A study of the educational adjustment of fifty negro veterans of World War II in the Atlanta University Center of Atlanta, Georgia

Joseph Wesley Walker

Atlanta University

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A STUDY OF THE EDUCATIONAL ADJUSTMENT OF FIFTY NEGRO VETERANS OF
WORLD WAR II IN THE ATLANTA UNIVERSITY CENTER OF ATLANTA,
GEORGIA

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
JOSEPH WESLEY WALKER

ATLANTA, GEORGIA
JUNE 1946
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"The veteran is, and always has been a problematic element in society, an unfortunate, misused, and pitiable man and like others whom society has mistreated, a threat to existing institutions."¹ That statement illustrated the hopeless quandaries veterans of other wars have faced. But after World War II, our nation was rightfully concerned about a program that allowed a gradual return of veterans back to the ranks of civilian life. The GI Bill,² with its educational features, was at least a partial answer to what might be termed an economic gap, in that it provided opportunities for training never before known to this nation's veterans.

Significance of Study

For the next decade at least, the Atlanta colleges in the Atlanta University Center will carry a large enrollment of veterans of World War II. These veterans will be seeking the opportunity to gain skills that will make for economic security and personal happiness, and above all they will be seeking a well formulated program that will make for their readjustment to civilian life and lead ultimately to a status in their respective communities.

In order that the schools may serve these veterans' needs efficiently, it is necessary to have some basic understanding of their educational background, their army experiences, both positive and negative influences, and their educational goals. This is an attempt to give those fundamental facts about veterans in the Atlanta University Center.

² GI Bill provides educational training for veterans who have completed 90 days of military service and who have a honorable discharge.
Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study may be concretely listed as follows:

First.--To show how different backgrounds and different army experiences were affecting the school adjustment of the veterans interviewed.

Second.--To give a picture of the problems of the veteran in making a satisfactory school adjustment as reflected in the relationships with the school administrations, teachers, and with each other within the school setting.

Third.--To give a picture of the social adjustment of veterans to college and university life as shown by the social and athletic activities in which they engage. Data will be presented to show the degree of interest in clubs, fraternities and other extra curricula activities.

Fourth.--To show their educational goals and choices for a life's work. Factors that have contributed to their selection will be analyzed and findings in the Atlanta University System will be compared with authoritative information compiled for the nation as a whole.

Scope of Study

Veterans from all of the schools affiliated with the Atlanta University were included in the study. Consideration was given to the veterans found in small numbers, in several of the schools. Atlanta University and affiliated schools includes the following: Graduate schools are Atlanta University School of Social Work, Atlanta University, Gammon Theological Seminary and the undergraduate schools are Clark, Morris Brown, Morehouse and Spelman Colleges.

Method of Procedure

Permission was obtained from the Presidents or Deans of the different
schools to interview fifty veterans in the schools. Permission to use the registrar's records to secure their names, addresses, and classification within the schools was also obtained.

A random sample was used in the selections of veterans to be interviewed. Each school was given proportionate representation. Proportionate representation was also given to the respective classes within the schools. Fifty percent were veterans recently enrolled in the schools. The other fifty percent had been in attendance a semester or longer.

Information obtained directly from the veterans was supplemented by reading material from books, current magazine articles and booklets written directly about veterans. Reference books in the fields of psychology, sociology, and psychiatry that gave light on the veteran and their problems were also used.
CHAPTER II

PRE-WAR AND ARMY BACKGROUND OF THE VETERANS

The pre-war thinking and attitudes of the World War II veterans were described by Bolte in the following lines:

It was a little different with us: We had an uncertain world to live in; we had to watch the world grow in its course, in its long and nerve-racking prelude of depression and chaos, in its bloody course, in its indefinite, fearful future. We did not leave the secure and orderly world of 1914. We grew up to the dying strains of the Jazzy age, in the bitter years when there were maybe no jobs for our fathers, or our elder brothers or ourselves, in the more hopeful years when Mr. Roosevelt was moving things over the strident protest of those we had been led to regard as the pillars of society. In the last years of our growing up our own bright hopes for the future were conditioned and straitened by the inevitable looming of a war to whose courses those same distinguished had contributed no little. We were sent to that war; most of us reluctantly. It took a Pearl Harbor to get our country into the battle and it took a letter from the draft board to get us into the uniform.¹

Americans were primarily concerned with a struggle to gain personal security in the midst of a world in turmoil. In their thinking, little relationship existed between the two struggles. This paradoxical thinking of veterans studied is partially accounted for in their peace-loving background and training.

