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A study of fifteen mother-daughter commitments to the reformatory for women Framingham, Massachusetts

Natalie Helene Jacobs
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A STUDY OF FIFTEEN
MOTHER-DAUGHTER COMMITMENTS TO THE
REFORMATORY FOR WOMEN
FRAMINGHAM, MASSACHUSETTS

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE ATLANTA
UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

BY

NATALIE HELENE JACOBS

ATLANTA, GEORGIA
MAY 1944
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Under our whimsical administration of criminal justice we have segregated in prison a fairly representative cross section of humanity. For delinquency attacks all, and the justice-net, though ill-equipped to exercise its functions of justice, has the advantage from a laboratory viewpoint of catching a fair sampling of humanity.¹

There is no one cause of delinquency. Each individual delinquent produces a new approach to the problem. We know that many of the delinquents come from slum conditions, and miserable homes —

homes where there has been death or desertion of a parent; deprived homes, where the mother may be immoral and the father alcoholic; criminal; homes where the parent's old world culture clashes with that of the community to which the individual is constantly exposed; homes where social values are cheap or altogether lacking.²

Many suffer from physical and mental defects. Many associate with bad companions. Yet, everyone who lives in the slums, who has bad companions, poor home environment, cultural conflicts, and physical or mental deficiency does not become delinquent. The reason for this has long been questioned. It is almost universally agreed that all of these factors may play a part. Dr. Maldens in his introduction to Dr. J. Lange's book has said,

when we compare two human beings, we can put down all the differences between them to one of four sets of causes: (1) differences of ancestry, (2) segregation, (3) differences of environment, (4) uncaused events, if such occur.³

¹Marie D Van Waters, "Incentive and Penalty in Education," Educational Trends, VI (April-May, 1933), 27, p. 3.


Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to consider fifteen pairs of delinquent women, biologically related as mothers and daughters, who were unable, because of underlying and emotional causes arising out of their heredity and environment to cope adequately with the demands of Massachusetts' society. In their cases this resulted in their commitment to prison. To a degree they may be assumed to represent a cross-section of prison population with the added factor of family ties. The variabilities and similarities between the mothers and daughters will be noted.

Then, when these delinquent women are apprehended and dealt with according to law, how do they react? What plans are made for their future post-institutional adjustment and how well do they react to freedom? Is there any basis for the statement, "like mother, like daughter"? These are the questions with which this study is concerned.

No problems will be solved in this short study. Rather the purpose is an attempt to shed light on facts which demand consideration, and again to raise the problem of individual frustrations.

Scope of Study

This study is limited to thirty cases, (fifteen mother-daughter pairs), known to the Reformatory. This is by no means an all inclusive study of delinquent behavior committed by members of a family, for legal complications make such impractical; but is a study of those cases in which, because of the nature of the offense, the offenders were committed to the Reformatory. That is, according to state law, only crimes punishable by sentences of two years or more, excluding drunkenness, subject their deer to Reformatory commitments.
Since only fifteen mother-daughter pairs had been committed, no sampling method was required.

Plan and Method of Study

The method was an analysis of case records; personal interviews with five persons incarcerated at the Reformatory during the period of September, 1943 to January, 1944, when the writer was an intern at the Reformatory; and interviews with the social workers, who were available on the individual cases. State laws pertinent to the Reformatory, institutional program, personnel, and annual reports were also considered.

All names used in case summaries and charts are disguised. Actual case records have been summarized and are indicated in the text.
CHAPTER II

THE REFORMATORY

Elvira Van Waters, The Superintendent of the Reformatory, in a recent article in Educational Trends has written a comprehensive summary of the Reformatory and its work.4

The Reformatory Prison for Women of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts at Framingham, Massachusetts, sums up over a half century of penal theory and practice. Built as a factory, then enlarged and altered in the same architectural concepts as Wellesley College, it opened forerring Massachusetts females in November, 1877. It was a venture in mid-nineteenth century liberalism, and was fought for by intrepid social reformers. All women criminals serving terms in jail from one year to life were gathered under its roof. The age range is 17 to 70. Crimes range from stubborn child, street walking, being without lawful employment, evading taxi fare, to murder. The population is approximately 320, 50 of them are babies under three years of age. At least eighty per cent are sentenced for personal or domestic maladjustment, alcoholism, drug addiction, neglect of children, fornication, adultery, desertion of home, vagrancy, etc. The remaining twenty per cent are found guilty of theft, arson, armed robbery, forgery, embezzlement, abortion, manslaughter and murder. The intelligence quotients range from forty to one hundred forty. Although the general health of the population seems good and there are few absences from work, or classes, this daily efficiency is due more to systematic living under regimen than it is to physical well-being. Almost every known functional and organic disability is present.

The institution has a three-hundred-fifty acre farm, a dairy, four factories which produce goods for other public institutions, and a poultry department of twelve thousand birds.

The value of these industries in money turned into the treasury of the commonwealth is approximately $220,000 per year, while the maintenance budget is approximately $240,000.

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4Op. cit., p. 2—5. This article was written in 1936. According to the Reports of the Massachusetts Department of Correction for the years covered in this study, there has been a fluctuation in the population of from approximately 150 to 350.

