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Some of the Means of Caring for Delinquent Children in Secondary Schools

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Some of the Means of Caring for
Delinquent Children in
Secondary Schools

By

Arnell Elizabeth Spriggs

An Undergraduate Thesis Submitted

To the

Faculty of the School of Arts and Sciences

Of

Prairie View State College

Prairie View, Texas

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

Of the Degree

Of

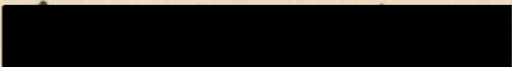
Bachelor of Science

In Education

August 1, 1932

And Accepted on the Recommendation

Of


Professor of Education

Dedicated
To
My Dear Aunt

August 1, 1932

Prairie View College
Prairie View, Texas

Introduction

Some of the Means of Caring for
Delinquent Children in
Secondary Schools

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Introduction.

The term "delinquent children" has been subject to a variety of interpretations. A popular conception has been inclined to limit it to those who are slaves to crime and malicious deeds. There are some books on delinquent children which deal primarily with those who are mentally retarded. In truth, however, the term may be considered much more comprehensive than one or both of these usages would imply.

It is in broad sense that the term "delinquent children" is used increasingly in educational thought. Such children are all bound together by the tie of being different, so different that they need special educational consideration. They require special facilities and special curricular provisions, if their latent powers are to be developed to a maximum capacity for their own happiness and for the social welfare of the community and of the nation which they form a part. The organization of the state and city school system frequently places the all under the same general administrative direction.

In the summer of 1932 a letter was sent to two hundred counties in Texas and twenty seven publishing companies, indicating the project which was under way and requesting information or announcements of books published which might be considered as a source of material for this thesis. Likewise, a postal card was sent to forty-eight states and

fifty-nine city superintendents of schools, asking for a bulletin or other material describing a program for delinquent children. Contacts were similarly made with educational and psychological organization interested in various types of delinquent children, for example: The Rotary club, Los Angeles, California; The State Department of Public Welfare, Springfield, Illinois; Board of Control of State Institutions, Des Moines, Iowa; and the Joint Committee on Methods of Preventing Delinquency, New York City, New York.

The purpose of this thesis is to present some method of dealing with the delinquent children, that in future years their problems will be less of a burden to both the teacher and the parent.

The writer wishes to acknowledge the courteous co-operation of publishers, organizations, school officials and other individual who have assisted in the compilation of this thesis.

Arnell Elizabeth Spriggs.

Some of the Means of Caring for
Delinquent Children in
Secondary Schools.

Individual Differences.

Absences and tardiness are not always the real cause of delinquency. To get the real cause the teacher must know her pupil at home as well as at school. Often the home conditions explain the case fully. Many parents are thoughtless or indifferent; and the complete lack of interest or of any system in their home-life makes it practically impossible for the child. Pity rather than reprimand is needed. The home is not always the source of trouble. There is the careless pupil the physically defective, and also the truant. To punish hastily, is often to aggravate rather than to remove the cause. This means that each case must be studied individually, if he is to be intelligently dealt with.

Retardation.

Pupils are said to be retarded when they are over-age for the grade in which they are enrolled. The causes may be due to: first, late entry into the school; second, failure to be promoted at any stage of elementary or secondary school; third, economic conditions in the home. It does not matter, however, what the causes of retardation may be, the child is thrown behind in his class work. Unfortunately, the

retarded child becomes discouraged and drops out of school. If this should be the case, he may get a job and work or end up in the delinquent group.

Difficulties of Adolescent.

Adolescence is the stage in which self-adjustment is one of the great danger points. The youth from the luxurious home is weaker with all his family or resources than many a street urchin. The urchin has learned better to keep in touch with the world and play his part in it; thus, he recognizes and accepts real conditions, meeting them and practicing adaptability.

The youth in the pre-adolescent stage may not have met with a favorable condition, the home may point the shafts of ridicule instead of extending hands of sympathy, the enlarged environment may seem strange and overwhelming, and the enlarged inner life a disagreeable perplexity. The youth, not sensing what it all means, may not realize that others are like him, and so hesitates to place his supposedly peculiar self on humiliating display. Perhaps his parents unwittingly have exaggerated this tendency by encouraging his self-love. Further, he may have been led by books, preaching, and teaching to form ideals so artificially high that all real life seems hopelessly vulgar.

The prime need of this age is for an understanding, sympathetic person, one who will take the budding young men

or women seriously. The teacher and home have often failed in filling this need of adolescent care and many a case of delinquency could have been avoided had they looked carefully into the needs of the individual.