Types of Pre-war Work Experiences

The majority of the veterans studied were between the ages of twenty-three and twenty-five and all had been drafted into the army. The average veteran interviewed had served three years in the army.

Although comparatively young, interviewed veterans have shown varied work experiences. It can be concluded from the study that a general dissatisfaction existed with their work routines.²

² Compilation of information from interviews March 5, 1946.
type of work was liked, the income was inadequate or the men felt that their training was insufficient and, as a result, a high degree of insecurity existed. A large number of men were dissatisfied with their jobs, their incomes, and all other factors connected with their work.

John stated, "My income was not adequate to take care of my needs."

James remarked, "I wanted to get married but I could not support a wife on my little salary."

Paul reacted, "I did not like my work but I had no other skills and I had a wife to support." Pre-war work experiences of veterans studied are shown in Table 1.

\[\text{TABLE 1}\]

VETERANS' INTERVIEWED PRE-ARMY WORK EXPERIENCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupations</th>
<th>Number of Veterans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance agents</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supply clerks</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambulance Driving</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper agents</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NYA Defense Training</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre Managers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truck Drivers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenters</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital attendants</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewelry Repairman</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor organizers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricians</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiters</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The largest number of veterans were students at the time of their draft into the army. The next highest number were in the teaching field. Most

1 All names of persons used in this study are fictitious.
of this group were men in graduate schools. The other veterans, specifi-
cally those on the undergraduate level, although working on full time jobs, as
indicated in Table 1, had intentions of returning to school. The jobs were
being used for the purpose of gaining sufficient savings to pay their tuition
expenses.

Types of Schools Attended Before Being Drafted

The majority of the veterans were life long residents of the South and
had attended exclusively all-Negro schools and therefore had no problems of
adaptation to all-Negro college life. They were totally prepared for the
opportunities of full participation in the social, recreational and academic
life of the school. Many had been drafted from the schools where they were
presently attending. Many of the others had selected local schools to attend
and the war merely delayed the carrying out of their original plans.

Army Life

In order to fully appreciate the value of the army's educational ex-
periences it is first necessary to get, in some detail, the effects of army
experiences on the men interviewed and knowledge of their feelings about
those experiences.

Army Life's Effects.—Military experiences in times of war left a mark
upon the men. In order to understand them, individualization is necessary.
The aim of the army is to impose its will upon the enemy but before that
can be done, it first must impose its will on the men in the organization.¹
The veterans in the colleges and the university in this study displayed
characteristics of self-direction and self reliance.² To further intensify

1 Willard Waller, op. cit., p. 19.
2 Ibid., p. 152.
the situation the fact that these veterans were all draftees, meant that they gave a minimum of consent to their experiences. To illustrate this point veterans interviewed made the following statements.

Jim remarked, "I really did not want to go to the army but there was not anything I could do about it."

William said, "All of my friends had been drafted and I was just another victim."

Terry stated, "I had just gotten my future fairly well planned and then the army took me." In substance, the army took men trained for peace and sent them to fight. It took men conditioned to look to their own interest and then compelled them to sacrifice their personal lives to a somewhat questionable, collective good. Above all, army life frustrated those basic desires that society itself had engendered.  

Post-war Feelings About Army Experiences.--Veterans' feelings about their army experiences ran the gauntlet from favorable to bitter and antagonistic remarks. A few typical statements were:

Thomas stated, "I feel advanced in every walk of life."

Smith said, "An experience that I am rightfully proud of."

In contrast was the impression of Anthony who stated that the army was "Man's worst experience" Paul said, "It was a necessary evil." The majority of veterans saw army life as a valuable experience but admitted that during their service they had little appreciation for it. It was only in reflecting over their experiences that the positive aspects were recognized.

Army Educational Experiences.--To those veterans that saw overseas service, travel loomed high from an educational point of view. The opportunity of seeing other nations and observing their cultural patterns and, even for

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1 Ibid.
a time, being partially subjected to their pattern for social pleasures was a very enlightening experience.

Donald remarked, "We had to learn to mix with other types of people and this experience broadened our human outlook." Many veterans, regardless of area of service, felt benefited by leadership characteristics developed in the army. Army life, from their point of view, was an opportunity to lead and to be led.¹

Mack became philosophical and stated, "Army life taught me what destruction meant to civilization."