In Massachusetts "stubbornness" is a felony derived from Colonial Puritan Law. Formerly punishable with death, it is now handled in juvenile court and institutions up to the seventeenth birthday; thereafter, in the state’s prison during minority.
Hard labor, which the state values above everything, and which some mental hygienists in Europe value and use as their most effective therapeutic agent, is the basic structure of our plan. It gives meaning to time and identifies the self with responsibility. It gives a sense of order. The industrial instructors are trained shop people, and some are affiliated with organized labor.

The institution is a self-contained community, having the aspects of factory, farm, home, school, hospital, nursery, playground, jail and scientific laboratory. Those who leave are placed and supervised in jobs if employable.

In the Framingham institution, art, poetry, drama, music, and fine handicraft are not only taught but produced.

The programs of education in Framingham include spontaneous interest groups, hobbies, activities and clubs. Each individual and industrial group has its guild or club. There are discussion groups.

One of the most important divisions of the Reformatory is the Research Department. This institution was among the first of its type to prepare case histories as a part of an effort and attempt to do case work. Under a trained director and a capable but overworked staff, this department acts as a coordinating agent within the institution and as a link between the students and the outside community.

The case records are well organized and detailed. Each record contains the legal data obtained from the complaint and mittimiss: the woman's own story of her life prior to commitment; a report of the investigation of a worker, who has gone into the home, and contacted other agencies, through visits or letters, in an effort to verify information; institutional history, including reports on conduct and work; health record; any letters received or written, which are felt to be pertinent; summary; and a parole sheet.

5All the students are referred to as students as a part of the underlying philosophy of education and reeducation for life.
The Guides, in writing of the records of the Reformatory, have
assigned three possible uses for them:

(1) They are employed in directing intelligently the effort of
the institution, to improve the individual offender.

(2) They are utilized by the Board of Parole in determining when
reaching and when, as well as by the Parole agents in
learning some of the problems of the parolee.

(3) The information available in the case records of the Reformat-
tory may be used as raw material for the scientific study of
female delinquency.6

There are two methods by which women may be released before they have
completed their sentences: parole and indenture.

Parole is a means of individualization of sentences to meet individual
needs, and makes it possible to release an offender when it is felt that
further incarceration would be of little service. It also offers an
opportunity for former student to adjust again to community life under
supervision. The present parole board is composed of five members, three
men and two women. They individually study each individual problem and
meet monthly at the Reformatory to give their decisions.

The system of indenture has developed under an old law, which permits
the prison authorities, with the consent of the woman serving the sentence,
to "contract to have her employed in domestic service for such term, not
exceeding her term of imprisonment and upon such conditions as they con-
sider proper with reference to her welfare and reformation."7 In recent
years the program has expanded to include other types of work placements.
Indenture is administered by the Commissioner of Correction.

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6Shelden and Eleanor Glueck, _Five Hundred Delinquent Women_ (New York,

7Chap. 29, Sec. 3, 1979, and Chap. 151, Sec. 2-4, 1980, now embraced
with modification in Chap. 127, Sec. 65-6, _General Laws of Massachusetts_.

Being a puritanical state, the laws regarding morality are particularly strict in Massachusetts. However, law interpretation allows for sentences to be set at the judge's discretion, within the limits set by law. Sentences at the Reformatory are set by the statute. That is, on an adultery charge, a judge may give a short sentence of three months in a local jail or House of Correction, or he may sentence the offender to the Reformatory. This Reformatory commitment automatically carries with it a five-year indeterminate sentence for that particular charge, unless otherwise designated. All persons sent to the Reformatory receive two years or more sentences, excluding those sentenced for drunkenness. Therefore it is just partly accidental that the thirty individuals included in this study were at the Reformatory. There may be several times that many persons biologically related as mother and daughter who had been delinquent and known to the courts, but because of the decision of the judges were never committed to the Reformatory.

These committed to the Reformatory had compensations, however, for they developed under a theory of helpfulness as expressed by the present head: "no case is hopeless; there are only hopeless social workers." There is a hope and a will for each student to become a useful member of society.

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Miriam Van Waters, op. cit., pp. 4-5.
CHAPTER III

CHARACTERISTICS OF FIFTEEN PAIRS OF MOTHER-DAUGHTER DELINQUENTS

Descent

America is made up of a mixture of the descendants of many nationalities. Of the thirty individuals studied, one mother was of German descent; one daughter was of German-Negroid descent; one mother and one daughter were Indians, of Negroid descent; two mothers and two daughters were of Negroid descent; one mother and one daughter were of Polish descent; six seven mothers and six daughters were of Irish descent; two mothers and two daughters were of French descent; one mother and one daughter were of French-Canadian descent; and one daughter was of Irish-French descent.

Of this number, eight were first generations of foreign born parents.

Fourteen pairs were of the same descent. In one case was there an introduction of Negroid strain into a German strain.

There has been much discussion as to the fact that numerous crimes are committed by American born children of foreigners. However, police and other competent persons believe that the criminal tendencies are not due to foreign stock, but are

traceable to the effect of the conditions under which he and his parents must live, and the influences to which he is subjected in the neighborhood where he spends his most impressionable days. 9

Sutherland has this to say on the immigrant home:

The immigrant home frequently suffers a breakdown of parental control because of the ignorance of the parents regarding conditions in American cities, and because of the superiority of the children

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in this knowledge. The parents were adjusted to a different situation and they fail to adjust to American conditions. The result is that the children look upon their parents with contempt. Some children are held to the home in spite of this, but many break with the home and adopt the superficial standards of the group around them. In the confusion of standards, the development of a stabilized and wholesome personality is extremely difficult. 10

The case of Doris Ellis, who at the age of thirty-six was committed to the reformatory on a charge of vagrancy, and whose daughter was later committed, had its beginning of delinquency in a cultural conflict.

