"Operation bootstrap" voluntary efforts in a settlement neighborhood

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"OPERATION BOOTSTRAP"

VOLUNTARY EFFORTS IN A SETTLEMENT NEIGHBORHOOD

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

BY
JERRY WORFORD

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

ATLANTA, GEORGIA
JUNE 1956
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>I. INTRODUCTION</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the Study</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method of Procedure</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Limitations</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Terms</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. DEVELOPMENT OF THE HAWTHORNE URBAN RENEWAL PROJECT: FROM SEPTEMBER 1954 TO FEBRUARY 1956</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Renewal</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia's Program; &quot;Operation Hawthorne&quot;</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hawthorne Area</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Code</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Results of the Project As Of February 1956</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Increase in Housing</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE HAWTHORNE AREA</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Physical Environment</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Inhabitants</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploitation</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. ROLES AND METHODS OF THE WORKER IN INITIATING THE COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION PROCESS IN THE VACANT LOT PROJECT</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fact-Finding</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiating and Enabling</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreting and Educating</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. THE PARTICIPATION OF LAY CITIZENS IN THE PROGRAM</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent of Envolvement</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factors Relating to Participation</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics of Leaders Discovered and Developed</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIXES</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Indebtedness to those persons who gave so generously encouragement, guidance, suggestions, and support to the writer during the course of this study is hereupon acknowledged.

Particular credit is due Professor Frankie V. Adams, Thesis Advisor; and Mr. Brad Fraley, Community Worker, who supervised the writer during the period of his block field work training at United Neighbors Association, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Significance of the Study

"Operation Bootstrap" was derived from a statement in the Social Audit Statement of United Neighbors Association in explaining what the Agency was attempting to facilitate in the Hawthorned area; a pilot area in Southeast Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It referred to the cooperative endeavors of the Agency with public authorities who were concerned with providing new housing and rehabilitating existing housing. When a new housing development is constructed in a substandard area, the surrounding areas tend to deteriorate at an accelerated rate, thus creating a problem situation in which a new housing development is an island in the midst of slums or blighted conditions. Hence, it referred to the efforts of the agency to fulfill its obligations and responsibilities of working with the people to change the appearance of the blighted area.

These obligations and responsibilities accrued to the Agency by virtue of three separate commitments: one, the Agency's general area of responsibility embodied this neighborhood; secondly, the City Housing Authority requested of the Agency to represent the

community, its people, and organizations in the Hawthorne Urban Renewal area; and thirdly, the City Housing Authority requested of the Agency to advise it relating to housing, and the kind of community facilities for the proposed Fitzwater Site and how they should be operated.

The following statement portrayed somewhat the concern of the Housing Authority. "...the neighborhood immediately around each one of our developments plays a major part in building or disrupting the morale of residents..."

United Neighbors Association, a settlement agency, was unqualifiedly ready to fulfill the requirements of the three commitments. In 1946, the Agency was formed by a merger of three settlement houses in the waterfront area of Southeast Philadelphia: Southwark House, Workman Place, and Stanfield House. This centralized organization was formed in order to give better settlement service to the South Philadelphia waterfront area. In 1950, the House of Industry merged with the organization. As of February 1956, the Association consisted of two settlement houses, Southwark House and the House of Industry; a community projects department and a camp.

The Association was an example of a settlement agency that had its roots in the traditional heritage of the movement and kept

1 Ibid., p. 11.
2 Ibid.
3 Letter from Mr. Drayton Bryant, Director of Community Relations, Philadelphia Housing Authority, July 29, 1955.
abreast with current change. "Settlement work represents not only the most devoted and most idealistic but also the most intelligent phase of social work of the past generation..."

The dynamic of the Agency's programs may be gleamed through weighing the philosophy, objectives and purpose which ultimately guide policies relating to its clientele, the community.

United Neighbors was dedicated to a program of cooperative action which made it possible for their neighbors to think, plan and work together for better living within the neighborhood; with guidance of staff and support of the larger community..." This cooperative self-help approach is the key to the philosophy and objective of the Agency...

The purpose of the United Neighbors Association is to provide an opportunity for the further development of self-reliance, social responsibility and leadership among neighbors through the process of group thinking, planning and action in order that they may better help themselves to satisfy their social, cultural and economic needs.

When the latter was formulated in 1948, the Agency had a housebound program. In 1950, the Association, having envisaged the potentialities of work being done directly in neighborhood settings, organized the community projects department. This department was designated field work projects prior to 1954. "The key to the community program of United Neighbors is the Citizens

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groups, who under the guidance of the Agency worker, have organized for the betterment of their neighborhood.\footnote{1}

With the community program, the Agency had reached many people in its area of responsibility who had never felt the influence of the settlement program. Consequently, the tools and skills of social work were applied directly on problems and potentialities in the neighborhood settings.

The field workers directed their work toward finding what expression a neighborhood would give of its own needs, and of finding and developing adult neighborhood leadership. These were the ideas which formed the basis upon which the area workers began their new jobs.\footnote{2}

United Neighbors, traditionally a group work Agency, had embraced community organization as a tool and process in meeting its responsibilities. It was stated in the Social Audit Statement that community workers use a balance of the group work and community organization methods and techniques in carrying out their functions.

Utilization of several processes of social work indicated a leaning toward a generic social work approach and it also seemed to carry the import of the following statements: The leadership role of the Settlement continued to be a dual one. \ldots that although it was the duty of settlements to stimulate social reforms and carry these into effect, a more fundamental task was to release the dormant powers of the neighborhood themselves.

It has been difficult to determine just what skills are necessary to do the job of field work. The question

\footnote{2} Files of Staff Evaluation Institute, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 18.
\footnote{3} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 18.
has arisen many times as to whether field work is group work, community organization, or recreation. As the multiplicity of the job is examined, it becomes apparent that any of the techniques may be used.

The Hawthorne experiment, if successful, will serve as a model by which similar undertakings in the City of Philadelphia can be expedited more economically as they relate to effort, time and money.

This study was particularly significant to the writer because of his general interest in working with neighborhood groups.