Some have discovered in the adolescence stage a real craze for self knowledge; consequently, the adolescents go about in their own way getting the knowledge the best way they can-- often in a detrimental way. Many seek adventure and end up a delinquent boy and girl.

At present the most generally recognized function of scientific study of delinquents is the determination of mentality in terms of normality or feeble-mindedness. This is a most important task; without such study it is hard to determine a mental defect.

It may be assumed from the above that the place for all mental defectives is in institutions, Even some of the definitely feeble-minded show good character traits, perhaps, having been brought up under good moral conditions respond well. Here it is a study not of the individual alone, but of the interaction between the individual and his environment.

In Chicago Dr. Bonner surveyed five hundred delinquents as they came into the Juvenile Detention Home, including first, offenders and found that very probably nine percent of these were defective to the degree of feeble-minded. Re-

cently the Judge Baker Foundation has been doing much more intensive work. In a series of one thousand young offenders in Boston, which the Baker Foundation surveyed; it was found that the percentage of mental defectiveness was quite similar to that of the Chicago series.

The striking fact brought out by these and other studies of the mental capacities of delinquents is that a much larger proportion of mental deficiency is to be found among delinquents as they appear in the ordinary population, perhaps ten times as much. This of course is highly significant. It is well known that some individuals of very limited mentality maintain themselves in the world without misbehavior, and indeed, show very good character traits. From the mere fact of deficient mentality, the outcome in behavior cannot be predicted. In other words, even a defective individual cannot be considered apart from any special capacities which he may have, such as: special abilities in or apart from formulative experiences and the influence of his given environment.

There are many demoralizing influences in the undirected gang. The period of adolescence which is particularly given to "ganging" is one of habit forming. For this reason, the nature of the condition to which the gang boy is subjected serves as a stimulus to his later adjustment. It is these early acquired characteristics which often make

him a difficult problem in his community in later years.

Demoralization begins with the boy's entrance into the gang earlier. The process continues progressively as the gang boy grows. Beginning as truant, he becomes turned into a minor delinquent. He develops into a seasoned gangster, and then a professional criminal.

Whether the school boy is a truant or not, the unsupervised gang is likely to lead him in the direction of delinquency. If the "gang" boy attends school regularly he encounters the demoralizing influence of the gang in his periods of leisure. The majority of boys in "gangland" stop school as soon as the law allowed them either to loaf or find a job.

Table I.

		Delinquent Boys's Time in Court								
		1916	1917	1918	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924
I		1172	1204	1246	1445	1062	950	759	673	988
II		453	495	471	539	401	357	290	280	519
III		249	304	283	301	216	215	123	173	276
IV		154	158	167	169	128	123	65	75	170
V		90	94	65	100	53	78	39	41	64
VI		46	39	41	55	22	29	34	13	28
VII		14	20	16	19	20	14	9	7	15
VIII		7	7	8	9	8	6	2	8	7
IX		6	7	9	10	2	2	3	10	12
X		1	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	-
Total		2192	2328	2306	2627	1912	1754	1330	1283	2079

A scale report Detention Home of Cook County

Juvenile Court.

The juvenile court was established under legislation that expressed a new idea in the judicial treatment of delinquent children, that of saving instead of punishing the child, and imposing upon a judicial agency, new functions. The court itself, through its probation service, was to become one of the administrative agencies for the achievement of the end in view. The first juvenile court had to develop new modes of preliminary procedure, new methods of conducting hearings. They had to extend the conception of evidence, to include the social and personal facts concerning the child's environment and the child himself, and work out a technique for the gathering of such facts. They had to develop methods of supervision over in the home that would justify the probation system — a method of disposing of cases which, though not known, was in the main undeveloped at the beginning of the juvenile court movement in 1910.

The importance of probation service and its public character was soon recognized. In many of the larger cities it was not long before the private agencies were able to turn over the work of investigation and supervision to regular probation officers paid from public funds. The agencies, in most instances continue to co-operate with the

court in many ways, but gave principal emphasis as a rule to prevention, community work, and the care of children who were in danger of becoming delinquent but not requiring court action.

The work of the judge in the juvenile court and of the officials making decision there, proceeds very largely in accordance with personal tendencies and moods.¹ Immediate treatment of the case to be specific is by method of personal appeal; by weighing facts already obtained; and by suspension of punishment during a probation period.

Moral Hygiene.