Doris was one of four children of parents, both of whom had spent their youth in Germany. They spoke German in the home.

Doris's delinquency began when she was fourteen years old, working in a print factory, from whence she was fired for "feeling too much." She was required to give all but ten cents per week of her pay to her mother. Before giving her mother the pay envelope, she would erase the amount, keeping the difference for spending money. She also stole from her mother's purse.

In Doris's case, parental culture recognized the family as an economic unit and demanded that she contribute her entire pay to them. The culture of the community and the other girls in the factory called for her having her own spending money. Thus began a history of delinquency, wanderings, shiftlessness and dependency on charity which caused the probation officer at the time of Doris's commitment to make the following comment:

Rather than go to the trouble of copying my record on Doris Ellis, I am going to send the complete file. It is a rather lengthy history and there is much more information in New York. I have thought from time to time that I would have a copy of that record made but never have been able to secure the necessary appropriation, and it would be fitting to have it made without charge.

In only this one case among those studied was there evidence of great cultural conflict. The other cases bear out the contention of William Healy that "cases drawn from many different nationalities give

10 Edwin H. Sutherland, Criminology (Philadelphia, 1924), p. 146.
no indication of special susceptibilities to conflicts being correlated with national characteristics. Rather, the problem seems to lie in the necessity of having society examine the various social and economic problems, and to help individuals make the necessary adjustments. Nationality is credited with having little or no effect.

**Citizenship**

All fifteen daughters studied were United States citizens. Fourteen mothers were citizens and one was an alien.

Immigration and Alien Registration officials keep a careful record of those persons committed to the Reformatory for there is the possibility of deportation for those found to be aliens.

**Place of Birth**

Regardless of place of birth or residence, any crime committed in the state subjects one to punishment within the state. Some stress has been put upon mobility as a causal factor in crime. In my study mobility within the state and along the New England coast was noted. However, there was little record of wanderings over the country.

Only two daughters were born out of the state, while thirteen were born in Massachusetts. Six mothers were born in Massachusetts; four in other places in the United States; four in Ireland; and one in Canada. In seven pairs were both mother and daughter born in the same state. In six pairs, the state was Massachusetts, and the other pair was born in Alabama.

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11William Healy, Mental Conflicts and Misconduct (Boston, 1930), p. 516.
Race

Of the thirty individuals studied, three mothers and four daughters were classified as being Negro. Twelve mothers and eleven daughters were classified as being Caucasian. In one of these cases, the mother was considered white and the daughter colored.

Even this small number of cases bears out the disproportionate number, according to the state population, of Negroes involved in crime. Among criminologists there is practically a uniform opinion that the social situation of Negroes offers the complete or nearly complete explanation of their criminality. Sutherland in his Criminology, concludes as follows:

A general comparison of the Negroes and whites is a comparison not only of races, but of different economic and cultural groups. If a valid comparison is to be made, it would be necessary to compare Negroes of a specified economic status with whites of the same economic status; or Negroes of a certain educational and cultural with whites of the same status. There is nothing in the previous discussion of the frequency of crimes of Negroes that proves any racial as contrasted with cultural differences between whites and Negroes.12

Root ends his consideration as follows:

The writer as a psychologist feels sure that for white men can appreciate at all the tremendous accumulative effect throughout the life of our society system. Debarred from this and that by a thousand social taboos, the lot of the Negro is unparalleled in the experience of any other circle of social, biological and economic causes; lack of education, no trade training commensurate with the intelligence he has; a set of moral, social and leisure habits adjusted to a rural southern community, a victim of caste, forced to live in discarded houses of the dominant race; restricted in employment and social opportunity, the Negro is forced daily to feel inferiority and humiliation in a thousand ways. All this must be given consideration in judging his status in a criminal world.13


13W. T. Root, Jr., A Psychological and Educational Survey of 1916,
The additional factor of being victims of the administration of justice through ignorance of court procedures is also to be considered when studying Negro crime.

It is generally conceded that the factor of race is not an important one in the cause of crime. As stated by one author:

"the truth is naturally, that crime occurs in all races, and, by the nature of a number of things, is only committed by a number (generally limited) of individuals in each race. In principle the races do not differ."

Conflict may arise out of a racial situation, however, because of the intra-family differences. Such is the case of Diana Ellis, the daughter of Doris Ellis, whose case was mentioned previously in this chapter.

Diana was an illegitimate child, but birth records list her mother's husband as the father. Her true father, name unknown was colored, but his identity had never been disclosed by Diana's mother. Diana has always referred to her mother's legal husband as her father.

At the age of ten, Diana was committed to the Division of Child Guardianship as a neglected child. She was noted to be troublesome and presented a difficulty in placement because of her complex race to racial factors. Five years later, she presented such a problem that arrangements were made for her admission to the Boston Psychopathic Hospital. A diagnosis of "primary behavior in children -- conduct disorder" was made. Many and frequent home changes were made but none were successful. She was committed to the Industrial School as a stubborn child. It was felt that she had developed a complex, because she was different, which partly accounts for her defiance and indifference.