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this study were (1) to trace the development of the Hawthorne Urban Renewal Project, and to discuss its effect on the neighborhood; (2) to point out some sociological and psychological aspects of the "Area" that seemed to influence the degree of citizen involvement in the program; (3) to discuss the vacant lot project, and to delineate some of the roles and methods utilized by the worker in initiating the community organization process in the project, also to demonstrate techniques utilized; (4) to point out the basic social work process utilized in the project; and (5) to discuss and analyze the participation of "grass root" citizens in the total program in the area.

Method of Procedure

The observational method was used extensively in this study: participant and non-participant, controlled and non-controlled

observation.

Background and historical information about the Agency and the Hawthorne Project was secured from studies and records.

Material from sociological and psychological studies and text books was used for the support of observational data pertaining to the community.

Social work text books and studies were used in substantiating social work methods and principles involved in this study. Also, agency material of which the writer was the author and custodian was used in this study.

Informal interviews were also utilized.

Scope and Limitations

This study was confined to the "Hawthorne" area. It excluded the Fitzwater Site (Public Housing Development Site) which was to occupy a portion of the area (see diagrams in appendix).

The study covered a six month period, during which time the writer was performing a block field work assignment entailing his carrying aspects of the Agency's social work responsibility in the area.

Limitations were placed on this study by virtue of the writer's limited skills in the use of research methods and the writer's knowledge and experience in the use of social work skills and methods.

Emphasis in the study was on the utilization of social work process, and on the involvement of citizens in the program, although the Agency's involvement was the primary concern of this study.
Definition of Terms

Agency - United Neighbors Association

Community Organization Process

Community organization as used here is to mean a process by which a community identifies its needs and/or objectives, order (or rank) these needs or objectives, develops the conferences and will to work at these needs or objectives, finds the resources (internal and external) to deal with these needs or objectives, takes action in respect to them, and in so doing extends and develops cooperative and collaborative attitudes and practices in the community.¹

Exploitation - As used in this study, exploitation refers to the unfair, unwise or selfish utilization of the community's resources, human and material. It also refers to the lack of community facilities and services which would have represented a more economical use of resources.


CHAPTER II

DEVELOPMENT OF THE HAWTHORNE URBAN RENEWAL PROGRAM
FROM SEPTEMBER 1954 THROUGH FEBRUARY 25, 1956

Philadelphia, as most metropolitan areas in the United States, had for some years been aware of, and concerned about, the general condition of a large portion of its area which was either in a state of decadence or rapidly deteriorating. Consequently, slums and slum-like conditions were evident, particularly in the older sections of the city.

Special projects had been tried from time-to-time with the hope that they might somehow prove a panacea, and hence, hold the solution to the problem of rehabilitating the city. One such project was the "Operation Fix-up" program sponsored by the Redevelopment Authority in 1949. This was primarily a self-help project in neighborhood improvement. Because this project required one hundred per cent cooperation from property owners in a block, it failed to gain impetus as a city-wide campaign and efforts were finally discontinued. However, it focused attention on the possibility of a neighborhood, literally, rehabilitating itself.

Agencies related to housing and the general welfare of the city had participated in some activities designed to improve conditions in the city. The milestone in urban redevelopment and

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rehabilitation has come about because of the recognition of the federal government through acts of legislation empowering that body to help finance the cost of slum clearance, redevelopment and providing public housing for low income families, et cetera. With the Housing Act of 1954 and subsequent Housing Amendments of 1955, the Urban Renewal or total approach to rehabilitating cities became a reality.

Urban Renewal

"Urban renewal begins with the community itself"; it begins with the community's own plans and resources. To be eligible, a community must create a "workable program" to combat slums and blight. This workable program constitutes the community's blueprint of the total problem in the area. "The workable program must be geared to combating slums and blight."

The purpose or aims of Urban Renewal are (1) to prevent the spread of blight into good areas - prevention; (2) to rehabilitate and conserve areas that can be economically restored - rehabilitation and conservation; and (3) continued clearance and redevelopment of areas that cannot be saved - slum clearance and redevelopment.

Where blight and slums are ingrained and widespread, special types of federal assistance are available to help cities and towns to reclaim declining areas and make decent homes available for slum dwellers.

2Ibid., p. 7.
To qualify for these aids, the community, through a workable program acceptable to the local governing body and the Housing and Home Finance Administrator, must attain within a reasonable time, the following objectives:

1. Adequate local codes and ordinances, effectively enforced.
2. A comprehensive plan for development of the community.
3. Analysis of blighted neighborhoods to determine treatment needed.
4. Adequate administrative organization to carry out Urban Renewal programs.
5. Ability to meet financial requirements.
6. Responsibility for rehousing adequately families displaced by Urban Renewal and governmental activities.
7. Citizen participation.¹

Philadelphia's Program; "Operation Hawthorne"

Philadelphia was one of the first cities in the country to set up a program meeting the requirements for federal aid under the Housing Act of 1954.

The City of Philadelphia began its urban renewal program by selecting four areas of varying degrees of blight as pilot projects in which efforts would be made to make them more livable and desirable.

United Neighbors was selected by the City to assist in one of the areas, the "Hawthorne Area", to create an atmosphere of understanding between the property owners and the tenants. Also to encourage participation by both groups and to interpret to them

¹Ibid., p. 5.
the City's plan. A study on the initiation of the Hawthorne project was done by a former student.

The Hawthorne Area

Bounded on the north by Lombard Street, on the south by Washington Avenue, on the east by Eleventh Street, and on the west by Broad Street, the area was approximately one mile from City Hall or Center City. The area was largely commercial, with row-house type of residential structures. Eighty-five per cent of the residents of the area were non-white.

The area was so designated because the Hawthorne Elementary School was situated approximately in the center of the area and had meaning to most of the residents of the area.

Housing Code

The new Housing Code for Philadelphia, one of the requirements to participate in the Federal Urban Renewal program, was approved August 5, 1954. This code was drafted by a committee under the auspices of the Philadelphia Housing Association. It replaced an archaic code that had been in effect since 1915.