Carl remarked, "It was a new world of experience."

Military Disabilities.—A few of the men interviewed had service connected disabilities and a few others had service-aggravated disabilities. All were drawing pensions with the exception of a few within the class of the service-aggravated group. Although majority of the veterans enrolled in the schools entered after the close of the war, the majority of those with disabilities were medically discharged long before that time. Only a few of these men had overseas service but yet their military life was colored with the more greatly intensified problems.

¹ Charles G. Bolte, op. cit., p. 5.
CHAPTER III

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND GOALS

Rehabilitation of veterans through educational training has many advantages. The schools with a good teaching staff can be well adjusted to the needs of veterans. Social pressures are not severe and the veterans have a chance to work out their emotional problems. Veterans interviewed looked upon the school as a means of gaining skills that in the future would mean security. The majority of undergraduates interviewed would have been in school even if there were not the GI Bill. On the other hand, the graduate students reported that they would not have been in school without government aid because of age and family responsibilities.

TABLE 2

VETERANS' COURSE SELECTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courses of Study</th>
<th>Number of Veterans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Administration</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Guidance</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Courses

Table 2 illustrates the selection of courses made by the fifty
Consistent with a survey of men in uniform,\(^1\) the educational interests of the veterans studied were strongly slanted toward vocationally useful curricula.

The largest number of veterans selected business administration and mathematics had the next highest grouping. The others can roughly be divided into preparatory courses leading to the field of medicine, teaching and social work.

**Purpose and Aims of the Veterans**

Veterans' objectives in educational training may be listed as follows:\(^2\)

1. To be restored to the competitive position which they occupied before going into service.
2. To rejoin those communicative processes of society that would give civilian status with all of the accompanied interests, habits and sentiments of civilians.
3. To overcome all handicaps, physical or mental, that were incurred in service.
4. To again be able to take active part in the life of the community.
5. To rid themselves of all bitterness and antagonism and to establish normal relationships in the school, family, church, and the civic and social life of the community.

Otis remarked, "I felt fairly secure when I went into the army and now I want to regain that feeling."

Johnson stated, "School will help me to readjust to civilian life."

Gerald said, "College training will enable me to become economically

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secure inspite of my handicap."

Fields selected for life's work are shown in Table 3 that follows:

**TABLE 3**

**VETERANS' SELECTED PROFESSIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fields of Work</th>
<th>Number of Veterans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Administration</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concert Artist</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part Time Work at The Schools**

The majority of the veterans interviewed felt that the income from the government was sufficient to take care of their basic needs. The only exceptions were married men with families. All veterans, married and single, felt it was better to devote full time to studies and the necessary recreation.

Jones reacted, "I want to have some time to do as I like."

Fields stated, "I am too restless to be confined to a job." Work opportunities by veterans studied were to be considered after a satisfactory school adjustment had been made.

**Membership in Organizations**

It was found that a large number of the veterans were members of the respective clubs connected with their fields of study. They were members of French Clubs, Business Clubs, Science and Mathematics Clubs, Pan Hellenic Councils, and athletic clubs. They were also active in the Student Councils.
of their respective schools. Where the veterans were not members of those organizations, they were attempting to demonstrate the type of scholarship and character that would soon qualify them for membership.

Aside from the academic clubs, veterans, in large numbers, were members of social organizations such as fraternities and sororities. Non-members were very much interested in gaining this affiliation. In the words of the veterans, these organizations gave prestige and status which was necessary for a fruitful school life.

Table 4 gives the social activities selected by the veterans studied and the number of veterans interested in those activities.

Table 4

VETERANS' SELECTED SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Number of Veterans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Movies</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dancing</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Card playing</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerts and Musicals</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversations and Socializing</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lectures</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checkers</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stags</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teas</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Movies, dancing and card playing such as bridge, whist, and hearts were the chief leisure time activities of the veterans.

Extra-School Activities

Veterans were asked to list their choices in social and athletic activities. They were also asked if they had sufficient time and opportunities for those activities. No veterans had any complaints about sport activities time allotment. Time allotment and the types of social activities
permitted were severely criticized in denominational schools.\footnote{Compilation of information from interviews March 5, 1946.}

Table 5 shows the athletic activities selected by the veterans and the number of veterans selecting all activities.