Some young people have it in them to recover moral health rapidly. Perhaps, there is less inner urge towards delinquency than in some others, perhaps there is less stress from the outside. Anyhow, some children do right themselves quickly without being steered by others and proceed in conduct ways on a steady keel. Many an individual has been secretly delinquent and has recovered. For the sake of all, sometimes mothers and fathers have to be told this by way of encouragement— it is well to think of the power of recovery in the moral world as one thinks of the healing power of nature in the world of physical health and disease, and the importance of "keeping fit."

Compulsory School Attendance.

¹The Chicago Juvenile Court by Helen Jeter in U. S. children Bureau Publication. No. 104, P.P, 5-6. Washington. 1921.

It is very important to note the open avenues to delinquency for a child whose time is not well occupied in school, or in other ways. Whole careers of misconduct have resulted from even temporary exclusion from school for sickness or for other reasons, provision for occupying the children's time not being made by either school or family. Perhaps the best source of help in the prevention of delinquency here, will be the developing the new profession of school visitor or visiting teacher.

Very much delinquency has its inception during hours of idleness, in bed as well as out of bed, and during times when day dreaming is possible. To trace misconduct to this inner source and to these times is to do more toward getting a clue to rational and efficient treatment than almost any thing else which may be done. It is possible to safeguard the young individual by preventing the occurrence of such times and reasons when delinquent thoughts develop, much more easily than it is possible to prevent opportunity for delinquent acts themselves to follow.

If then attendance is of such vital importance it is essential that in so far as possible, absences should be prevented. The teacher must consider not only unlawful absence but all absences. From the stand point of the loss of educational opportunity to the child, it probably makes little difference what the cause of absence may be.

Presumably, if an absence is unlawful, it is unnecessary. By the fact that an absence is excused does not mean that it is necessary or that it may not be prevented. Absence is an effect not a cause; therefore, all absences should be investigated to determine the cause.

The school code designates as an attendance officer the person who, in many school districts is the only person to investigate absences. This person is really the point of contact, since he is to go as a representative of the schools to the homes of the tax payers supporting the schools. He should go not as a militant representative of the law, but as an ambassador to establish the best possible relation of co-operation and helpfulness between the school and the home..

Many parents are not acquainted with the modern educational system and advantages which the school has to offer to their children. The attendance officer with a comprehensive knowledge of the school and of what it is trying to do, may carry to the home the story of the advantages of education, in general and may explain specifically the opportunities offered by the local school system.

The routine work of the officer consists of taking school census and seeing that all children of compulsory age are enrolled in either a public, private or parochial school. He should take the children at heart and perform

his duty faithfully.

Industrial Schools.

The schools reported as "Industrial Schools for Delinquents" are reformatory institutions for delinquents and receive inmates committed by juvenile or other courts. Reports were received from one hundred and forty-five institutions; thirty of these are private institutions controlled by corporations or associations; these homes admit children committed on public charges and therefore receive appropriations from the state. In 1900 the number of schools reporting was 80 according to the record of this bureau with 176 public industrial schools for delinquents in United States. The percent reporting in 1922 is about 82 percent of the total.

Inmates.

The average number of inmates per school has increased from a little less than 300 in 1906 to more than 450 in 1922. The ratio of whole number of inmates in the United States in 1900 to the total number of children 5 to 18 years, inclusive is 1.1. The number of students receiving instruction per teacher has remained about constant since 1900 being slightly in excess of 40. During the year 1921 and 1922, children committed to reformatory institutions numbered 31,240 and 31,867 of whom 58 percent enrolled in school classes. During the past 22 years colored inmates in these schools have increased more rapidly than white in-

mates. Female have increased more rapidly than the males.

Illiteracy.

Eighty-nine schools representing about two-thirds of the total commitment, report that nine percent of those committed during the year could neither read nor write. Forty four schools, representing about one-third of the commitments, report 20% able to read in the second reader but not able to write. If these rates are constant for all schools of this types, it would indicate that about 71% of the inmates committed during the year could both read and write. One hundred and twenty-seven schools report 93% of those discharged able to write. This would indicate, also that illiteracy is not entirely eliminated in these schools. The children who have had all the benefits of these industrial schools for delinquents have still a greater percent of illiteracy than that of the general population. It is be remembered, of course, that the ability to read or write is not always tested by the same standard.

Receipts and Expenditure.

In 1918 total receipts of \$13,031,130 were reported by 130 schools; in 1922 total receipts of 17684277 were reported by 132 schools; in 1922 total expenditure of \$16,992,197 by 134 schools. This represents an increase in cost per pupil of about 40%.

This report contains statistics for 1926 - 27 of schools

for delinquents. The institutions are of a reformatory nature, and receive inmates committed to their care by juvenile and other courts. Reports were received from 158 institutions out of 173 believed to exist.