The Housing Code as approved August 5, 1954, provided the following declaration of purpose:

The purpose of this ordinance is to protect the public health, safety and welfare by enacting a housing code which: (1) establishes minimum standards for basic equipment and facilities for light, ventilation and

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heating; for safety from fire; for space, use and location; for safe and sanitary maintenance; for cooking equipment; of all dwellings now in existence or hereafter constructed; (2) determines the responsibilities of owners, operators and occupants of dwellings; (3) provides, as an incident to the primary regulation, for licensing of the operation of rooming houses and multi-family dwellings; and (4) provides for administration, enforcement and penalties.

On January 27, 1955, the following excerpt, which dramatically portray some of the early developments of the project, was published by the Philadelphia Daily News:

The eyes of the nation's housing experts are fastened on Philadelphia today to watch the results of a vast experiment that could brighten the lives of thousands of residents of sordid slums.

On January 1, the City put into operation one of the country's best -- and strictest -- housing codes. To test the code, one of the City's worst slum neighborhoods was selected as a "pilot area" to learn what is faced enforcing the regulations.

Thus, "Operation Hawthorne" was born -- a block-by-block, house-by-house, room-by-room, inspection of a wide area in South Philadelphia in an effort to halt the complete disintegration of a badly blighted neighborhood.

Once a respectable section, the area -- now is dotted by deteriorating and misery-filled buildings that contain dwelling units loosely called homes.

The first, preliminary results of "Operation Hawthorne" are in, and the Daily News can report exclusively these startling statistics on the depth to which a neighborhood can sink:

A total of 238 homes of the first 949 inspected have outside toilets, which must be removed under provisions of the new housing code -- better than one home in every four checked.

More than half have no bathing facilities or hot water.

Nearly 50 per cent have no central heating and are heated by dangerous and inadequate open flame units -- banned under the new code.

More than 60 per cent of the homes were found to be overcrowded.

Out of 949 homes checked as of last Friday, only 41, about 4\%, were found to comply with all provisions of the new housing code.1

**TABLE I**

**STATISTICS ON COMPLIANCE TO THE HOUSING CODE IN THE HAWTHORNE AREA, OCTOBER 27, 1955**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disposition</th>
<th>Dwellings</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Inspected</strong></td>
<td>905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free from violation on original inspection</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houses complied with</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work in progress</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houses scheduled</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial compliance</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In process of being sold subject to orders issued</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other states of disposition</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Some Results of the Project as of February 1956

As of February 1956, probably the greatest effect of the Code had been its effect on the owners of property, that is, in definitely delegating responsibility to owners for the maintaining and upgrading of their properties.

Table I shows the general effect as far as compliance with the minimum standards set forth by the Code, as of October 27, 1955, and the work slowly continued.

However, it seemed to be the general consensus that the minimum standards offered by the Code was inadequate for the total needs of the area. For instance, some dwelling units had been brought up to code standards without any noticeable changes. As one observer phrased it, "the housing code does not provide for the esthetic values needed to make a house really acceptable as a home."

Some owners had gone beyond the requirements of the Code and had done a thorough job of renovating their dwellings. Nevertheless, the overall appearance of the community was still somewhat depressing.

Enforcing the Code had the effect of curtailing the market for slum dwellings. "The market for slum dwellings has almost disappeared with prices down 50 - 75 per cent and the end not in sight. Big owners are holding on and little owners are unloading-- unable to rehabilitate."

United Neighbors was instrumental in organizing two committees during the initial stage of instituting the project in the Hawthorne Area.

One, the Tenants Committee, had as its general purpose the consideration and amelioration of all problems relating to tenants.

One city official closely related to the Urban Renewal program stated in a meeting at one of the settlement agencies of the city on October 11, 1955, that he considered the efficiency of this group the most encouraging outcome of the pilot program. Indeed this feeling was widespread among interested persons with adequate knowledge of the group's activities. This group had become very militant in its desire for an improved community.

The other committee was composed of property owners, who, of course, were interested in the problems peculiar to the owners of property.

They seemed to be concerned about two problems: (1) financing the repairs and (2) possible competition from the Housing development. Also they questioned the ability of the present tenants to pay the increased rents which would be forthcoming once the properties will have been improved.

There were some landlords, as pointed out earlier, who had taken a positive view of the project. The following excerpt from the Evening Bulletin gives a proposal of one owner which was indicative of the more progressive minded owners and their problem:

What makes Hollander somewhat unusual is the fact that he owns some 90 housing units in the Hawthorne slum district, and his idea is designed to bring these and other properties up to the standards of Philadelphia's new housing code.

From Hollander's and other landlords' point of view, the question is how to get the money to fix up the properties without raising rents which the City Housing Rent Commission has frozen.

...Philadelphia banks are reluctant to lend the money which would enable the landlords to make necessary improvements. This is principally because they feel the old buildings are a bad long-term risk. Hollander's proposal runs something like this:

Let the Federal Government certify the area as eligible for long-term loan Funds under Section 220 of the 1954 Housing Act.
A group of landlords would then be able to go to work. The chief difficulty with the plan, according to city housing officials, is that the Federal Housing Authority would control the pursestrings.

The F.H.A. ...has become as conservative as a bank, maybe a little more so, these official say.1

A similar demonstration plan, whereby a group of owners would take a number of houses, probably a block, and completely renovate them, had to be abandoned because the backers were unable to secure financial help from the banks.

This group, a property owner committee, operated its affairs independently of Agency assistance. It appeared that the committees, tenants and property owners, had become independent organizations.

The following article which appeared in the Neighborhood News gives an evaluation of the work in the area as of February 1956.

The Hawthorne Area Urban Renewal Program is working. Much good has been done. But there still is a long way to go.

When the city inspected the 905 area homes, it found only 205 free from violation of the housing code. This left 700 which needed work. Of these, 138 have compiled with the code.

This leaves 526 to go. But 268 have scheduled work, leaving 294 homes on which repairs are not planned. A total of 75 owners have been brought before Magistrate Louis Vignola for code violations, including some of those who have scheduled work.

Work is in progress on 26 homes at present. Another 35 have been vacated. Other figures on the homes:

- Out of State owners: 7
- Orders reissued: 88
- Partial compliance: 13
- Being sold: 18

Good work is apparent at several addresses. This includes installing bathtubs, hot water and central heat. The addresses are: 500 Block, S. Iseminger St. - 6 houses - Diamond, Liss and Goldberg, 1332 Girard Avenue, 1239 Webster St., front and rear - 5 houses, Edward H. Gornish, 620 S. Broad St., 1330 Kater St. and 1304 Mott St.