Diana's own explanation of her delinquency was that she failed to obey when the authorities of the Division of Child Guardianship refused to allow her to have any contact with her mother. This was thought best by the authorities, because of the family differences. The mother, however, refused to admit that there was a difference, and would slip to see or to correspond with Diana. After each such incident, there would be a marked behavior symptom evident in Diana. Diana also stated that she had a marked feeling of resentment because she was colored, "and wanted to be and often passed as a white person".

Upon being transferred to the Reformatory from the Industrial...
School where her adjustment had been very poor, Diana was interviewed by Dr. L. Pullay Rob, psychiatrist, who said in part: "I see no evidence of psychosis or psychopathy. I feel that we are dealing with a conduct disorder with feelings of social insecurity."

Diana, of her own free will, constantly associated with Negroes both in and out of the institution, yet always expressed resentment. Until Diana’s conflict of race relationship is cleared up, she will have this resentment against society, which she expresses in anti-social behavior. This factor plus the unfavorable background of poverty, insecurity about parentage, murder of mother witnessed by Diana as she was entering into adolescence, death of father from tuberculosis, makes the prognosis for Diana poor, but by no means hopeless. She has always been far more maladjusted than delinquent.

**Religion**

It has long been recognised that a powerful motive for "good citizenship" is to be found in religious ideals and teachings. How to make these teachings functional is the major problem.

Of the thirty individuals studied, it was found that twenty-four were Catholic. Of this number thirteen were mothers and eleven daughters. Two mothers and four daughters were Protestant. In two pairs the mothers were Catholic and the daughters Protestant, in two pairs were both Protestant, and in the other eleven pairs, both mother and daughter were Catholic.

The difference in religion was not given by any of the students as a cause for conflict in the family. Feelings of guilt were expressed most often by the Catholic students.

In the general Massachusetts population in 1930, the religious distribution was as follows: Catholic, about two-thirds of the population;
Protestant, about one-fourth; and a little over a tenth were classed as
Hebrew. 15

### Chart I

**Citizenship, Place of Birth, Race and Religion of Thirty Delinquent Women Studied by Pairs**

*Note: First name in pair is that of mother; second name is that of daughter. Under Race, "C" is for Caucasian and "N" is for Negro; under Religion, "RC" is for Roman Catholic and "Prot." for Protestant.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
<th>Citizenship</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Religion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doris Ellis</td>
<td>Mass.</td>
<td>U. S.</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>RC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen Grace</td>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>U. S.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Prot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilma Mays</td>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>U. S.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Prot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortamce Morgan</td>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>U. S.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Prot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natalie Henry</td>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>U. S.</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>RC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanda Jones</td>
<td>Mass.</td>
<td>U. S.</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>RC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorothy Evans</td>
<td>Mass.</td>
<td>U. S.</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>RC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dora Evans</td>
<td>Mass.</td>
<td>U. S.</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>RC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitty Harper</td>
<td>Mass.</td>
<td>U. S.</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>RC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen Harper</td>
<td>Mass.</td>
<td>U. S.</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>RC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betty Gray</td>
<td>Mass.</td>
<td>U. S.</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>RC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Morgan</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>RC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice Morgan</td>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>U. S.</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>RC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilma Downs</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>U. S.</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>RC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stella Williams</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>U. S.</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>RC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hortense Jeffries</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>U. S.</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>RC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace Flowers</td>
<td>Mass.</td>
<td>U. S.</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>RC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Letretta Roberts</td>
<td>Mass.</td>
<td>U. S.</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>RC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gena Roberts</td>
<td>Mass.</td>
<td>U. S.</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>RC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roberta James</td>
<td>Mass.</td>
<td>U. S.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>RC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lydia Crimes</td>
<td>R. I.</td>
<td>U. S.</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>RC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wanda Gray</td>
<td>Mass.</td>
<td>U. S.</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>RC</td>
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<td>Dina Ayers</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>U. S.</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>RC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally Czar</td>
<td>Mass.</td>
<td>U. S.</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>RC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patricia Ayers</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>U. S.</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>RC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolanda Ayers</td>
<td>Mass.</td>
<td>U. S.</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>RC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of Chart

Over half of the cases studied were Massachusetts born. Four mothers were born in foreign countries. In seven pairs, both the mothers and the daughters were born in the same state.

All the students studied were citizens with the exception of one mother.

Of the fifteen pairs of mother-daughters, thirteen were Caucasian, seven were Negroid, and in one the mother was considered Caucasian and the daughter Negro.

The majority of students studied were of the Catholic faith. In two cases there was a difference in the religion of the mother and of the daughter.
CHAPTER IV

CHARACTERISTICS CONTINUED

Birth

Of the thirty cases studied, twenty-four were legitimate and six were born or conceived out of wedlock. Of these twenty-four, two were conceived out of wedlock, but their birth certificates did not show this. In Massachusetts there is no notation made as to whether the birth is legitimate or illegitimate. Only in cases where the name of the father is given as unknown might this be assumed to be true. In two cases where on the birth certificate the name of the mother's husband was given as the father, the mothers admitted that the children were not conceived within the bounds of marriage.

In these cases of illegitimacy, there is the singular case of Irene James, who preferred to be thought illegitimate. The psychiatrist in commenting on this stated that there were two probable reasons for this attitude: (1) Irene's feeling that if she had been legitimate, her father and his people would never have allowed her to be treated as she was; and (2) the fear of insanity as the paternal grandmother was at that time in an institution for the mentally ill. The mother of Irene, who is included in this study was also an illegitimate child. In two pairs were both the mother and daughter illegitimate. In two other pairs, the mothers were legitimate and the daughters illegitimate. In the other eleven pairs both the mothers and daughters were legitimate.