The number of instructors reported for the year is 1488, of which number of inmates are 582 men. These persons are engaged, primarily, in the instruction of inmates. The assistants numbered 4,677 in 1927 whom 2,529 were men. These assistants do no teaching but care for the inmates.

The total number of inmates reported for 1926 and 1927 is 84,317, of which number 65,174 are boys and 19,143 are girls. Of the total number 72,803 are white and 11,514 are Negroes. Since 1922 the number of inmates has increased 28.6%, which is an increase of 30.2% for boys and 23.5 percent increase girls in the United States. White inmates have increased 31.4% in the last five years and Negro inmates have increased 25.7%. Instruction was given to 61,740 inmates or 74% of the total number in institutions reporting this item. Some trade or occupation was taught to 48,646, or 75% of all inmates in institutions reporting this item.

The percentages of those inmates which are native born of foreign or mixed parents, are about the same as the percentage for corresponding group in the 5 to 20 year class of the general population. Foreign-born inmates comprise about six percent of the total number of inmates in insti-

tutions reporting foreign-born; while the foreign born children comprise about 7% of the whole number of children in the United States.

Ninety-one schools reported both the number of inmates committed (24,110) and the number that could neither read nor write (2,271). This is 9.4% of those committed in these institutions. In 1920 among children 10 to 20 years of age in the United States, 2.7% were illiterate. One hundred and thirty-nine institutions report both the number of inmates discharged (27,530) and the number that could read and write (27,385). This would indicate that 145, or 0.5% of those discharged from these institutions, were illiterate. This is considerably below the average for the United States, although there are probably differences in the definition of illiteracy in each group. These reports indicate the results of twenty eight years for the work on the delinquents for their betterment as a citizen, a neighbor and an all around person for society.

Table II.

Summary of Industrial Schools for Delinquent from
1900 - 1914.

Items	1900	1905	1910	1912	1914
Schools Reporting	80	99	115	117	112
Teachers					
Men			493	492	458
Women			624	560	616
Total	538	771	1117	1035	1074
Assistants					
Men			1649	1704	1889
Women			1134	1134	1196
Total	1569	2013	2783	2898	3085
Whole Number of Inmates					
Boys	18968	31120	43702	41137	43333
Girls	4933	6886	12961	10830	11465
Total	23901	38006	56663	51967	54798
Total - White	20278	30881	45741	40575	42130
Total - Colored	2695	4681	7434	6757	7008
Inmates Receiving Instruc- tion in School	21626	36580	42381	43226	43283
Learning trade or Occupation	15946	30378	39391	33592	39344
Total - Children from 5 to 18 years of age	21488011	23410800	24305932	2516445	2600153

Table III.

Summary of Industrial Schools for Delinquents from
1915 - 1927.

Items	1915	1916	1918	1922	1927
Schools Reporting					
Teachers					
Men	447	518	482	430	582
Women	588	643	655	774	960
<u>Total</u>	<u>1035</u>	<u>1161</u>	<u>1137</u>	<u>1204</u>	<u>1488</u>
Assistants					
Men	1793	2098	1937	2139	2529
Women	1216	1413	1588	1841	2148
<u>Total</u>	<u>3009</u>	<u>3511</u>	<u>3525</u>	<u>3980</u>	<u>4677</u>
Whole Number of Inmates					
Boys	45794	49009	49660	49660	65174
Girls	11443	12819	14102	14102	19143
<u>Total</u>	<u>57237</u>	<u>61828</u>	<u>63762</u>	<u>65550</u>	<u>84317</u>
Total - White	46730	53223	51786	55393	72803
Total - Colored	6775	7312	8479	9157	11514
Inmates Receiving					
Instruction in School	44735	50323	51937	50485	61740
Learning Trades or Occupations	40707	46543	43410	40274	48646
Total Children from					
5 to 18 years of age	26425100	26846976	27686476	30532529	34090094

Conclusion.

The school is undertaking the problem of recitation, teaching the wise use of leisure and the problem of vocational guidance to find where the talent will fit the task. It is often assumed that the period of adolescence is the time for leaving school-- some pupils becoming delinquent, some doing well if guided correctly. With the curricula widened, the hand-worker, equally with the brain-worker, can feel that he is being tried out and guided wisely toward his craft. The school will then be the sure road to success. Granted this, why should one leave school.

The rightful heritage of children is an opportunity for development and social adjustment. These desires should be gratified unless there is some good reason for not satisfying them. All the happiness that can come for their own well-being should be given. All the social agencies and institutions ought contribute to this program of happiness and social efficiency-- then - exit delinquents.

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