The Iseminger Street homes, owned by K.S.P.S. Realty, Inc. are single family row dwellings. Four are three-story brick and two are two-story brick. They rented for from $20 to $28 a month. "Until a few weeks ago," said a member of the realty firm, "none of the homes had running hot water, inside toilets or heating. Two side walls were in bad shape.

At the cost of $22,000 - $3,666 per dwelling the firm replaced the bad walls, installed baths, hot air coal furnaces and automatic hot water heater, painted the buildings inside and out and put in new floors.

But the repairs caused a new problem. Mrs. Alice Williams, president of the Tenant Committee, was raised from $20 to $45 for her Iseminger Street home. She feels the boost is too much, since she is in a small house without closets.

There is one emerging central question. Can houses in a slum be repaired to comply with the code and still rent for a price the residents are willing or able to pay?

An important thing to know in connection with the renewal program is that a tenant can be evicted only after he has been notified by the Rent Control Commission. Many owners have tried to evict tenants when they comply with the code. Tenants must know they cannot be evicted without being notified, except if they have not paid their rent.

When tenants are put out so repairs can be made, the city must find them housing as good or better than the homes they left.

Proposed Increase in Housing

Fitzwater Site.-- Appendix B shows the site of the proposed housing development within the Hawthorne area. The site covered the area from 12th Street on the east to Park Avenue on the west; from Catherine Street on the south to Fitzwater on the northeast and Bainbridge on the north. This was the official site for the development.

The proposed plan was to build five fourteen story buildings, with one hundred ten dwelling units in each, at a cost of approximately $8,566,270.2

The selection of the Fitzwater site was a controversial one. All of the members of the Joint Committee on Site Selection except one, opposed the site because of certain undesirable features of the area. This one member submitted a minority report.

United Neighbors opposed the high rise structure because of (1) the increase in population density, and (2) the coverage of more slum area was desired.

However, at the time of this study, both the choice of the site and the high rise structures seemed definite.

United Neighbors had organized a Hawthorne Area Committee, composed of Catholic and Protestant clergymen, the two school principals of the Hawthorne area and tenants of the immediate area to serve as an advisory group. On July 29, 1955, a letter was sent to the executive of the agency, excerpt of which read:

At this time I am asking on behalf of the Philadelphia Housing Authority that you work with us in two particular on the design of community facilities. There will be limitations of course, of funds, space and location in relation to the rest of the development and the neighborhood. However, within these limitations, we wish to design facilities which will be of maximum benefit to the residents and the neighborhood. To do this properly in light of our experience and the objectives of a neighborhood organization such as yours, should of course include involvement of neighborhood leaders, needs and opinions.

The second request is that you suggest to us persons active in neighborhood organizations and institutions who should be brought together as a neighborhood advisory group to consider opportunities for community facilities within the new development.

1 Ibid., November 12, 1954.
2 Ibid., November 16, 1954.
The Hawthorne Area Committee had made several recommendations which the Authority had under advisement. The group had also considered the possibility of acquiring, (see Appendix B) a church site for expansion of the Hawthorne Elementary School and the clearance of the area immediately north of the school.

Environmental Improvements.-- Assured of the certainty of the Housing Development, United Neighbors renewed its efforts to clear the numerous vacant lots in the Hawthorne area, particularly those immediately surrounding the Fitzwater site. These lots were used as woodyards, "junk yards", and for the storage of lumber. They were ill-kept, used as dumping places and were breeding places for rats.

A project around the vacant lots will be discussed in a later chapter.

1 Files of HURP, vacant lots, op. cit., October 1955 - February 1956.
CHAPTER III

A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE HAWTHORNE AREA

Before proceeding with the discussion on the vacant lot project, some aspects of life in the Hawthorne area, notwithstanding the improvements which had taken place as a result of enforcing the housing code, will be delineated.

Perhaps in delineating these factors which had varying influences on life in the community of "Hawthorne" -- an arbitrary designation, one might envision more clearly some of the ecological and psychological aspects of the area, and the scope of the job of making this an integrated or wholesome community. It might also indicate what can be expected in citizen participation.

The ingredients of community are two: a place and a people. The recipe for a good community is equally simple: the proper mingling of the people with each other and the proper arrangement of the place. We might say that the unstable community is non-cooperating people living in the same place. And the imperfect community is a number of like-minded people who are scattered in different places. Before a community may be called good or may hope to achieve wholeness it must arrive at cooperating people living and concerned about the same place.

Generally, this area had all the characteristics of slums and blighted areas covered in books on sociology dealing with this phase of city life. The arrangement, nevertheless, may be unique and distinctive.

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The Physical Environment

Location.-- The "Hawthorne Area" was a twenty-one block area situated approximately one mile from City Hall or Center City. It was a highly commercial area with some industries present. The area was bounded by Lombard Street on the north, Eleventh Street on the east, Washington Avenue on the south, and Broad Street on the west.

Psychologically and physically the section might be considered an isolated area. The area north of Lombard Street contrasted sharply with it and was predominately White. Broad Street was a wide street separating it from the large Negro residential area on the west. Washington Avenue had industries which separated it from the predominately Italian section on the south and east of Eleventh Street, which was also rather wide south of Bainbridge Street.

"Those people up there don't care what happens to us Negroes down here." This statement from Negroes in the area indicated their feeling of being separated and apart from the dominant group.

Institutions and Religion.-- There was one elementary and one Junior High School -- Hawthorne and Bartlett, respectively. Hawthorne Elementary School had the only playground in the area. Several churches were in the area. One minister stated that out of approximately one hundred five members, only six lived in the area. Most of the whites (Italians) were probably Catholic; many

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1 Letter from Mr. Milton Brown, Assistant Executive, United Neighbors Association, January 25, 1956.
of the non-whites also were Catholic and attended nearby Catholic churches. Most of the non-whites were Protestants.

