⁸

In the sections devoted to schools and public welfare⁹ much valuable information is found which relates to the guidance of underprivileged and delinquent children and the services that are available for them.

During 1938 standardized tests were administered to

⁸Ibid., p. 98.

⁹Ibid., pp. 76-115.

25,000 high school seniors in North Carolina by the Committee on Admissions of the North Carolina College Conference, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the University of North Carolina Testing Service. These tests were accompanied by personal data sheets to secure significant information about each pupil taking these tests. The information revealed that only one out of five pupils who entered elementary school eventually graduated from high school. This revelation prompted the organization of the Cooperative Personnel Study whose aim was to study the children and youth of North Carolina. Those participating in this endeavor were the North Carolina unit of the National Youth Administration, the North Carolina College Conference, the State Department of Public Instruction, the University of North Carolina Testing Service, the North Carolina branch of the Works Project Administration, and the State Council of Youth-Serving Agencies.

In conducting this youth survey, questionnaires were completed for or by all persons, aged six through twenty-five, in selected representative areas of the state. Of the 44,963 questionnaires sent out, 96.3 per cent were completed and returned. This is a very high return and gives great significance to the findings.

Gordon W. Lovejoy served as coordinator in this study

and in the preparation of the report.¹⁰ It revealed, in many ways, the attitudes of young people toward the society in which they live and their reaction to the problems they face. As a result of this study, the following factors were recognized as being pertinent to North Carolina: (a) the age-grade distribution of in-school children and youth; (b) the holding power of the school until social and vocational competence have been developed; (c) vocational guidance, training, and placement; (d) the hours of work and the wages of the out-of-school youth; (e) dependent out-of-school youth; (f) enriching the leisure time activities of youth; and (g) providing adequate medical care for all youth. The committee recommended these seven problems or areas be studied further. From the personal observation of the writer it seems that the agencies concerned have done much toward solving these problems; however, seventeen years after this report was published these same seven factors still present areas of great concern.

For many years much has been said about the Negro in American society. The decision of the Supreme Court of the United States in May, 1954, declaring segregation in public schools and public facilities on the basis of race to be

¹⁰Gordon W. Lovejoy, "Paths to Maturity," Findings of the North Carolina Youth Survey, 1938-1940, N. Y. A. Official Project Number 1-10934 (Chapel Hill: Cooperative Personnel Study, University of North Carolina, 1940).

unconstitutional, has provoked much discussion by the leaders of the major political parties. The press and news-disseminating agencies have publicized all phases of the Negro question and have provoked much controversy on race relations.

According to the report of the Bureau of the Census for the Census of 1950, the total population of North Carolina was 4,061,929: 2,983,121 white, and 1,078,808 non-white. The total population of the counties selected for this study was given as: Watauga, 18,342; Wilkes, 45,243; and Ashe, 21,878. The three counties of Watauga, Wilkes, and Ashe are populated primarily by the white race. There are a few Negroes, however, in all three counties, but not a sufficient number to be of significance. Most of the Negro population in North Carolina is to be found in the Piedmont and Coastal areas.

In 1933, Wiley Britton Sanders¹¹ made a study about the Negroes in North Carolina. Although the information in this work is somewhat out of date, one can find in it a good background for an understanding of some of the statements being made today about delinquency among Negro youth.

A part of Sanders' study¹² is concerned with the

¹¹Wiley Britton Sanders, Negro Child Welfare in North Carolina (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1933).

¹²Ibid., pp. 183-214.

juvenile courts of North Carolina from the time of their establishment in 1919 until the summer of 1929. The passage of a law creating a juvenile court in every county did not immediately result in the establishment of an "actively functioning" juvenile court in each of the one hundred counties. Many of the juvenile judges were hostile to the movement, and the general public in many counties was indifferent and slow to provide for the work. In some counties poor records were kept. Sanders emphasized that after the laws of this state are enacted, their effectiveness lies not with the legislators but with the officers responsible for their interpretation and enforcement.

Most of the material included in the bibliography of this study is available at the library of Appalachian State Teachers College. In addition, many other publications of interest to the student of the problem of juvenile delinquency are available there.

CHAPTER III

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IN WATAUGA, WILKES, AND ASHE COUNTIES FOR THE PERIOD 1937 TO 1956

When the idea of this study of juvenile delinquency was first conceived, the conditions of Watauga County were of primary interest, but, after due consideration, it was deemed advisable to study the problem in two adjoining counties in order that a broader view might be portrayed. With the study consisting of as many as three counties, it is felt that the information from each county is strengthened by that from each of the others.

Ashe County was selected because its interests are similar to those of Watauga. These two counties are primarily agricultural and have their own tobacco, produce, and livestock markets. The topography is about the same. Both have two small towns: Boone and Blowing Rock in Watauga County, and Jefferson and West Jefferson in Ashe County. The forests furnish timber for lumbering, and abundant grass provides grazing for many cattle. The main differences in the two counties are these: Watauga is the home of Appalachian State Teachers College; it is considered more of a tourist center than Ashe; there are no colleges in Ashe.

Wilkes County was selected because on the west it is bounded by both Watauga and Ashe counties. In area it is

one of the largest counties of the state. On the west it extends up into the Blue Ridge Mountains. Part of its topography is similar to that of the other two counties, but much of its area is in the lower elevations and is considered a part of the Piedmont section of the state. It is largely an agricultural county, although there are some furniture, coffin making, lumbering, building supplies, and textile industries found there. Like Ashe and Watauga, Wilkes has two small towns, Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro. In addition, the villages of Moravian Falls, Ronda, and Roaring River are located in Wilkes. There are no institutions of higher learning located there.

Because of the impossibility of securing information on all delinquent cases, the data presented here are confined to those taken from the juvenile court records of Ashe, Watauga, and Wilkes counties for the period beginning January 1, 1937, and ending with December 31, 1956. Many cases are never brought to the attention of the court, and in a study of this kind, therefore, one does not have available the information necessary for a complete analysis of the problem. Sufficient data have been collected, however, to provide an adequate portrayal of delinquency in the area covered and included in this study.