Siblings

Another factor to be considered is the number of children in the

---

16 Dr. Eleanor Ravenstadt.
The average number of persons per family in Boston is 4.5. The number of children of course would be lower.

Half of the cases studied came from families of four or more children. For three mothers there was no record. Only one mother and three daughters were only children. Two daughters had one sibling, while one mother and two daughters were members of families where there were three children.

One mother and two daughters had three siblings, and two mothers and two daughters had four siblings. Three mothers and one daughter were members of families with six children, and only two daughters had seven brothers and sisters. Three mothers were members of a fraternity of ten, and one mother and one daughter had twelve brothers and sisters. In two pairs, both mother and daughter had the same number of siblings. In the case of Gwen and Loretta Roberts, each was one of thirteen children.

These figures would tend to follow the contention of the Cilwicks that delinquents at the Reformatory come from larger families than the average Massachusetts family.

Just how important these facts are is impossible to measure, but they cannot be completely ignored.

**Rank in Fraternity**

Criminologists, educators and biologists have often referred to the order of the delinquent in the fraternity as of significance in influencing his attitude and behavior. In the twenty-three cases in which this fact was ascertainable, it was found that seven (five mothers and two daughters) were first born. In but four cases was the student an only child. In three of these cases, the students made only a fair adjustment to the institution program. Only one child was able to make a good adjustment.
In two pairs both the mother and the daughter had the same position in the family. Two mothers and one daughter were the third children, two daughters were the fourth oldest child, and two daughters were the youngest children.

**Education**

At the time of commitment to the Reformatory of the twenty-seven cases in which there was a record, there was but one illiterate. Three daughters had been in the special class in school and two had finished high school. One daughter had completed the fourth grade. Four mothers and three daughters had completed the eighth grade. The ninth grade had been completed by three mothers and one daughter. Two mothers had completed the tenth grade and one mother the eleventh. In no instance was the education of the mother and daughter the same. In ten cases the education of the mother was higher than that of her daughter.

These figures also tend to support the theory of the Gluecks' that the schooling of the Reformatory inmates is less than that represented by Boston public school children. These figures also help support the statement made in a federal study in 1933, which in conclusion said that recent crime statistics afford no support for the statement made in recent years to the effect that education, and especially college education, tends to promote crime. In so far as education, or the lack of it, is a factor in the situation, the census statistics indicate that an increase in the educational facilities and in their use, should tend to reduce crime.

In judging the significance of any figure it must be emphasized that these figures refer only to convicted persons and not to all lawbreakers. It is quite probable that offenders having education (partly by reason of that education) are more successful than the uneducated lawbreaker in avoiding arrest and conviction for their crimes.17

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Von Hentig states:

There was a time when education was believed to be a major factor in preventing criminality. We have since abandoned such exaggerated hopes. We know that the emotional set-up is much more important in the genesis of human actions than the intellectual equipment. Nevertheless, it is true that many better paid jobs require some kind of education.\(^\text{15}\)

In eleven of the cases were the students known as truants. The fact that more and more stress is being laid on the act of this truancy is evident by the Report of the New York Crime Commission which states:

Truancy from school is now recognized by investigators as one of the first overt acts of the juvenile delinquent. Frequently the "problem child" is retarded, his status produces dissatisfaction, then impudence, punishment, and finally rebellion in the form of truancy. During truancy, various contacts, habits, and attitudes are formed which lead him to violate the law.\(^\text{16}\)

The report of the Department of Labor in their study of Juvenile Delinquency says:

Truancy has been called the "kindergarten of crime", because frequently children who later become delinquent start their misbehavior as truants during their early school years.

**Intelligence**

Criminal law is based partly on the theory that all citizens have intelligence enough to know the difference between right and wrong. Recent advances in intelligence testing have shown that there are wide differences in the makeup of people. I. Q. tests for general intelligence given were the Terman-Merrill, Binet or Wechsler-Bellevue; for determining manual and planning ability, the Porteus; for determining ability to see

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relationships, the Healy P. C. II. Illiterate persons were given the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale test. In requested cases, the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale and the Wechsler Memory Tests were given. Of the twenty-nine recorded measures of intelligence there was a wide range. Four mothers had I. Q.'s between 50 and 60. Three mothers and two daughters had I. Q.'s between 60 and 70. Two mothers and two daughters had I. Q.'s between 70 and 80. One mother and four daughters had I. Q.'s between 80 and 90. Two mothers and one daughter had the rating of 90 to 100. In four pairs the I. Q. of the mother and that of her daughter fell within ten points of each other.

The diagnosis given was based on various scales. Of the thirty cases, over half (eighteen) were in the border-zone or below group. Six mothers and two daughters were classified as feebleminded. One mother and five daughters were classified as being in the dull normal group. Three mothers and one daughter were classified as borderzone. Five mothers and five daughters were classified as average adults. Two daughters were classified as not classified as high average. In five pairs, both mother and daughter were classified alike.

In a detailed and complex statistical study, Laura Chassell has arrived at a low correlation between morality and intellect. In commenting on this, Mrs. Torman has said:

... There are few things more certain than that some correlation exists between intelligence and conduct.