Housing.-- The row type housing was characteristic of Philadelphia's housing. The area from Lombard to Catherine Street had the greatest concentration of multiple dwelling apartments. The area from Catherine Street to Washington Avenue had the largest percentage of home owners. This section of the area was decidedly superior to the former in the quality of houses and general appearance. Furthermore, the Lombard-Catherine area accommodated the majority of the transients; it was a hotel and boarding house area.

Businesses.-- South Street was a shopping center. Here abounded pawn shops, small meat markets and grocery stores, lucky charm shops, shabby barber shops and "eating joints," bars, pool rooms and drug stores. Neighborhood delicatessens were scattered throughout the area.

Industries.-- Along Eleventh Street, from Bainbridge to Catherine Street and along Washington Avenue were found numerous distributing and manufacturing industries. Some others were within the area, particularly wood and coal yards. Numerous nuisance industries were also present - wood and coal yards, storage places for fixtures and lumber, rag shops, glass bottle shops, et cetera.

Conditions under which people live have such an important effect upon the public welfare that even ancient law gave public authorities power to control and abate "nuisances" which endangered public health, safety or morals, offended the senses, or interfered with the legitimate use of neighboring property.¹

The Inhabitants

Composition of the Area Population.-- The population of the Hawthorne area was about eighty-five percent non-white, primarily Negroes and fifteen percent white, predominately, Italians, (See Appendix B).

Family Types.-- The percentage of "broken" families in the area was very high. Among the whole families those with middle aged parents seemed to be in the majority, of these 62 percent 1 were small families. Of young married couples, only the "marginal" ones seemed to remain in the area. Furthermore, there were many unattached elderly men and women in the area; 15 percent of the area population. There were several neighborhoods where stable families resided, however, with the high mobility rate of the area these neighborhoods were subjected to radical changes.

"Then there grow up slums which are inhabited by great numbers of poorer classes who are unable to defend themselves from association with the derelict and vicious." 3

In an interview with one of the leaders in the Tenants Committee, it was stated that most of the people in the area were on relief. While this was probably somewhat exaggerated, the percentage of families and elderly unattached individuals on relief was very high. Desertion and separation figured high in the incidence of "broken" families.

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2 Ibid.
Education and Occupations.-- It had been estimated that the average non-white adult educational level in the area was about five years of formal schooling. Consequently, most of the men were laborers or factory workers and the women were factory workers, domestic servants, et cetera.

The writer was told in one interview that most of the people engaged in some illicit "side" activities whether on relief or not.

The Settlement people know the demoralization which comes from a too bitter struggle on the lower levels of modern life. But they also know that human values in character often survive in spite of overwhelming burden and privation. Thus they evolve a philosophy of life which does not ignore the force of circumstances, but conserves, nevertheless, the spiritual integrity of the individual.1

Morale.-- With the degree of impersonal relationships that existed in the area, one might expect the inevitable, that the general morale of the area was low.

Morale...in any social group, is the sum total of attitudes and feelings of the members of the group. Involved in it are the attitudes of the individuals toward their immediate neighbors and their beliefs as to how the neighbors feel about them.2

Some Expressed Attitudes.-- Apathy toward general improvement in the area prevailed. As Ross has expressed in his Multiple-Factor Theory, that no single factor makes for integration, the same might be said of apathy. The complete influences of many

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1 James Dahir, op. cit., p. 10.
2 "Building the Human Structure of Housing", Annual Conference of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials, Middle Atlantic Region, April, 1954.
factors on the life of individuals hold the key to causality.

Nevertheless, attitudes have been labeled "predispositions to action." Many persons in the community felt that because this area was predominately inhabited by Negroes, the city would make only a token effort to have the area improved. This attitude was particularly true among the men.

Another attitude tied in with the concept of getting ahead was, that whatever means were used by Negroes to get ahead were justifiable.

The expansion and instability of our cities cannot be understood without an awareness of the American ideal of getting ahead. One of the greatest, if not the greatest, attraction of the American way of life is the feeling people have had that in this country a man can improve his lot by individual efforts, little hindered by accidents of origin or of history. A large proportion of the adult Negro group was from the South -- "most of the people who were born in this area are now in jail," stated one neighborhood person.

The Negro migrant from the South came to the North to make a better life for himself and/or his family. However, being uneducated, many have known a deep frustration engendered by a lack of competitive power and the rejection of the majority group. Consequently, many actually felt helpless, having had to go on relief or live off the earnings of women. This latter was said to be quite common, although the foregoing is probably only part

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of the explanation for it.

Culture, as the social heritage of the group, implies both a locality to which it is indigenous and a constant, rather than a changing social situation...

Movement in the person, as from one social location to another, or any sudden change as caused by an invention, carries with it the possibility or the probability of culture decadence. The cultural controls over conduct disintegrate; impulses and wishes take random and wild expression. The result is immorality and delinquency; in short, personal and social disorganization.¹

Exploitation

The statement that slums are the greatest parasites affecting the city is often made by students of city life. It is stated that these areas receive a disproportionate share of city revenue while contributing only a nominal amount to the city treasury through taxation. This is no doubt true, however, no area pays as much and receives so little. Even that which is donated through relief and wages, et cetera, is ultimately taken away or misappropriated.

Tap Rooms.—These are usually classified as recreational or places of leisure. When a twenty-one block area supported twenty-three bars, it was evident that a lot of money was being taken out of the homes of the area.

Prostitution.—One woman in the neighborhood in a discussion with friends stated that she had been in the area for over fourteen years and that prostitution had been practiced openly during those years, and that she knew that there would be no stopping the practice.

This was stated matter-of-factly. Policemen were reputed to take their "cuts" from the women. It was reported that one policeman, who had quite a reputation in the area, had demanded that the women not ply their trade on the street while he was on duty.

There are prevalent in society two general conceptions of the duties of the police officer. Middle-class people feel that he could enforce the law without fear or favor. However, there are others who feel that he should have the confidence of the people in his area so that he can settle many difficulties in a personal manner without making arrests. There seemed to be a feeling by some official persons that the officer should not make too many arrests nor too few. He is to regulate illegal activities rather than to enforce the law. Since competition in illegal activities leads to violence, it is also in the interest of the Department to cooperate with the racket organizations in eliminating competition. By regulating the racket and keeping the peace, the officer can satisfy the demands for law enforcement with a number of token arrests and be free to make his adjustment to the local situation.