I. NUMBER AND FREQUENCY OF CASES IN WATAUGA COUNTY

After a close examination of the records of the Juvenile Court Judge of Watauga County a total of 129 cases classified as delinquent was found. The records also contained a few cases of small children with no offense involved.

Information pertaining to the number and frequency of cases is set forth in Tables I, II, III, and IV. These deal with boys and girls separately for two periods of ten years each.

The first period extends from January, 1937, through December, 1946, and the second from January, 1947, through December, 1956. The first period ends at the time considered as the close of World War II. This can certainly be regarded, for the most part, as a time of frustration and insecurity in the life of large numbers of people, because it was during this time that war clouds were hovering over Europe. In this country people were making preparation for national defense, and eventually for entry into the war.

Tables III and IV present data for the ten years following the war, beginning with January, 1947. If one thinks of war as a frustrating experience, he should note that during this period the United States intervened in the Korean War. For the sake of comparison, however, one might think of the latter period as a time when this country was considered to

be at peace.

First ten-year period (1937-1946). From January, 1937, through December, 1946, a total of seventy cases classified as delinquent was brought before the Juvenile Judge of Watauga County. Sixty-three of these were boys and seven were girls.

For the girls (Table I), not more than one case in any one year was listed. In 1937, 1938, and 1945, no cases were recorded. There is no set time for the convening of the Juvenile Court of Watauga County. Hearings are held by the judge at any time an offender is brought before him. It is correct to consider that the offense was committed in the month in which it is listed in the court record, and the record shows that two cases were committed during the month of June and two in September. One case was recorded in January, February, and December respectively. No offense was listed in the other months.

The information in Table II presents data for the boys who were listed as offenders during this period. Sixty-three cases were brought before the judge for hearings. The highest and lowest numbers of cases were distributed in descending order as follows: sixteen in 1944; ten in 1945; nine in 1942; three each in 1943 and 1940 respectively; and two in 1939. The average was 6.3 cases per year. Four years

TABLE I

THE FREQUENCY OF CASES OF GIRLS BROUGHT BEFORE THE JUVENILE
COURT OF WATAUGA COUNTY, 1937-1946

Month	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	Total
January									1		1
February							1				1
March											
April											
May											
June			1			1					2
July											
August											
September			1				1				2
October											
November											
December									1		1
Totals			1	1	1	1	1	1		1	7

TABLE II

THE FREQUENCY OF CASES OF BOYS BROUGHT BEFORE THE JUVENILE
COURT OF WATAUGA COUNTY, 1937-1946

Month	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	Total
January									1		1
February	2									1	3
March	2									3	5
April						2			1		3
May		2				3	1	8	1		15
June			2	2	1	3			2		10
July								4	2		6
August	1				1		2	4			8
September					2	1					3
October		1		1					2		4
November									1		1
December		1									4
Totals	5	4	2	3	7	9	3	16	10	4	63

(1945, 1944, 1942, and 1941) were above the average, and six years were below the average.

Whether any significance can be attached to the months in which the cases occur may be debatable. Sanders seemed to think that such might be the case.¹ It is interesting to note that of the sixty-three cases, an average for the twelve months would be approximately 5.3. In descending order of frequency, May, June, and August were above average, with fifteen, ten, and eight recordings respectively. For the entire ten-year period only one case each was recorded in January and November. February, April, and September show three each. July, March, October, and December were nearer the average months with listings of six, five, four, and four.

Second ten-year period (1947-1956). During the last ten-year period, a total of ten girls (Table III) appeared before the Juvenile Court of Watauga County, and all of these cases were recorded during the months of January through June, with none recorded in July through December. Four were listed in January, two in June, and one in February, March, April, and May each. Five cases occurred in 1954 and two in

¹Wiley Britton Sanders, Juvenile Courts in North Carolina (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1948), pp. 29-30.

TABLE III

THE FREQUENCY OF CASES OF GIRLS BROUGHT BEFORE THE JUVENILE
COURT OF WATAUGA COUNTY, 1947-1956

Month	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	Total
January							4				4
February					1						1
March								1			1
April				1							1
May									1		1
June		1						1			2
July											
August											
September											
October											
November											
December											
Totals	1	1	1	1	1	1	5	2	2		10

1955. In 1948, 1950, and 1952, one case was recorded each year and none in 1947, 1949, 1951, 1953, and 1956.

During the last ten-year period (1947-1956), forty-nine boys were tried in the Juvenile Court (Table IV). There was an average of 4.9 cases per year. Thirteen cases were recorded in 1955 and eight in 1948 and 1953 each. No listings were found in 1954, only one in 1956, and two in 1952. The more nearly average years were 1947, 1949, 1950, and 1951, with listings of five, three, six, and three respectively. The average for the twelve months is slightly over four (4.1) per month. The above-average months were November, October, May, March, and September, with totals of eight, seven, seven, six, and five respectively. The smallest number of cases, one, was recorded in July. Only two cases were recorded in February, June, August, and December respectively. Three cases were recorded in January and four in April.

Comparison of the two periods. In comparing the number and frequency of the two ten-year periods, the most outstanding item is the number of offenses. Probably little significance can be attached to the fact that there were only seven girls during the first ten-year period and ten during the last. Of the girls' cases, 41.2 per cent occurred during the first period, while 58.8 per cent occurred during

TABLE IV

THE FREQUENCY OF CASES OF BOYS BROUGHT BEFORE THE JUVENILE
COURT OF WATAUGA COUNTY, 1947-1956

Month	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	Total
January		2				1					3
February				1	1						2
March			1	2		1	1		1		6
April				3					1		4
May	3								4		7
June		1					1				2
July							1				1
August	1	1									2
September		2							3		5
October			4						3		7
November					1		5		1	1	8
December	1				1						2
Totals	5	8	3	6	3	2	8		13	1	49

the last period. This is a tremendous increase percentage-wise.

In the case of the boys, the number of offenses is sufficient to be significant. Of the total 112 cases for the twenty years studied, sixty-three, or 56.3 per cent, occurred during the first period; forty-nine, or 43.7 per cent, occurred during the last period, a decrease of 12.6 per cent.