On the other hand, the correlation is not such as to afford much of a basis for predicting that a mentally inferior individual will probably become delinquent. He may and indeed is more than likely to than the person of high intelligence, but there are far more chances that he will not become delinquent than that he will. Intelligence

tests of delinquents are worthwhile, but they do not carry us very far
in the problem with which we are concerned. Research must be carried
into the field of emotional and personality traits if we would develop
methods by which delinquent tendencies may be recognized, before the
individual becomes in serious conflict with the law.

The level of intelligence has been shown to be only a factor closely
associated with other influences, but not the cause of a specific type of
crime.

**Work History**

As would be expected as a result of the intelligence and education of
the group, the work done before commitment was of the laboring type, with
the exception of one daughter and one mother, who had done clerical work.
Six mothers and two daughters had done factory work. Two mothers and two
daughters had been waitresses. Three mothers and eight daughters had done
domestic work. One mother had been a cleaner. In three cases had both
the mother and daughter done the same type of work — domestic work. For
two mothers and two daughters there was no work record. These general
classifications are for the occupations that had been pursued for the
longest period of time prior to the date of commitment. The only apparent
correlation between occupation and the type of crime here is the economic
one. Domestic work pays so little and prostitution so much!

**Family Relationship and Home Conditions**

The author of *Youth in Conflict* has this to say about the home:

The home has had primary tasks to fulfill for its young to shelter
and nourish infancy in comfort, without inflicting damage of premature
anxiety; to enable the child to win health, virility, and social so-
tomy; to educate it to the meeting of behavior codes of the community.

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to respond effectively to human situations which produce the great emotions, love, fear, and anger; to furnish practice in the art of living together on a small scale where human relationships are kindly and simple; finally the home has the supreme task of weaning of youth, this time not from the breast of the mother, but from the dependence, from relying too much on that kindness and simplicity of home, so that youth may not become imbued with joy of struggle, work and service among sterner human relations outside.

Home should furnish the child with a clear thread, which mingling later with results of his own spiritual discoveries, will become the guiding line of the future, and reveal his place in nature. The home not only furnishes the child with its first knowledge of human personalities, but may open or shut the door to many fascinating interests; nature, adventure, ideas, discovery and conquest, failure and defeat. To do these things would be the work of the adequate home.

What kinds of homes did the women in the study have? Much has been written about the influence of the broken home on delinquency, and the general consensus of opinion is that there is a definite causal factor in the broken home. In our study of individuals there were fifteen broken homes. The majority of them were caused by desertion and separation. Three were caused by death. In the homes of five of the mothers, and two of the daughters, the relationship between the parents was fair. In the case of the mothers, three of them had parents whose relationship was socially healthy. Six mothers and five daughters had homes where the relationship between the parents was socially unhealthy. Two pairs had homes where the relationship was the same. The other also received foster home care or institutional care. In one case, both mother and daughter had foster home care. Of the daughters who married, 2 3 4 whom there were seven, none had a socially healthy relationship with their husbands. Only one


24. The following definitions are from 1,000 Juvenile Delinquents:
A "socially healthy" relationship of the parents means that they are living together congenially; a "fair" relationship implies gross incompatibility but without open breach; a "socially unhealthy" relationship is reflected in separation, desertion, or divorce. A family in "dependent" circumstances in one that has to be supported quite continuously by public or private agencies.
mother had sound discipline in her home. In a large proportion of the families, about three-fourths there was a history of crime within the family. Two mothers had homes where the economic conditions were adequate, one daughter also. Homes where the standards of living were marginal were inhabited by six daughters and five mothers. The other sixteen lived in homes that were dependent to some extent. Eight pairs lived in homes of approximately the same economic level.

Four mothers and three daughters were not known to any social agencies. One daughter and three mothers were known to one social agency. Two mothers were known to two social agencies. Three daughters were known to four social agencies. Five agencies had contact with one mother and one daughter. One daughter was known to six agencies. Two daughters were known to seven agencies. Ten agencies had served one mother and one daughter. One daughter was known to twelve agencies, and one daughter to fourteen. One mother was known to "all the social agencies on the New England coast.

One readily sees that these families present more social problems than the average family. In no case were the mother and daughter known to the same number of agencies.

Just how do these adverse home conditions affect the women? Let us consider a few cases:

Wanda Gray, who was committed on an I and D charge is the daughter of Lydia Grimes, who was committed 20 years previously on a lunacy charge. Wanda Gray is a case of lax discipline and family insecurity. Wanda herself explains her delinquency on the basis of her grandmother’s leniency. She was brought up by her maternal grandmother who indulged her, never encouraged her to work. Wanda also states that after she became involved with Buddy Ford, the boy who was accepted into the home as a visitor by Wanda’s grandmother, her relatives decided that she was not worth the bother of helping. When she visited them, she was treated as a casual visitor and she was never accepted in her home town. Wanda’s mother left home when Wanda was very young and has refused since that time to accept the responsibility or to have anything to do with
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Commitment</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Intelligence</th>
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<td>69</td>
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<td>6th</td>
<td>73</td>
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<td>64</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


Summary of Chart

The majority of students studied were legitimate. In two pairs were both mother and daughter illegitimate. In two other pairs, the mother was legitimate and the daughter not.

The students studied came from large families. Their position in the family ranged.

The education of the students was limited. It is interesting that in ten pairs the education of the mother was higher than that of her daughter.

The intelligence range was great. In four pairs the I. Q. fell within ten points of the other.

The students prior to commitment had held mostly laboring jobs.