There seemed to be evidence that the foregoing facts had some application in the Hawthorne area.

Many of the women had daughters who had been encouraged to take up prostitution, stated one of the leaders in the Tenants Committee. The usual setup of such activity was evident - pimps, dope, et cetera.

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Gambling.-- Playing the "leads" and "numbers" were common accepted behavior. Twice a day one would see people congregating on the streets and walks waiting to hear the "word" or place their bets. Children were sent on errands to place bets with known agents. This practice was, seemingly, accepted as natural. Crap shooting on the streets was also a common sight to behold.

Rents.-- Although there was a rent control commission, and contrary to the statements that slum property yield very low rents, a large proportion of the people were paying exorbitant rents. By requiring weekly rates, many owners had found that tenants would pay much more than a flat monthly rate. Obviously they never stopped to figure out the aggregate rent for the month.

The writer made a survey of the rents paid in twelve units and discovered that in ten the amounts charged were twice the legal rents, and in the other two the rents charged were about six times the legal rents.

Another mean of extorting high rents utilized by some owners was to "chop-up" a unit and rent it in a semi-boarding or rooming house fashion.

Neighborhood Store.-- There was not a single"super-mart" in the immediate area. Numerous neighborhood stores abounded.

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1 Files of the H.U.R.P., op.cit.
CHAPTER IV

ROLES AND METHODS OF THE WORKER IN INITIATING THE COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION PROCESS IN THE VACANT LOT PROJECT

Scattered throughout the Hawthorne area were numerous vacant lots used for the storage of lumber, odd fixtures, coal and wood yards. Aside from the bad appearance which these lots added to the community, they were used as dumping places and were breeding places for rats. Some constituted nuisance industries.

United Neighbors saw the possibilities of these lots serving more useful purpose to the community. Also, a project around the lots would be a common factor around which to activate citizens in cooperative efforts, thus affording opportunities for discovering and developing leadership and building attitudes of neighborliness; hence, developing a greater feeling of community and community responsibility on the part of citizens of the area.

Fact-Finding

Fact-finding was carried on throughout the period of this study in relation to the vacant lots. The object of fact-finding is to have reliable guides to policy making and action.

Surveys—Observational Surveys of the lots and the community were made to ascertain factual and plausible answers to the following:

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1 James Dahir, op. cit., p. 40.

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1. Location and number of lots in the area.
2. What were the possible uses that the lots might be put based on size and location?
3. What were the present uses of the lots?
4. What were the feelings of the immediate neighborhood people about the lots and their uses?
5. Who were the owners of the lots?
6. What zoning ordinance existed in reference to the lots?
7. The nature and scope of the problem of clearing the lots.
8. City's policy and possible efforts regarding the lots.
9. What was the community structure?

Selecting Priorities.— On the basis of these facts and the responsibility of the agency to work with the neighborhood people immediately surrounding the Fitzwater site to raise the standard of that area, those lots in the immediate environs of the proposed housing site were given priority.

The lot at 12th Street and Webster Street was selected as the first on which to seek action. This lot was adjacent to the Bartlett Junior High School. Furthermore, the principal had filed complaints with the City's Department of Licenses and Inspection, seeking to have the lot cleared. Consequently, pressure was being applied to that end.

It is evident that, in order to select among the competing needs, judgments must be made with regard to (a) relative urgency of needs, (b) those needs most likely to be met through existing or potential resources, and (c) those needs about which there is a state of readiness upon the part of the community which would make change possible. It is easy to "lose the cause" by premature action before there is general readiness on the part of those to be affected by a proposed change.2

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1 Files of H.U.R.P., Vacant Lots, op. cit.
Initiating and Enabling

Recruiting and Selecting Committee.-- From information gained after contacting members of the immediate Webster Street side of the block - that there were five "broken families" and four "whole families", three with children - the worker elected, to develop a "core-group" of the families (women) with children. This group's general discontent with the lot would be buttressed by its consideration that the lot was a menace to the children in its present condition and would become a value to them if used by them.

Discussion terminated in scheduling a meeting at the home of one of the women. No one attended this meeting which was held October 6, 1955.

Building Relationships Through Support and Permissiveness.-- Worker wrote letters to two of the women, (Mrs. A) who reacted positively, praising her for the effort she had made.

Worker had recognized that (Mrs. C) would follow (Mrs. B.) A letter was sent to (Mrs. B) stating that her support was necessary and that she had been missed.

A follow-up interview with (Mrs. B) brought out the following tirade:

...I (worker) told (Mrs. B) that I was concerned about her absence from the meeting. She stated that she was getting her hair done. I asked her whether she was a friend of (Mrs. A). She replied that she speaks to (Mrs. A) but keeps her distance. I asked whether the neighbors like (Mrs. A), she said no, that nobody liked her; that she thought she was better than other people; that she did not discipline her children; that she tried to run everybody's business; that she had been fired from her job as Street Guard for talking too much; that she just ran her big mouth too much; and that was the reason nobody came.
I then asked her whether she thought she could work with her in trying to improve the block. She replied that she could and would. I then asked if she would meet at her home. She said that she would and that if I personally spoke to (Mrs.C) as I had to her, that she too would go, but that she did not think any of the other neighbors would. I assured her that about five members of the neighborhood would be satisfactory. I talked with (Mrs.C), and she stated that she would attend the next meeting if held at (Mrs.A).

The essence of community, as John Dewey suggested is communication. ...effective communication within a group, or between groups, depends to a considerable extent on the quality of relationship between the people involved. Where hostility, fear, aggression, distrust, disrespect predominate in these relationships, communication will be far less effective than where there are friendliness, mutual respect and trust. This suggests the importance of the creation of a social climate which permits and facilitates communication.

Four neighborhood people attended the meeting at (Mrs.A) on October 13, 1955. The group discussed things about which the individuals were concerned.

Negotiating.-- There existed a degree of tension between some property owners and tenants. For this reason and because of the limited time the women could give to improvement activities aside from their other responsibilities, the worker agreed to endeavor to secure the lot for the group's use.