Probably the most reliable figures are derived by taking the totals of both boys and girls. During the first period seventy, or 54.3 per cent, of the total cases were recorded, while in the last period fifty-nine, or 45.7 per cent, were recorded. This is a decrease of 8.6 per cent and may be significant.

Of the total 129 cases, the cases of two Negro boys and one Negro girl are included. Because the population of Watauga County is so predominantly white, little if any significance can be attached to percentages of Negro cases involved.

II. NUMBER AND FREQUENCY OF CASES IN WILKES COUNTY

The same procedure for collecting data on the problem of juvenile delinquency as that followed in Watauga County was used in Wilkes County. For the two ten-year periods a total of 667 cases was recorded. Some cases recorded as

"neglected and delinquent" are included in this study and are treated as delinquent. Tables V, VI, VII, and VIII portray the number and frequency of offenses in Wilkes County for the same ten-year periods as used in describing the condition in Watauga County. The first period is shown in Tables V and VI and the second in Tables VII and VIII.

First ten-year period (1937-1946). During these ten years hearings were held by the Juvenile Judge of Wilkes County for 318 delinquents. Of this number, 282 were boys and thirty-six were girls.

The case frequency for cases of girls that occurred during this period is listed in Table V. With the exception of 1944 and 1946, some cases were recorded each year. There was an average of 3.6 cases per year for the entire ten years. Eight, the highest number for one year, was recorded in 1943. There were seven in 1941 and six in 1940. The three lowest years were 1939, 1938, and 1937, with one, two, and three respectively. Four cases were recorded in 1942 and five in 1945. For the twelve different months there was an average of three per month, with May, August, and September each having that number. The highest number of six was in April and the lowest of one case in June.

For boys, an average of 28.2 cases per year was recorded for the period from January 1, 1937, to December 31,

TABLE V

THE FREQUENCY OF CASES OF GIRLS BROUGHT BEFORE THE JUVENILE
COURT OF WILKES COUNTY, 1937-1946

Month	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	Total
January				1	2	1					4
February						2	1		1		4
March	1						1				2
April					4		2				6
May	1	1				1					3
June									1		1
July				1			1				2
August							1		2		3
September			1				1				3
October				1			1				2
November				3					1		4
December	1				1						2
Totals	3	2	1	6	7	4	8		5		36

1946 (Table VI). The year of 1942 had an almost average number of cases with twenty-eight. The highest number of forty-five was recorded in 1946 and the lowest of sixteen in 1938. Four years were above and five below the average of 23.5 for the twelve different months. With the exception of October, July, January, and February, which had eleven, twelve, fifteen, and forty-five cases respectively, all had a number of cases ranging within the twenties.

Second ten-year period (1947-1956). The cases of delinquent girls will again be considered first in this period. The information is recorded in Table VII. Sixty-seven girls were brought before the Juvenile Court. Offenses were listed in each year of this period. The smallest number, two, occurred in 1948 and 1952. The average per year was 6.7 cases. In 1951 there were six cases and in 1955 there were seven. The highest number, fifteen, occurred in 1953, while the second highest, ten, occurred in 1956. The monthly average for the period was 5.6. September, February, and March were almost average months, with five, six, and six cases respectively. January had the highest number of cases, twelve, and November ranked second with ten. The lowest number of cases recorded was two each in May, August, and October.

For this ten-year period for boys see Table VIII.

TABLE VI

THE FREQUENCY OF CASES OF BOYS BROUGHT BEFORE THE JUVENILE
COURT OF WILKES COUNTY, 1937-1946

Month	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	Total
January	4			4	1	1	3	1		1	15
February	3	4	7	7		4	7	1	4	8	45
March	3		3	3	3	2	1	3		6	24
April			11		3	3	2	2	2	3	26
May	2	4			10	3	1	1	3	1	25
June	3		3				3		9	3	21
July				4		1	2	1	2	2	12
August			7	4		7	3			1	22
September	8	4	2	4	1	1		1	6	6	33
October				1		2	2		3	3	11
November			4		2	3	1	9	1	7	27
December	7	4				1	1	4		4	21
Totals	30	16	37	27	20	28	26	23	30	45	282

TABLE VII

THE FREQUENCY OF CASES OF GIRLS BROUGHT BEFORE THE JUVENILE
COURT OF WILKES COUNTY, 1947-1956

Month	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	Total
January				2			5	4	1		12
February							2	2	2		6
March				1	3					2	6
April			2				1		1	4	8
May	1								1		2
June					2			1			3
July		2						1	1		4
August	1					1					2
September	2						3				5
October	1		1								2
November	2				1	1	3			3	10
December	2			1			1	1	1	1	7
Totals	9	2	3	4	6	2	15	9	7	10	67

TABLE VIII

THE FREQUENCY OF CASES OF BOYS BROUGHT BEFORE THE JUVENILE
COURT OF WILKES COUNTY, 1947-1956

Month	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	Total
January	2	2	2	1	4	8	9	2	6	4	40
February	2				2	1		2	1	1	9
March		4	5	1	3	3	5		5	5	31
April		2	3	1		2	3	5	1	4	21
May	1		4		1	5	4	6	5	6	32
June		2			2	2		5		3	14
July	1	5	1	1	1	2	2	2	3		18
August		4				3	3		7	3	20
September		2		1			5		2		10
October		4	9	6	9			2	9	2	41
November	5	1	1	2	2	4	1		7	4	27
December		3	1	1			3	2	5	4	19
Totals	11	29	26	14	24	30	35	26	51	36	282

The records show that five years were above the average of 28.2 cases, and five were below. The highest number, fifty-one, was listed in 1955, and the next highest, thirty-six, in 1956. In 1947 the lowest number, eleven, was recorded, and the next lowest, fourteen, in 1950. The largest number of offenses was committed in the month of October with a total of forty-one. January was a close second with forty cases. The lowest number, nine, was in February, and ten occurred in September. The average number per month was 23.5 cases. Five months were above the average, and seven ranked below it.