Home relationship and environment were poor. A large number had been exposed to foster home care.
CHAPTER V

LEGAL DATA

Under the Massachusetts state law, there are forty-nine offenses for which the offender may be committed to the Reformatory. The charges for which these women were committed were vagrancy, being a stubborn child, drunkenness, being idle and disorderly, lewd and lascivious cohabitation, maintaining a disorderly house, neglect, adultery, being a lewd, wanton and lascivious person in speech and behavior. Five daughters were committed on charge of being stubborn. Five mothers were confined on drunkenness charges. The charge, "being idle and disorderly," which has had many interpretations, accounts for seven women. Four daughters and three mothers having been committed on this charge.

In no instance were the mothers and daughters convicted of the same offense. The sentences given ranged from one year to seven years. Four of the girls sentenced on stubbornness charges were given minority sentences. The majority received sentences of two years or more.

When did these women begin their delinquent behavior? Over half, eighteen, were twenty-three or over at the time of their first arrest. One daughter was nine at the time of her first arrest and one mother was thirtysix. In no case was known delinquent behavior begun at the same age by mother or daughter.

The causes of the first arrest of these women follow very much the cause of their commitment to the Reformatory. In five cases stubbornness was the cause. In eleven cases drunkenness precipitated the initial arrest. In five cases lewd and lascivious cohabitation was the offense.

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25 This term means living together as man and wife, without benefit of clergy.
Two were apprehended for running away. One each was arrested for neglect of child, assault and battery, being lewd and wanton, and being idle, disorderly and delinquent.

For seven persons the Reformatory commitment constituted their first arrest. For four it was the second arrest. For five, it was the third arrest and for two the fourth one. Three of the women had been arrested five times previously. Two were experiencing their sixth arrest, and two their second. One was arrested seven times previously and one nine previous times. For three people it was their nineteenth, twentieth, and thirty-first arrest respectively. In two pairs the mothers and daughters had been arrested an equal number of times. In one pair, there had been four previous arrests, and in the other pair, there had been two previous arrests for each.

At the time of the Reformatory commitment, the age range was great.

Seven daughters were between the ages of seventeen and twenty. One mother and two daughters were between the ages of twenty and twenty-five. Four, three daughters and one mother, were between the twenty-five to thirty age bracket. Three mothers and one daughter were between thirty and thirty-five. Two daughters and three mothers were between thirty-five to forty range. Three mothers were between forty and fifty, and three were between the ages of fifty and sixty, and one mother was sixty-nine. This mother, Eliza Myers, was feebleminded. She was committed on a drunkenness charge. In fourteen pairs were the mothers at least five years older than their daughters at the time of commitment.

The adjustment of the individual to the institution is a difficult one for anyone to make. About fifteen of those studied made a good adjustment. By that, it is meant that they presented no serious behavior or
conduct problem, that they adapted themselves to the routine without too much difficulty and participated in the program of the institution. Three made very good adjustment. Of these three there was a mother-daughter pair. They were in the institution at the same time. Eight only made a fair adjustment. They could not quite adjust themselves to the different regime of living. Four made a poor adjustment in that they presented behavior or work problems, they were bad influences on the other girls, they refused to work, and all in all did not become a part of the institutional life. (The intelligence of the students did not affect their adjustment.) Students of all groups were able to adjust themselves.

While they are in the institution the purpose is to prepare the women to live socially acceptable lives in the community. Each woman is confident before she is released that she can do well if she is released. The granting of parole and parole supervision is an important job, for it may mean the turning point in the individual’s life. It does little good to release the women back to the same conditions from whence they were committed, to the same people and to the same temptations. Five persons were yet in the institution at the time of the writing of this study. One had been returned on the revocation of her parole. Twenty of the persons paroled were paroled to work placements away from home.

Of the people on parole, seven completed their parole successfully. Thirteen had their parole revoked and they were returned to the institution. Among the reasons given for the breaking of the parole were: (1) In the case of Alice Morgan, she attributes her failure on parole to her continued, unsatisfactory relationship with the man in the original charge. She believes that she made it too easy for him and with
no stimulus or necessity he continued to "stall" her divorce and their subsequent marriage. She believes that toward her he has always been arrogant and selfish and frequently unfaithful. (2) In the case of Betty Grey, she blames her drinking on her nerves and on the fact that she is entering her menopause. (3) In the case of Wanda Grey, she states that conditions were palatable at the work-placement, but she had a "compulsion" to leave because, "I had been locked up a year". Once she left, she just kept going. (4) Irene James, who has been in institutions since eleven, says that she had been locked up for so long that she did not know how to act when she was released. (5) Hortense Jefferies gives discouragement as the cause for her delinquent behavior. She states that she accompanied her daughter when the latter began to frequent beer gardens and look after her daughter, and, in time, began to drink herself.

The taking of classes is left up to each individual student. Basic classes are offered in English, mathematics, shorthand, typing, art, religion, psychology, cooking, sewing, and physical education. Other classes are formed upon demand. There seems to be a greater interest on the part of the daughters to take at least one class than the mothers. In only one case did both the mother and daughter take the same number of classes, which was six. They both had mental ability rated as that of average adults.