...the members of any citizens organization have only a limited time to devote to community welfare. ...They do not sustain interest in any project for very long and tend to relax as soon as some tangible goal, however small, has been attained.

1 Files of H.U.R.P., op. cit.
2 Murray G. Ross, op. cit., p. 179.
3 James Dahir, op. cit., 279.
On October 19, 1955, the following interview was held in relation to securing the lot:

Interview with (Mr. X) at his office. I (worker) explained my mission: to get information on the lot, and the tenant interest in the lot. (Mr. X) wanted to know who was complaining about the lot. He stated that only tenants lived on the block and that they had no right to complain, that if they did not like the conditions there, they should move; that only owners of property have a right to complain about the lot, and that since he owned most of the property in the block he is the one to complain if anyone should. I asked him what plans he had for the lot... He said he might put a one-story structure there for a store of some sort. I asked him if he would, in the meanwhile, let the tenants clear the lot and use it as a tot-lot or to plant flowers on it. He replied that he might ask for it at any time so that would not be practical. I told him that it was not practical from his standpoint but that it was from that of the tenants. He said if they wanted to clear it and use it for those purposes, then they had his permission to go ahead.1

Subsequently, written agreements were exchanged between the group and the lot owner. The worker likewise was instrumental in securing city service in collecting the trash and removing it from the lot, and jointly with the Committee in getting a commitment from the principal of the Bartlett Junior High School to cooperate with the group by making available school facilities in reconstructing a picket fence around the lot.

Coordinating.-- In South Philadelphia, the Friends Social Order Committee sponsored the Philadelphia Volunteer Weekend Work Camps. The activities of the groups were based on the beliefs (1) that the individual can contribute to the world-wide efforts for realizing peace through volunteer service to others; that by identifying with disadvantaged people one may recognize

1 Files of H.U.R.P., op. cit.
the fallacy of stereotyping; that working on a common cause
dissipates antagonisms.

Volunteer members who labor in substandard neighbor-
hoods to help tenants fix up and paint up their property
are usually enlisted from nearby high schools and colleges... However, campers come from every section of the country to
help Philadelphia tenants repair their living quarters.
...only requirement for their services is that the
tenants should assist with the work.2

After an interagency agreement had been negotiated by the
Agency executive concerning the involvement of the Friends group
in the area program, the worker held conferences with the super-
visor of work campers to coordinate the activities of that group
with that of the neighborhood group in clearing the lot. An
important consideration in coordinating the groups' activities
was that of determining the number of campers to be involved in
relation to the number of neighborhood people who would participate
on any given weekend. A ratio of six-to-one was deemed desirable;
consequently, the neighborhood people would always be in the
majority and would consider the campers as helpers rather than
doers for them.

Interpreting and Education

Interviewing.--Numerous interviews were held with community
people explaining the program in the area. The worker used this
medium plus discussions to stimulate and sustain interest in the

1 American Friends Social Order Committee's Youth Service
Projects.

2 "Volunteer Paint Brush Brigades Bring Cheer to Run-Down
(Abstract).
in the project.

Discussion.-- Meetings of the committee were used for planning purposes and for exchanging ideas.

Reporting.-- Reports on the project were made to the agency staff, community project committee and to the tenants committee.

Consultation.-- The project was eventually referred to the tenants committee. The worker became a consultant to a sub-committee of that body.

Supervising Leader.-- The elected leader of the Webster Street Committee had very limited leadership skill, hence, the worker endeavored to strengthen her in this area. Frequent interviews or conferences were held in which the worker through support discussed the leader's feeling about the group progress and her role in furthering its activities.
CHAPTER V

THE PARTICIPATION OF LAY CITIZENS IN THE PROGRAM

From the beginning, the necessity of having wide citizen participation was recognized and every effort made to involve as many persons as had interest and desire as well as to create or foster interest and desire to participate in those persons who would be directly and indirectly affected by the program.

A community does not grow under forced circumstances. It grows and develops capacity only as it develops will and desire to grow, only as it struggles and strives to overcome its difficulties, only as it achieves strength in the conquest of its own problems.

Extent of Involvement

Interpreting Needs of Area to the City and City Officials.-- On May 28, 1954, a delegation composed of agency workers and neighborhood people met with the Housing Coordinator and pleaded that the Hawthorne area be considered as one of the proposed pilot sites.

Neighborhood people appeared in a Radio and Television Program depicting the conditions under which they were living, and were, consequently, instrumental in having the area certified for Urban Renewal.

Committee Work.--One of the outstanding phases of the Urban

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1 Murray G. Ross, op. cit., p. 38.
Renewal program in Philadelphia had been the development and subsequent functioning of the Tenants Committee.

Neighborhood people served on the Hawthorne Area Committee, on the Field Projects Committee, which was composed of staff, board members and community people. One tenants committee member was made a member of the board of directors of United Neighbors Association.

**Procuring Participation.**-- Those persons organized under the program had actively sought out others to join in the efforts of the program.

**Supportive: Liaison Between Tenants and Owners.**-- The Tenants Committee was the vehicle through which the tenants with aggravated housing problems had received and processed those grievances. When owners had endeavored to retaliate, this group had interceded and championed the rights of the tenants.

The group also attempted to instill within its members and friends some feeling of tenant responsibility.

**Pressure Group.**-- One of the functions of the citizens group was that of fostering, through a very critical attitude, what it felt to be the responsibilities of those administering the program. They attended court sessions and made recommendations to the judge on several occasions. They approached property owners and petitioned them to improve specific properties.

As a source of social control public opinion becomes important in societies founded on secondary relationship, of which great cities are a type. In the city every social group tends to create its own milieu and, as these conditions become fixed, the mores tend to accommodate themselves to the conditions thus created. In secondary groups and in
the city fashion tends to take the place of custom, and public opinion, rather than mores, becomes the dominant force in social control.  

Advisors and Consultants.—Leaders of the group had consulted with city and other officials on problems in the area, and also served as advisers to a Housing Authority official.

Factors Relating to Participation

Of the non-professional persons from the Hawthorne area who had actively participated in the program, women comprised almost the total figure. Nearly all of these women had children. All professional persons participating were men. This group's service was mostly of an advisory nature.