Comparison of the two periods. For the entire period of twenty years covered by this study, 103 cases among the girls of Wilkes County were recorded. Thirty-six occurred during the period from 1937 through 1946. This number represents 35 per cent of the total number of cases of delinquency among girls, while the sixty-seven cases of the last ten-year period (1947-1956) represent 65 per cent of the total number of cases among girls. This is an increase of 30 per cent for the last ten-year period.

Very little can be said of the comparison of cases of boys with those of girls. For the twenty years studied a total of 564 hearings for boys were recorded in the Juvenile Court record. During the first period 282 cases were recorded,

and 282 cases were recorded during the second period. Significance may be attached to the identical numbers for the two periods. This may indicate a trend that could be traceable to several factors.

For the twenty-year period studied, 667 cases were listed, including both boys and girls: 318 for the period of 1937 through 1946, or 47.7 per cent, and 349 during the period of 1947 through 1956, or 52.3 per cent of the total. This increase of 4.6 per cent during the last period was brought about by the increase in the number of cases of delinquency among girls.

Included in the above figures were eleven cases of Negro boys and three cases of Negro girls. Wilkes County is predominantly white; therefore, little significance is attached to this small number of cases involving Negroes.

III. NUMBER AND FREQUENCY OF CASES IN ASHE COUNTY

In Chapter II of this study reference is made to the fact that the effectiveness of laws depends upon the interpretation of and enforcement by the officials in the local county courthouses. No two people are likely to do the same job in exactly the same manner. The same record forms were used in Ashe County as in Wilkes and Watauga counties, but upon examination it was found that they were not completed in as understandable a manner as those found in the

latter two counties.

The information for Ashe is classified in the same manner as that for Watauga and Wilkes counties, using the same ten-year periods. Tables IX and X are for 1937-1946, and Tables XI and XII are for 1947-1956. Despite the lack of information for 1937-1946, the tables are prepared and are presented here for the sake of maintaining uniformity in the study.

First ten-year period (1937-1946). No cases were listed in the records of the Juvenile Court of Ashe County during this period until January, 1943. The cause of this could not be determined. It seems obvious that one of two things had happened: either there were no cases during the years in question, or no record was kept. For the last four years of this period, however, twenty-two cases were recorded. Five of these were girls. Because of the small number of cases and the fact that none was recorded in most of the ten years, it is not considered significant.

There were seventeen cases involving boys for the four years recorded. This is an average of 4.25 cases per year. For the twelve months three cases each were listed in January, April, and October; two cases each in March, July, and August; one in July, and one in November.

TABLE IX

THE FREQUENCY OF CASES OF GIRLS BROUGHT BEFORE THE JUVENILE
COURT OF ASHE COUNTY, 1937-1946

Month	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	Total
January											
February											
March											
April											
May							1			1	2
June									1	1	2
July											
August											
September											
October									1	1	2
November									1	1	2
December											
Totals									1	4	5

TABLE X

THE FREQUENCY OF CASES OF BOYS BROUGHT BEFORE THE JUVENILE
COURT OF ASHE COUNTY, 1937-1946

Month	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	Total
January							1	1	1		3
February											
March							2				2
April							1			2	3
May											
June											
July								1			1
August							1		1		2
September									2		2
October										1	3
November										1	1
December											
Totals							7	2	4	4	17

Second ten-year period (1947-1956). During this period 109 young people charged with offenses classified as delinquent were brought before the Juvenile Court of Ashe County.

Table XI shows that eight girls were given hearings. It appears that the number is the only thing that is significant about these cases; however, half of the total occurred during the year of 1951.

Of the 101 boys given hearings during this period, twenty-four occurred in 1954, sixteen in 1956, and fifteen in 1955. Only one case occurred in 1949, and three cases each in 1948 and 1951. The average number of cases per year was 10.1.

These cases were distributed among each of the twelve months with the three highest as follows: February, seventeen; October, sixteen; and August, eleven. The smallest number, two, was recorded in July. January and September had three and four respectively. The average was 8.4 cases per month. Five months were above the average and seven below.

Comparison of the two periods. A statement of comparison for the two periods for this county can hardly be made because of the lack of information for the first period. Of the 131 cases recorded, thirteen were girls. This is 9.9 per cent of the total.

TABLE XI

THE FREQUENCY OF CASES OF GIRLS BROUGHT BEFORE THE JUVENILE
COURT OF ASHE COUNTY, 1947-1956

Month	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	Total
January				1							1
February											
March				1							1
April					2						2
May											
June											
July									1		1
August											
September			1								1
October											
November					2						2
December											
Totals			1	2	4				1		8

TABLE XII

THE FREQUENCY OF CASES OF BOYS BROUGHT BEFORE THE JUVENILE
COURT OF ASHE COUNTY, 1947-1956

Month	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	Total
January	1				2						3
February				1			9		1	6	17
March				1			3		3		7
April						3	3	2	2		10
May		2					2	3		2	9
June	1	1	1					1	1	2	7
July	2										2
August						4		4		3	11
September				1			1	2			4
October	4				1	2	5		4		16
November				2	2		2		1	1	8
December						2			3	2	7
Totals	8	3	1	5	3	13	13	24	15	16	101

IV. AGES OF BOYS AND GIRLS INVOLVED

Much has been and is being said and written about the problems of the adolescent boy and girl. As they reach the age in which personal and social responsibilities become greater, adjustments of all kinds have to be made. Many factors have to be considered in making decisions. As children begin to face these problems in a realistic way, they find that the mores of the community determine to a large extent much of their behavior. As the ages of the offenders are considered, agreement is reached with the following statement from Havighurst:

An individual's behavior is a product of the social environment in which he has lived and of his own personal make-up. The social environment--home, church, school, neighborhood, age group, community--establishes a code of good conduct.

Through these agencies the code is communicated to individuals and in a sense is forced upon them; through these channels a person learns what is expected of him; and through them he is rewarded or punished to the degree to which he lives up to expectations.

.....

The moral character of the individual is always the result of what he already is as a person combined with the play of social forces upon him.