TABLE 5

VETERANS' SELECTED ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Number of Veterans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Track</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft ball</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ping Pong</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowling</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse back riding</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse shoe pitching</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrestling</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badminton</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pool</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Football and basketball were the leading athletic activities selected. Baseball and tennis and track were also popular.
CHAPTER IV

PROBLEMS OF EDUCATIONAL ADJUSTMENT DIRECTLY IN THE SCHOOL

The majority of veterans interviewed had completed three or more years of military service. This service undoubtedly influenced their patterns of living. In addition almost half had been discharged only a month; about half of the others for a two month period, and the others for a three month period before their enrollment in the respective schools.¹ These veterans, therefore, not only had the normal problems of getting orientated to school life but also the over-all problem of readjustment to civilian life. In terms of school relationships, there is a fusion of the two problems. The army is not a school for the building of character. When a person has made the necessary adjustment to army life, some part of his ability to readjust to civilian life has been lost.²

A few veterans were poorly adjusted before entering the army and their school adjustment had been aggravated and intensified by these life long problems. A few other veterans had problems of adjustment because of a disability, both service connected and service aggravated.

Practically all of the veterans had the problems of loss of ability to concentrate, to express themselves freely, and other problems of similar nature. The effects of these different factors on their school adjustment will be treated in this chapter.

School Administration-Veteran Relationships

Colleges and universities must modify their curricula and procedures in terms of the needs and abilities of the veterans, rather than in

¹Compilation of information from interviews, March 5, 1946.
terms of traditional practices or academic standards applicable to younger and less experienced persons.¹

This point of view is further illustrated in the following.

Educational authorities are already finding that major adjustments in ordinary schools and college programs are necessary in order to meet the veteran's special requirements. The need for these adjustments is stemming from three main facts.

1. The veteran is now a matured adult.
2. He wants to make up for lost time and get his education quickly.
3. He wants his education pointing toward a specific job or vocation.

At least four major guide post are emerging that should be helpful to schools in adapting their educational services to these factors.

1. Teaching methods, texts and procedures used for adolescents need to revamped to meet the interest and pre-requisites of more matured students.
2. Colleges must be more flexible in their entrance requirements in order to save the veteran from waste of time or courses that he does not want to take.
3. More training opportunities offered within the schools.
4. Special attention, in the schools, to the disable veterans, including more complete records, individual guidance and counseling and assurance of adequate health services. Local educational authorities need to plan his program in close cooperation with the veterans administration.²

The attitudes expressed in the above were strongly endorsed by the veterans, particularly those in the freshman classification. Half of the undergraduate veterans were freshman.

Richard stated, "There is too much emphasis placed on certain petty requirements which are especially distasteful to the average veteran—for example, freshman orientation, physical education, and chapel meeting more often than absolutely necessary."
Veteran Organization in the School.—One half of the veterans interviewed were of the opinion that a veteran's organization in the school would be beneficial, both to the school and to the veterans. This group was cognizant of the negative aspects of an organization in the schools. The following reasons were given to support their stand:

1. This would be an opportunity to understand each other better and to help each other with personal problems.
2. Civilians do not understand veterans, in that they do not have a full appreciation and insight into what they have gone through.
3. An organization would help the veterans to find the road back to normal social participation.
4. Veteran organization could be used to promote the interest of the entire student body in the schools that have not seen fit to permit student council representation in the school.
5. Organization would be a means of veterans getting together to talk over old army experiences and travel observations.

The other half of the veterans were opposed to a veteran organization in the schools. They felt that the negative effects would be too detrimental to the interest of all concerned. The following reasons were given to support this point of view:

1. One of the primary purposes of educational training is the integration of the veteran to the civilian pattern and an organization would impede that process.
2. In incidents where there are suppressed emotions and sometimes even open hostility between veterans and civilian men students an

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1 Compilation of information from interviews March 5, 1946.
2 Ibid.
organization would tend to accentuate and aggravate those feelings.

(3) A good veteran advisor in the schools would be able to serve all of the veteran's needs, without any of the negative factors attached to an organization.

(4) Veterans are, or should be, too busy studying for an organization and too many organizations for veterans are already established throughout the nations.

Veteran Advisor in the School.—All of the veterans were in favor of an advisor in the schools and they unanimously agreed that this advisor should be a veteran too. The following points were advance in support of these opinions:

(1) Many veterans have problems that are peculiar only to them and an advisor could help them to do something about those problems.