Motivations.—It was stated by the group at one of its meetings that everyone present, those who regularly attended meetings, had been personally helped in some way, by either the agency worker or the group. Other motives could have been (1) for the opportunities for socializing offered, (2) personal needs being satisfied and (3) the association with the professional workers.

Participation is partly a habit and also a matter of skill. It may also be an avenue of self-expression, like a hobby, chosen in preference to other uses of leisure. ...Reasons or motives for participation may develop as the following list will indicate:

1. Civic pride, including interest in conservation of values.
2. Organized expression of good will or "Social Consciousness."
3. Enjoyment of fellowship and sense of power in getting along with or manipulating other people.
4. Resentments and grievances which may get organized, rational expression.

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5. An outlet for energy.
6. Desire for prestige.
7. Keeping pace with one's family or peers.
8. Need for "contacts" in business and professional life.

Why People Do Not Participate...
1. Lack of time, energy, money, especially on the part of members of the working class.
2. Fear of losing job: reprisals against people who venture into unapproved activities...
3. Sense of futility because problems (urban) seem overwhelming.
4. Reluctance of people to "stick their necks out"; to be different or to be considered "reformers."
5. Lack of knowledge of the function of organizations; failure of leaders in interpreting programs.
6. Opportunities for participation are not always definite or concrete enough to be grasped by the inexperienced individual.¹

Only a small part of the population had participated. To expect too much of whole community action is to under-cut community self-confidence which is meager enough already.

The promotion of wider social participation is not singly a matter of getting families (or individuals) to join in activities or to accept leadership responsibility, but also a problem of overcoming attitudes toward themselves that block such participation. Much of the participation inertia in our society is no doubt related to these self-attitudes.³

If we would meet the challenge of our time, we must face the reality of fear. Social workers know the devastating effects of fear upon the individual or a whole people. The fears we know in our country, are fears of the heart and spirit, born of frustration.⁴

We who in our modern age have been brought up with an almost blind faith in anything labelled scientific do not easily realize that the peasant has a sense of security in his insecurity...but that insecurity is the thing he knows,

²James Dahir, op. cit., p. 42.
³Arthur Hillman, op. cit., p. 198.
and he understands it in so far as he has always lived with it and adjusted his practices and his ideas in relation to it.\(^1\)

These succinct statements focus on the central problem of the area in reference to why more people were not participating. For instance, some persons were aware of the rent control laws and further realized that the rents they were paying were too high or above the legal rent. However, they valued their relationships with the property owners more than the possible decrease in rent. The writer would suggest in explaining this that the individuals with good relationships with the owners could afford to miss their rent several times without the danger of being evicted. This is to say, seemingly, that the complacence was inherent in the individual's feeling of general security.

Social values are the key to understanding a community. If we know what the people in a certain area considered the most important thing in life, we know their social values. \(...\) people are going to evaluate our program in keeping with their scale of values.\(^2\)

Nevertheless, the Agency workers, had freed some tenants of their fears of landlord by giving them support and educating them to their rights under the law.

Since participants are potential leaders, the encouragement of broad participation will yield new sources of leadership. Leaders develop through competition of participants and by apprenticeship and experience on the part of capable individuals. In addition to the indirect development of leaders through extending participation, there are possibilities of leadership training of a more definite sort. Often this can best be done in specific situations by professional workers or more mature acting people acting as coaches.\(^3\)

\(^1\)Murray G. Ross, op. cit., p. 30.


\(^3\)Arthur Hillman, op. cit., p. 205.
Characteristics of Leaders Discovered and Developed

Four related attributes seemed to characterize the leaders of the tenant group: High native intelligence, courage, outspokenness, and aggressiveness. Considering the following it was obvious that this type of leadership would be necessary to activate and sustain the group.

Professional leaders from the community had been almost nil in their influence on the community people. The principals of the two schools of the area were influential with the advisory group.
CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study was undertaken with the purpose of reviewing the program in the "Hawthorne" area, placing emphasis on the participation of lay citizens in the endeavors. The writer sought to discuss and point out the significant developments in the program in the area; to delineate some conditions that existed in the area; to point out and demonstrate the social work process, roles, and methods evident in the vacant lot project; and to analyze the participation of lay citizens in the program of the area.

The following conclusions might be drawn from the material presented:

1. Having the organizational machinery and a crystallization of its purposes and philosophy, United Neighbors was fulfilling the responsibilities of three commitments in the "Hawthorne" area.

2. A generic social work approach seemed to be utilized by the Agency in its community program.

3. Urban Renewal presented a broad approach to ridding cities of slums. Philadelphia was one of the first cities in America to qualify by formulating a workable program.

4. Through code enforcement, some improvements had been made.
Nevertheless, code standards alone were not deemed adequate to meet the total needs of the area. Some owners had gone beyond the code standards and done a thorough job of renovating their properties.

5. Property owners, as a result of code enforcement, had full responsibility for improving their properties and were the immediate focus of the program.

6. Plans for the Fitzwater housing development were proceeding, with neighborhood people participating in the planning process.

7. The market for slum properties had been curtailed as a result of code enforcement.

8. United Neighbors had been instrumental in organizing a tenants group and a property owners group. These groups lent themselves to the consideration of problems peculiar to the respective group.

9. The "Hawthorne" area was not only economically impoverished but was also socially impoverished.

10. As the worker sought to assess the resources of the community, it was evident that human and material resources were being wasted.

11. Although some case work and group work skills were utilized by the worker in the vacant lot project, the community organization process was used more extensively in carrying out the assignment.

12. A "core" group of women around a common concern was facilitated by the worker in the vacant lot project.
13. The Friends weekend work campers were instrumental in catalyzing movement in clearing the lot.

14. Area participants were predominately women.

15. If quality of participation is to be considered paramount, then the Agency had been successful in its responsibility to activate the participation of area citizens.
APPENDIXES

- Hawthorne Area
- Hawthorne Elementary School
- Fitzwater Housing Development Site
- Headquarters: United Neighbors Association
  House of Industry; Community Projects
Hawthorne Area

- Vacant lots
- Churches
- Fitzwater Housing Development Site
- Non-white concentration
Hawthorne Area

- Neighborhoods with good external features
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