It is important to note that there is no clear demarcation between that which lies "within" the person and that which lies in the social context around him. Values and codes which were first imposed by society are eventually adopted by an individual as his own.²

²Robert J. Havighurst and Hilda Taba, Adolescent Character and Personality (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1949), pp. 5-6.

Watauga County. In Table XIII information is set forth regarding the ages of the boys and girls brought before the Juvenile Court in Watauga County. It is interesting to note that violations were most frequent in the period known as adolescence. The largest number of cases for both boys and girls was recorded in the fifteenth year of age. Ages fourteen, thirteen, and eleven, in descending order, were the next highest. Of the total number of cases, 63.7 per cent occurred at the ages of fourteen and fifteen. As shown in this table, these seem to be the critical ages for both boys and girls.

For age sixteen no cases were noted among the boys and only one among the girls. For eleven-year-old boys there was a considerable increase over the ten-year-old boys; however, there was a decrease in number at the age of twelve.

Wilkes County. The ages of juveniles brought before the Juvenile Court in Wilkes County are given in Table XIV. In considering the totals for both boys and girls, beginning with the lowest at age six, an increase in number is noted as the age increases until sixteen. This fact is also true with the boys alone and is nearly so with the girls. As was shown in Watauga County, the age of fifteen had by far the largest number of offenders, with 198, or 30.2 per cent of the whole. For the fourteen-year-olds, 144 cases, or 21.1

TABLE XIII

AN ANALYSIS OF THE AGES OF THE BOYS AND GIRLS WHEN
OFFENSES OCCURRED--WATAUGA COUNTY*

Age	Boys	Girls	Total
9	2	1	3
10	5		5
11	13		13
12	6	2	8
13	13	2	15
14	26	5	31
15	42	6	48
16		1	1
Totals	107	17	124

*In five cases the age of the child had been omitted from the court record; therefore, this table was made upon the basis of 124 cases.

TABLE XIV

AN ANALYSIS OF THE AGES OF THE BOYS AND GIRLS WHEN
OFFENSES OCCURRED--WILKES COUNTY*

Age	Boys	Girls	Total
6	3	-	3
7	6		6
8	8	1	9
9	18	2	20
10	19	1	20
11	28	6	34
12	57	6	63
13	82	11	93
14	120	24	144
15	172	26	198
16	49	19	68
Totals	562	96	658

*In none cases the age of the child had been omitted from the court record; therefore, this table was made upon the basis of 658 cases.

per cent of all cases, are recorded. These two ages represent 51.3 per cent of the cases of the Juvenile Court of Wilkes County for the twenty-year period of 1937-1956. By studying this table one can readily see that the pattern followed by the offenders among girls according to age is similar to that among the boys.

Ashe County. Table XV is concerned with the age distribution of the boys and girls charged before the Juvenile Court of Ashe County. The span of ages is from six to sixteen. A child six, seven, or eight years of age is considered too young to be handled legally by a court of any kind. The ages of 122 children charged as delinquents were recorded. In the totals, with the exception of the nine-year-olds, there is a steady increase in number as the age increases to fifteen. Fifty cases were fifteen years of age. This is 41 per cent of the total. The next highest number of cases occurred at fourteen years of age. It can be seen that the pattern set in Watauga and Wilkes is also found in Ashe. Of all the cases, 57.4 per cent were committed at the ages of fourteen and fifteen.

V. OFFENSES WITH WHICH JUVENILES HAVE BEEN CHARGED

In the records of different juvenile courts, and also in the same courts with different judges, no consistency of

TABLE XV
 AN ANALYSIS OF THE AGES OF THE BOYS AND GIRLS WHEN
 OFFENSES OCCURRED--ASHE COUNTY*

Age	Boys	Girls	Total
6	1		1
7		1	1
8	5		5
9	2	1	3
10	9		9
11	6		6
12	11	2	13
13	13		13
14	17	3	20
15	47	3	50
16	1		1
Totals	112	10	122

*In nine cases the age of the child had been omitted from the court record; therefore, this table was made upon the basis of 122 cases.

charges has been used. The judge who has had legal training or been in office for any length of time will tend to use the same terms that are used in the Superior Courts, while the more inexperienced judge will use more elementary terminology. It is interesting to follow the proceedings presided over by the same man and observe that as he becomes more familiar with the job of Juvenile Judge his terminology changes. This makes it difficult to catalog the offenses in the proper category. In many cases one charge is used for many different offenses. For example, the charge "delinquent" is used for a number of offenses, and while conducting this study it was noted that this particular term is being used more in recent years. If an offender is charged with being "delinquent," there is no way of determining what his exact offense was. Another example is "incorrigible," which was used in many cases in the records in Wilkes County. When interviewing the judges, they were asked to explain "delinquency," and their explanation was that this term had been used as a protection for the youth in later life.

Watauga County. Table XVI gives the offenses with which the youths brought before the Juvenile Court in Watauga County were charged. There were forty-four cases of "larceny," which comprised 34.6 per cent of all cases. The charge of "delinquency," explained above, was in second place with

TABLE XVI

A LIST OF THE CHARGES AND THE NUMBER OF OFFENSES OF EACH
 BROUGHT TO THE JUVENILE COURT OF WATAUGA COUNTY
 FOR TWENTY-YEAR PERIOD, 1937-1956

Offense	Number
Assault	10
Assault on female	2
Breaking and entering	20
Dangerous use of firearms	1
Delinquent	27
Destruction of personal property	6
Embezzlement	1
Giving worthless checks	2
Immoral conduct	5
Larceny	44
Operating car without driver's license	2
Seining for fish	2
Truancy	6
Violation of prohibition laws	1

twenty-seven cases, or 21.3 per cent. In third place was "breaking and entering," with a total of twenty cases, or 15.7 per cent. There were ten cases of "assault," which comprised 7.8 per cent of all cases. Any one of the other charges comprised a small per cent. There were fourteen charges in all.

Wilkes County. In sixteen cases during the twenty years of this study (1937-1956), the charge had been omitted from the record, and it was impossible to determine what it was. The percentages in this section are figured on the basis of 667 cases instead of the total listings. In Table XVII there are a few of the charges listed which had a small number of offenses. Another judge might have designated these by a different term.