(2) An advisor could explain rights and benefits and veterans administration processes to relieve veteran's feelings of anxieties and emotional tensions often felt, especially in the beginning of their educational training.

(3) This advisor could help the teachers and the administrators to understand veterans, and this would make for smoother relationships.

(4) A veteran advisor could help veterans to decide professional goals of educational training.

At the time of this writing no veterans' organization or advisor had been established in the schools that met with the standards desired by the veterans.

Teacher-Veteran Relationships

Compilation of information from interviews March 5, 1946.
About one third of the veterans noticed no changes in teacher-student relationships from what they were in pre-war days. The other veterans gave varied viewpoints, with the majority feeling that the teachers were too sympathetic. They were resentful of that attitude. They wanted the teachers to give recognition to what they had been through with a high degree of understanding but with little display of sympathy. Practically all of the veterans felt that the teachers wanted to be helpful. This attitude was deeply appreciated. Only a few veterans felt that the teachers were too indifferent toward them. This accusation was directed to a limited number of instructors and carried no general implications.

Jimmy remarked, "Some teachers have no appreciation for what the veterans have been through."

Lunley stated, "Some teachers are expecting too much out of us."

About one third of the veterans felt that their attitude toward teachers was the same as it was in pre-war days.

The majority of veterans had high respect for the instructors and accepted them as authorities in their respective fields. The only exception to this opinion was the veteran's attitude toward part-time instructors, where, in most cases, there was no opportunity in time allotment for the normal teacher-student relationships which would lead to the establishment of that much needed rapport. A few veterans said that they felt cautious of themselves in the presence of the instructor. A few other veterans stated they felt a fear of their instructors based on their own personal inadequacies and complexities which they hoped to keep shielded from the instructors, so that these factors would not enter into the relationships.¹

¹ Compilation of information from interviews March 5, 1946.
Preparation and Classroom Participation

The best place to start veteran education is with the veteran and his own attitude.\(^1\)

*Caldwell remarked, "It took a half of semester to get accustomed to teachers, classes, and study."* The statement was typical of the attitudes of the majority of veterans interviewed. After being in school for that length of time, such remarks as this were made:

"I am regaining self confidence but a world of extra effort was required."

"I feel so secure now."

The only exceptions were veterans that had changed fields of study from their pre-war training. Extra time was necessary in order for them to regain a feeling of security.

*Ability to Concentrate.*—The majority of veterans found it extremely difficult to concentrate, for any length of time, at the beginning of their training period. The learning process in the army was a maximum of activity with a minimum of instruction and study.\(^2\) With the situation reversed, veterans had to call out all of their powers of determination and self discipline. In most cases extensive reading had improved their ability to concentrate.\(^3\)

*Ability of Self Expression.*—Army life not only provided a new way of living, but, it also, gave a new language. The concise and standardized

\(^1\) Willard Waller, *op. cit.*, p. 295.

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 28.

\(^3\) Compilation of information from Interviews March 5, 1946.
method of speaking in the army could not be useful in civilian life and especially in educational centers.¹ Several veterans made this statement: "Words just don't come out right."

Many veterans had nervous disorder and speech impediments that further complicated their expression problem.

Other Related Problems.—As a whole, veterans, in viewing their problems of classroom participation, were invariably making comparisons in their abilities in the pre-war and post-war days. They could feel no degree of satisfaction until they had regained the level of or surpassed their previous accomplishments.² There were a few exceptions where the status and accomplishment in the army was set as a civilian goal. These veterans were constantly concerned about their decision to return to school when they also had the opportunity to re-enlist in the army and retain their rank and security.

A few other veterans, in most cases married men and those in graduate school, had good job offers or satisfactory old jobs to return to, and they were still debating, although enrolled in school, what should have been done. Divided interest of this type was not making for the best classroom activity.³

Attitudes of Veterans Toward Their School Adjustment

Practically all of the veterans felt that they were working through their problems of school adjustment and in the cases of those that had been in school for a semester or longer, felt that their adjustment process had been completed. These veterans felt that it was necessary to maintain a

¹ Willard Waller, op. cit., p. 32.
² Compilation of information from Interviews, March 5, 1946.
³ Ibid.
positive attitude in view of their life long ambitions, even in face of serious problems. They also realize certain skills and techniques were required. It was this undaunted determination that transformed school adjustment from a hope to a reality.¹

Place of Study

The majority of the veterans interviewed preferred to study in their rooms. The men veterans said the accommodations of the library were adequate but the presence of so many young ladies made for a distraction. Only a few veterans selected the library as the best place to study, and some of that number specified library stacks as their place for study.²

Hours of Study

The majority of veterans studied three or four hours each day. Table 5 shows the time allotment for daily study hours.