While in the institution, ten of the women did not take any classes. Eight took one class and two took two classes. Three classes were taken by three people, and three more took four classes. Only one took five classes, while two took six classes. There was no record for one woman.
Nine mothers knew that their daughters had been committed to the Reformatory, and three did not apparently know. Three mothers were dead at the time of their daughter's commitment. Ten daughters knew of their mother's commitment and five did not. In three cases the daughters had been at the institution as Infants, but they were unaware of the fact. For the most part the attitude of the mothers to their daughters and vice-versa was one of indifference, which in some instances is complete rejection. Such is the case of Wanda Gray:

Wanda Gray was an insecure adolescent girl. The total ruthlessness of the family had been made apparent. Not only has the mother had two illegitimately born children and Wanda spent the first months of her life in the Reformatory, but unlike many of the illegitimately born students, her mother was sold and unwilling to pass on any of her own experiences to Wanda in order to help her succeed. In other words, there was a mental as well as social repudiation. The attitude of the very protective mother is shown in the case of Betty Gray, who blames her daughter's delinquencies upon authorities who committed Wanda to the Reformatory. Later, when her daughters needed her most, she considered her commitments to have been motivated by animosity of the police and court officials.

The daughter's often blamed the mother for their delinquencies and changed their attitude. This is shown in the case of Gwen Roberts:

Gwen Roberts has wavered in her attitude regarding her mother. At time of commitment she blamed her mother, stating she allowed soldiers to frequent the home. More recently she has pictured her as a person who did well, considering her large family, lack of economic security, and deserting husband.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Charge</th>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Number of Previous Arrests</th>
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<td>Vagrancy</td>
<td>2 yrs. ind.</td>
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<td>Stubborn child</td>
<td>Minority</td>
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<td>0</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Maintaining a disorderly house</td>
<td>2 yrs. ind.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natalie Henry</td>
<td>L. and L. C.</td>
<td>5 yrs. ind.</td>
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<td>Loudness and being a loud person in speech</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>9</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
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<td>Dina Ayers</td>
<td>Drunk</td>
<td>1 yr. ind.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally Cramer</td>
<td>L. &amp; L. C.</td>
<td>5 yrs. ind.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patricia Ayers</td>
<td>Drunk</td>
<td>1 yr. ind.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yolanda Ayers</td>
<td>Adultery</td>
<td>6 yrs. ind.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY

In any study made of a selected group as small as this, one cannot hope to arrive at any startling conclusions. The particular emphasis on a biological relationship and crime is not a new approach, but little has been done in the area of female criminality with stress on the mother-daughter aspect. The keeping of detailed case records as done by the Reformatory is assisting in opening new avenues for research into female crime. Additional staff would greatly assist this.

The causes of crime are many and varied. Age, education, race, religion, home environment, family relationships, intelligence, siblings and rank in fraternity are some of the influencing factors. However, each new criminal presents a new aspect to the problem. There is little evidence that any conscious feeling of shame or desire to imitate the other members of the family created a desire in these women to commit crime.

Although the program of the Reformatory seems ideal, here are yet some who do not adjust favorably. This is evidenced in the breaking of parole and recidivism among the students. This raises the whole question as to whether prisons are the answer, if so, is this type of institution? Is the parole and indeterminate system practical?

The students were predominately Catholic. In two pairs there was a difference in religion between the mother and daughter. The large proportion of Catholic students is in keeping with the predominance of Catholicism among the general Massachusetts population.

Even in this small study there was a high incidence of Negro crime. The general causes of crime are further complicated by the necessity of overcoming the caste system in which the Negro is forced to live. In but
one case was there a racial difference between the mother and the daughter. This difference was significant in the daughter's life.

The intelligence quotients of the students ranged from fifty-five to one hundred twenty-three. In four pairs the I. Q. of the mother and that of the daughter fell within ten points of each other. According to mental classifications, the diagnosis given for five mother-daughter pairs was alike.

The education of the group was limited and below that of the general population of Massachusetts. In ten cases the education of the mother was higher than that of her daughter.

The types of crime committed varied. Of the forty-nine possible offenses, nine were committed by the students in this study. In no instance was there a case of a mother and daughter having been committed for the same offense. The age for the beginning of known delinquent behavior varied with each mother and daughter. In all but one case the commitment age of the mothers was at least five years older than that of the daughters. For seven persons the Reformatory commitment constituted their first arrest. In two pairs had the mothers and daughters been arrested an equal number of times.

Fourteen mother-daughter pairs were of the same descent. In the other pair a foreign element was introduced into the family, producing a student of mixed descent.

In fourteen pairs, both the mothers and the daughters were citizens. One mother was an alien and her daughter a citizen.

In seven pairs, both mothers and daughters were born in the same state. Six pairs were born in Massachusetts and one pair in Alabama. Five
mothers were foreign born.

In two cases both the mother and daughter were illegitimate. In two others, the mothers were legitimate and the daughter illegitimate. In the other eleven pairs both the mothers and daughters were legitimate.

Both mother and daughter had the same number of siblings in two cases. In two pairs both the mothers and the daughters held the same position in the family.

Domestic work had been done by three mother-daughter pairs. Other types of work done by the other pairs included clerical work, factory work, waiting and cleaning.

Two pairs of mother-daughters had homes where the parental relationship was the same. In one case both the mother and the daughter had had foster home care. Eight pairs lived in homes of approximately the same economic level.

The institutional adjustment was good for about half of the students studied. One mother-daughter pair made a very good adjustment.

Then, these students studied were not unlike many other female delinquents. The added factor of having a family relationship with another delinquent appears to have been of little importance. Many obvious factors concerning the related students studied show the marked differences in individuals and their reactions. Whether these women would have become delinquent regardless of familial ties remains a mute question.
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