Of the offenses listed more cases were recorded as "delinquent" than any other, with 199, or 29.8 per cent of the total cases. "Larceny" was number two, with 163 cases, or 24.4 per cent of all. "Breaking and entering" accounted for 12.7 per cent and "truancy" for 10.3 per cent. Under these four charges were listed 77.4 per cent of all cases, leaving 22.6 per cent distributed among twenty-one other charges.

TABLE XVII

A LIST OF THE CHARGES AND THE NUMBER OF OFFENSES OF EACH
 BROUGHT TO THE JUVENILE COURT OF WILKES COUNTY
 FOR TWENTY-YEAR PERIOD, 1937-1956

Offense	Number
Affray	5
Assault	14
Assault on a female	1
Assault with deadly weapon	10
Attempted rape	2
Breaking and entering	85
Carrying a concealed weapon	1
Cursing and abusing	1
Delinquent	199
Destruction of property	9
Drunkenness	10
Forging checks	10
Incorrigible	32
Larceny	163
Prostitution	4
Perjury	1
Operating automobile without license	6
Resisting an officer	1

TABLE XVII (continued)

Offense	Number
Setting fires	4
Sex crimes	6
Trespassing	5
Vagrancy	9
Truancy	69
Violation of liquor laws	4
Violation of parole	1

Ashe County. In Ashe County 131 cases were listed in the Juvenile Court record during the period covered by this study. Of these cases 31 had no charge listed, and it was impossible to determine what it was. The percentages below are based upon the total cases instead of the total listings of charges.

The most common offense was "breaking and entering," which had a total of twenty-one cases, or 16 per cent of the total cases (Table XVIII). "Larceny" accounted for 13.8 per cent with eighteen cases, and "delinquency" twelve cases with 9.2 per cent. The remainder was distributed among twelve other charges.

TABLE XVIII

A LIST OF THE CHARGES AND THE NUMBER OF OFFENSES OF EACH
 BROUGHT TO THE JUVENILE COURT OF ASHE COUNTY
 FOR TWENTY-YEAR PERIOD, 1937-1956

Offense	Number
Breaking and entering	21
Cruelty to animals	1
Delinquency	12
Disturbance	4
Driving without driver's license	10
Drunkenness	6
Fishing in closed stream	3
Fighting	2
Forgery	5
Hunting out of season	6
Immoral conduct	1
Larceny	18
Property damage	4
Truancy	1
Uncontrollable	5
Violation of liquor laws	1

CHAPTER IV

A RESUME AND COMPARISON OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IN THE SELECTED COUNTIES

Life is a continuous process of learning or making adjustments to situations that may arise. The child has to learn to walk, to talk, and to care for himself. As age increases he is confronted with the necessity of learning to live effectively with other people. When he is old enough to enter school, he discovers his needs are magnified and new situations multiplied. As he continues to grow, he passes gradually into that period known as adolescence, the period between childhood and maturity. Because of the many adjustments the individual has to make to the social and material environments, this period is considered by many as a critical stage in life. In discussing the tasks of adolescence, Havighurst said:

The period from 12 to 18 is primarily one of physical and emotional maturing. The sex glands ripen, and sex differences widen. The boy becomes ready for manhood, and the girl for womanhood. The principal lessons are emotional and social, not intellectual. Emotional independence from parents is established. Boys and girls learn to be attractive to each other. Adolescents learn to work together on common interests, and to subordinate personal differences in pursuit of a common goal. School loses its appeal to the wide-open mind of the child and must cater to the selective interests of the adolescent. The vocational interest comes to the fore. Toward the end of this period may come a time of altruism, and reflection on problems of good and evil.¹

¹Robert J. Havighurst, Developmental Tasks and Education (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1950), p. 30.

The boys and girls of this study are having or have had to make these adjustments. Because they have not had a wholesome and desirable environment in which to grow up, they should have the sympathy of society. They are condemned by many, yet the population as a whole should realize its responsibility and obligation, both individually and collectively, for these persons. Too often their capabilities are ignored. By no means do all children brought before a juvenile court develop into criminals. On the other hand, many become useful citizens. It is not possible here to indicate to what extent this is true. It would seem desirable that a thorough study be conducted.

A worker in the field of juvenile delinquency often may develop a negative outlook toward young people. Only a small per cent of juveniles are delinquent. The majority of young people never see a juvenile court in session or otherwise. Their interests and enthusiasm are an inspiration to those who come in contact with them. It is evident that the future of this country will be determined by their work, and society can most assuredly place its confidence in them.

I. CASE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION

In Chapter III an attempt was made to describe the condition of juvenile delinquency in the three selected counties in North Carolina: Watauga, Wilkes, and Ashe.

The purpose of this section is to portray the condition in the area as a whole. Table XIX was prepared with this in mind. The information was taken from the totals of the tables concerned with the frequency of cases and presented in Chapter III. In addition to the three counties for both ten-year periods included in this study, the totals for the entire twenty years are given for the area. During the first period (1937-1946), there were 410 cases recorded for both sexes. Of this total, forty-eight, or 11.7 per cent, were girls, while 362, or 88.3 per cent, were boys.

For the second period (1947-1956), there was a total of 517 cases. Eighty-five, or 16.4 per cent, were girls. This is significant. A lack of records in the Juvenile Court of Ashe County during the first period was pointed out in Chapter III. This does not affect the percentage, because the listings for boys were also missing for the same time. Comparing the cases of girls for the first period with the second, it is noted that there was an increase of 4.7 per cent. During the same ten-year period, 432 cases of boys, or 83.6 per cent, were recorded. This, too, is a significant figure. The percentage is not affected by the lack of records for the period in question in Ashe County. There was a decrease of 4.7 per cent among the boys.