TABLE 6

VETERANS' STUDY HOURS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Hours of Study Daily</th>
<th>Number of Veterans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Majority of the veterans studied three hours daily. These were all in undergraduate school. The more conscientious undergraduate veterans

¹ Ibid.
² Ibid.
studied four hours daily. Those studying five and six hours daily were all in graduate school.
CHAPTER V

PROBLEMS OF SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT

It is a commonly recognized fact that the majority of veterans have made personality changes, as a result of military experience, that affect social adjustments on their return to school. But it is also a fact, frequently overlooked, that the general atmosphere of the campuses have made major changes.¹ In spite of these two facts one third of the veterans interviewed had no problems connected with their social adjustment on the campuses. Many of this number felt that the civilian students were a little too casual and indifferent in their attitudes toward them. A number of others felt that the other students had exaggerated opinions of themselves. To illustrate exactly how the veterans interviewed felt about the other students.

Marcus made this remark, "The other students accepted me after a period of introduction."

Amos made this statement, "The other students were not friendly, it could have been my fault."

Stephen said, "I was received casually." These statements are typical of the reactions of this group of veterans.

Social Problems Connected With Age

If an attempt were being made to rate social problems according to prominence, unquestionably the problem of age would head the list. The problem is divided into two general topics.

Veteran-woman Student Relationships.—The majority of veterans interviewed in the undergraduate schools were between the ages of twenty-four and twenty-five and those in graduate school had an age level above this.

¹ Willard Waller, op. cit., p. 81.
In addition, the travel and experiences of the men had given to them a sophistication surpassing their chronological ages. In contrast, the average female students, even those in graduate schools, were much younger, and their hopes and expectations were in keeping with their age. Their emotional maturity bore little relationship to their educational accomplishments. As a result, in most instances, there was not a medium for permanent happy relationships. Only the satisfaction of immediate pleasures was the result.¹

For an example Hart reacted, "I am just dating around hoping to find the right girl."

Norton said, "I date a girl on week-ends just to get away from my room for a while."

Veterans discharged early from the army—in most cases medically discharged—faced additional problems. Even though they wore the honorable discharge button, they were often classed with the 4F's and deeply resented it. Because of the acute shortage of men, permanently located around the campuses, women students made their own social and recreational program to the exclusion of the few men that were around.²

Veteran-Civilian Men's Relationships.—On campuses where veterans were in small numbers and the ages of the civilian men students and the veterans were comparable there was no conflict. But on the campuses where veterans were in large numbers and there was a disparity of ages of the two groups, suppressed emotions and some open hostility were observed. The civilian teen-age men students were resentful and antagonistic to veterans

¹ Ibid.
² Ibid.
and felt that they had been cheated out of participation in the war. On the other hand the veterans felt that many of those students were too young and childish to be in college. Veterans also felt that these young men students wasted too much time and asked too many foolish questions. To climax it all, veterans felt that their educational abilities were superior to the non-veterans and displayed mannerisms to support their convictions.

Lewis made this remark, "I thought and still think most of the other students are childish."

Mira said, "They are too young to be in college."

Stevenson stated, "We veterans are doing better school work than the other students." All of these statements were made in the undergraduate schools.

Some Typical Veterans' Complexes

The majority of the veterans made satisfactory adjustment after a considerable lapse of time and often after considerable cost. While they were going through that transitional period some of the most common reactions were as follows:

Hamilton said, "I had an inferiority complex toward other students."

Allen remarked, "I was not accepted too pleasantly. It could have been my personality."

Pearson stated, "I must be careful of my speech in public. I lack confidence in myself."

Harper reacted, "I am resentful of other students."

Alfred remarked, "I felt superior in experience, academically inferior

\[1\] Ibid.
\[2\] Ibid.
and sort of out of place."