The percentage of decrease for the boys is something to be desired, and it is encouraging to note this fact from

TABLE XIX

THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF CASES BROUGHT BEFORE THE JUVENILE COURTS OF WATAUGA, WILKES, AND ASHE COUNTIES FOR THE PERIOD OF THIS STUDY, 1937-1956

County	First Period 1937-1946		Second Period 1947-1956		Totals 1937-1956				
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total			
Watauga	63	7	70	49	10	59	112	17	129
Wilkes	282	36	318	282	67	349	564	103	667
Ashe	17	5	22	101	8	109	118	13	131
Totals	362	48	410	432	85	517	794	133	927

the data collected in the three counties of the selected area. On the other hand, it is alarming to note the increase of cases among the girls. It is generally agreed by most people in this country that delinquency among juveniles is increasing. American society looks upon the feminine sex as upholding a high standard of morals. This is true in most cases, but if the increase among girls is the same for another generation or two, it could become very detrimental to the American way of life.

Because of a lack of information in Ashe County for the first period, no accurate percentage can be determined for the totals of the two periods and the total for the twenty years. There were 927 cases of delinquency handled by the juvenile courts of the selected counties during the twenty years (1937-1956); 133, or 14.3 per cent, were girls, and 794, or 85.7 per cent, were boys.

These percentages are greater than those ascertained by Sanders.

Among white boys delinquency hearings increased by 2.3 per cent, while among white girls it increased 30.1 per cent.

.....

For boys of both races delinquency hearings decreased by 10.9 per cent, while for girls of both races delinquency increased by 11.2 per cent, in the second five-year period as compared with the first.²

²Wiley Britton Sanders, Juvenile Courts in North Carolina (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1948), p. 190.

II. AGE DISTRIBUTION

In reporting upon his findings in the five-year (1937-1944) study of juvenile delinquency in North Carolina, Sanders³ reported that: (1) the number of cases of delinquency increased for each year of age up through fifteen; (2) a little over one-fourth of all cases of delinquency, for both races and sexes, fell in the fifteen-year age group; (3) nearly half of the cases of delinquency fell in the fourteen and fifteen age group; and (4) there was a high concentration of delinquent girls' cases in the fifteen age group.

Information on the age distribution of delinquent boys and girls brought before the courts in the three counties concerned in this study was taken from Tables XIII, XIV, and XV on pages 55, 56, and 58 respectively, in Chapter III. These data are assembled in Table XX. From the standpoint of comparison with the conditions in North Carolina as noted above, the following observations are made: (1) in each of the three counties, as well as the totals for the selected area, the number almost consistently increased for both sexes for each year of age up through fifteen; (2) of the 904 cases with age reported, 32.7 per cent were in the

³Ibid., pp. 75-76.

TABLE XX

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF CHILDREN HANDLED BY THE JUVENILE COURTS OF
WATAUGA, WILKES, AND ASHE COUNTIES, 1937-1956

Age	Watauga		Wilkes		Ashe		Total		
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
6			3		1		4		
7			6			1	6	1	
8			8	1	5		13	1	
9	2	1	18	2	2	1	22	4	
10	5		19	1	9		33	1	
11	13		28	6	6		47	6	
12	6	2	57	6	11	2	74	10	
13	13	2	82	11	13		108	13	
14	26	5	120	24	17	3	163	32	
15	42	6	172	26	47	3	261	35	
16		1	49	19	1		50	20	
Total	107	17	562	96	658	112	10	781	123
									904

fifteen-year group, and 21.6 per cent were in the fourteenth year, or 54.3 per cent in these two age groups; and (3) the highest concentration among the girls was at the ages of fourteen and fifteen, with the age of sixteen accounting for 16.4 per cent of the total for girls.

III. DELINQUENCY CHARGES

The inconsistency of terms used in recording the charges of juvenile delinquency in the juvenile courts was discussed in Chapter III. There was a total of 927 cases handled by the juvenile courts for the twenty-year period of this study (1937-1956). For forty-six of these, the charge had been omitted from the record, leaving a total of 881 cases with charges recorded. These are given in Table XXI. This table is made from the information tabulated in the listings of charges for the three counties; Tables XVI, XVII, and XVIII, containing this information, are found on pages 60, 62, and 65 respectively. In consolidating these data it was noted that different terminology had been used for the same offenses. In these cases, for brevity's sake, they were placed together. An attempt was made, as far as possible, to retain the exact terms used by the courts.

There are thirty-three different offenses listed in Table XXI. About 66.8 per cent of the cases fall in the

TABLE XXI

A LIST OF THE CHARGES AND THE NUMBER OF OFFENSES OF EACH
 BROUGHT TO THE JUVENILE COURTS OF THE SELECTED
 AREA FOR TWENTY-YEAR PERIOD, 1937-1956

Offense	Number
Delinquent	238
Larceny	225
Breaking and entering	126
Truancy	76
Incorrigible	32
Assault	24
Destruction of property	19
Operating automobile without driver's license	18
Drunkenness	16
Forgery	15
Violation of wild-life laws	11
Assault with deadly weapon	10
Vagrancy	9
Affray	7
Immoral conduct	6
Sex crimes	6
Violation of liquor laws	6
Trespassing	5
Uncontrollable	5

TABLE XXI (continued)

Offense	Number
Disturbance	4
Prostitution	4
Setting fires	4
Assault on female	3
Attempted rape	2
Giving worthless checks	2
Carrying a concealed weapon	1
Cruelty to animals	1
Cursing and abusing	1
Dangerous use of firearms	1
Embezzlement	1
Perjury	1
Resisting an officer	1
Violation of parole	1

category of the first three highest, "delinquency," "larceny," and "breaking and entering," in descending order of frequency. As the charge "delinquency" has been used by the juvenile courts in recent years, very little significance can be attached to it. As explained above, it is merely a blanket charge used for many offenses which the judge might deem advisable.

In the study of juvenile delinquency in North Carolina⁴ for the period 1939-1944, it was found that 62.3 per cent of the cases were charged as "larceny," "delinquency," and "breaking and entering," in the same descending order of frequency. The same charges comprised the three highest in both studies, but "larceny" and "delinquency" were in reverse order in the area embraced by this study. "Truancy" came fourth in North Carolina, with 5.4 per cent of the totals. It was also fourth in the study of this selected area, with 8.6 per cent of the totals.

The other offenses comprised such a small per cent, individually, that it does not seem necessary to comment further upon them. From the above comparison, it may readily be seen that the children brought before the Juvenile Courts of Watauga, Wilkes, and Ashe counties fall very nearly into the pattern set for the whole state.

⁴Ibid., p. 78.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In recent years society in this county has been alarmed over the increase in crime and delinquency among juveniles. The behavior of young people is a common subject of conversation. Statements, both private and public, are made in regard to it. Many of these are based upon hearsay. On the other hand, the reality is such that concern is justified. The realization of this fact was instrumental in prompting a feeling of need for a study of this type, in order that the true picture for the counties involved might be revealed. In the eyes of the public, many situations are magnified; however, examination of the juvenile court records reveals that there is much delinquency among boys and girls today.

I. A GENERAL SUMMARY

This study consists of an analysis of all delinquent cases officially handled by the Juvenile Courts of Watauga, Wilkes, and Ashe counties in North Carolina during two consecutive ten-year periods: January 1, 1937, through December 31, 1946; and January 1, 1947, through December 31, 1956. A detailed description of the conditions found in each county has been made. As far as the information at hand would

permit, the condition in the area has been compared with that in the state.

The statistical data for these selected counties, as a unit, have not been collected before; therefore, no information from an earlier period was available for comparison. This study embraces a total of 927 cases which were classified as delinquent.

It is of significance to compare the data of the war period (1937-1946) with those of the period immediately following World War II (1947-1956), because the first period was a time of frustration and insecurity for many people.

The Juvenile Courts of Watauga, Wilkes, and Ashe counties, as in most counties of the state, are administered by the County Clerk of the Superior Court serving as judge. This arrangement was provided by action of the North Carolina Legislature in January, 1919. The jurisdiction of the three courts embraces the entire geographical area of the counties involved.

The primary purpose of this study was to secure and present such information as would enable those of the area concerned with delinquency among juveniles to deal more effectively with the problem. Information such as this is of value to administrators and teachers of the public schools, as well as to the officials who are charged with the responsibility of dealing with delinquent children. It is needless

to repeat here in detail the conditions found, but listed below, under separate headings, are a few of the more significant findings and recommendations.

II. FINDINGS

1. The General Assembly provides that: the County Clerk of Superior Court serve as juvenile judge for the county; cities of 10,000 population and above maintain a city juvenile court; and towns with as many as 5,000 population and not county seats may maintain a city juvenile court if desired.

2. For the twenty years covered by this study, there were 927 juvenile delinquency cases dealt with by the juvenile courts of the selected area; 129 of these cases were in Watauga, 667 in Wilkes, and 131 in Ashe.

3. Of the total cases for the twenty years, 14.3 per cent were girls and 85.7 per cent were boys.

4. In comparing the two ten-year periods, it was found that among the girls there was an increase of 4.7 per cent and a decrease of 4.7 per cent among the boys.

5. During the second period a decrease of 8.6 per cent occurred in Watauga County.

6. In Wilkes County, in the second period, offenses among the girls increased 30 per cent, while the same number of offenses was recorded for the boys for both periods. As

a result of the increase in offenses among the girls, the over-all increase was 4.6 per cent.

7. Ages fourteen and fifteen were the critical ages. For each of the counties in this study, it was found that the highest number of cases occurred at age fifteen and the second highest at fourteen. Of all cases handled in the area, 54.3 per cent were committed by offenders fourteen and fifteen years of age.

8. For the individual counties, as well as for the area, the number of offenses increased as the age increased up through fifteen years of age.

9. Thirty-three different charges were used by the three courts during the twenty-year period.

10. The charges of "delinquent," "larceny," and "breaking and entering," in the same descending order of frequency, accounted for 66.8 per cent of all cases handled by the three courts during the twenty years of this study.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. When a person is elected County Clerk of Court and becomes Juvenile Judge, he should be required: (a) to acquaint himself with the laws and regulations governing the treatment of delinquent children; (b) to familiarize himself with the problems of delinquency; and (c) to learn the techniques of dealing with youngsters. If studying at an

institution, school, or college is necessary, the expense should be borne by the county.

2. If the above recommendation should not be feasible, it is further recommended that someone who is qualified to deal with the problem of these boys and girls, other than the Clerk of Court, be employed by the county to serve as Juvenile Judge.

3. In recent years emphasis has been placed upon counseling in the public schools, but far too little is known about the subject by many involved in school work. School administrators, as well as teachers of the upper elementary and high school grades, should be encouraged to improve their knowledge and skill in using the modern techniques of counseling by continuing professional studies in this field.

4. Many of the youth are released to the custody of the parents. The County Superintendent of Public Welfare should be charged with the responsibility of making periodic checks of the youth and the home to advise and insure that proper relationships are maintained. A report of these checks should be made, periodically, to the Juvenile Judge.

5. Proper manuals and guidebooks should be written on the organization and procedures of the juvenile court for the use of probation officers, juvenile court judges, police, and case workers handling children's cases.

6. As far as is known, no allowance is made in the school systems of Watauga, Wilkes, and Ashe counties for professional psychological service. It is recommended that the service of psychologists be made available to the schools of these administrative units. They should be available for conferences with teachers as well as with parents and children.

7. It is recommended that the churches in these counties place special emphasis upon the work with young people. They should energetically promote the enrollment of every boy and girl possible in the Sunday Schools and young people's organizations, as well as encourage their participation in the whole church program.

8. Through the cooperation of public school officials, public welfare officials, parent-teacher groups, and church organizations, a program of parent education should be conducted in these counties. This program should have as its aim the acquaintance of parents with the present-day problems of young people and point out the parents' responsibility toward the welfare of the child.

III. CONCLUSION

At another place in this thesis it is stated that one of the reasons for the selection of this topic was an interest in unfortunate children. The citizenry of this

country can be improved only as the young people improve, because the boys and girls of today will be the citizens of tomorrow.

No study of this nature for these counties has been published. It is hoped that facts portrayed here may serve as a starting point for closer supervision for those who need it and a deeper concern by those in places of leadership for boys and girls. All must take advantage of every opportunity to guide and encourage the more unfortunate young people.

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