The veterans felt the other students were neurotic and the other students felt that the veterans were neurotic. This points out a total lack of understanding.1

Disabilities and Their Social Problems

The majority of veterans studied were in better physical condition when they left the service than when they entered, an establish fact with veterans on a whole.2 The required physical exercise, shots for the prevention of disease, and dental and medical care accounts for this. Then too, had there been anything seriously wrong, they would not have been demobilized. In regard to veterans with disabilities, in majority of cases difficulties were pre-induction in nature, and were only aggravated by military service. This was consistent with facts found for veterans on a whole.3 Their major social problem was the students' lack of understanding as to ways to treat men with disabilities. If students had followed simple rules of good manners among which are: don't stare, don't point, don't make personal remarks and don't ask questions4 most of their problems would have been avoided. Most resented of all were the questions asked about their disabilities. A few veterans found it impossible to engage in social activities such as dancing because of their disabilities.5

1 Ibid.
4 Ralph Arnold, "How to Treat Them" Reader's Digest, (February 1944) p. 24.
5 Compilation of information from interviews, March 5, 1946.
Family Problems and School Adjustment

A few of the veterans studied were married and the majority of that number were in graduate school. They all desired the companionship of their wives, but because of the lack of housing accommodations or because of professional work of the wife, it was impossible for the wives to permanently remain in the vicinity. It was found that veterans without overseas service were suffering greater discontent and anxiety over their wives' absences. It was further evident, from the study, that if it were not for the GI Bill with its free educational opportunities these men would have never returned to school. Many indicated in statements and actions that unless their companionship problem was solved their school tenure would be cut short of its objective.¹

Southern Cultural Pattern and Its Affect on Northern and Western Veterans

Only a few of the veterans interviewed were from Northern and Western communities without any past exposure to life in the South. These veterans had a misconception of the social life of the Atlanta schools. Having previously attended mixed schools where there were limited social activities and participation, they had concluded that the situation would be reversed. To their disappointment, they found the students had the normal interest in social activities but were greatly restricted by school regulations that gave limitations equal to the racial factor of the North.² Secondly, social prestige in the North was based on occupation, education, and income while in the South it was associated with lightness of the skin.

The results of this cultural pattern was shown on the campuses by the

¹ Ibid.
² Ibid.
intimate groups such as cliques and clubs. Frazier makes a reference to this type of thinking.\(^1\)

**Military Prestige and Its Civilian Social Problem**

A few of the veterans were officers during their military service and a few others were non-commissioned officers of high rank. This military standing had given a status exceeding any attainment in civilian life. To become an unidentified freshman or sophomores in college was a severe blow to their personalities. This was evident in their private conversation and publicly in the frequent wearing of their military uniforms.\(^2\) To illustrate this point, Sigmund made this remark, "I was an officer in the army but look at me now."

Levy stated, "Perhaps I would feel better if I had stayed in the army."

Klein said, "It is pretty tough without that uniform on."

Veterans without overseas service had a problem of socializing with those that had traveled over the world. The other students expected them to have something to contribute to the conversation about travel experiences. This made these veterans feel resentful and envious of their globe trotting comrades. On the other hand, if the other students gave them as much recognition as the overseas combat men, they felt guilty and undeserving.

English said, "Some veterans talk too much about overseas service, it is embarrassing to me."

Cannon stated, "I feel funny when other veterans talk about overseas service." This point of view has been elaborated upon in various books written on the adjustments of veterans.\(^3\)

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2. Compilation of information from Interviews, March 5, 1946.
CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

This study was a survey of the educational and social problems of adjustment of fifty World War II Veterans selected at random from the three hundred and twenty-six veterans enrolled in the Atlanta University affiliated schools. Six of this number were female students, having served in the WAC. Proportionate representation was given to the seven schools in the system and to the respective classes within the schools. Length of school attendance was also given consideration in selecting students for study. The primary purpose was to give a picture of the school adjustment pattern of veterans.

Summary

The World War II Veteran grew up, not only in a nation of economic chaos, but in the midst of international upheavals. He was facing a depression on one hand and a threatening war on the other. To further complicate matters, society had given veterans a philosophy of life that was geared for peace in a world of turmoil. This left the veteran totally unprepared for the ordeal he was compelled to enter.

Military service left its mark on the veteran. It took him from his world of individuality and self discipline to a new way of life, one of regimentation and group control. It gave opportunities for travel and the development of certain basic leadership characteristics, but it also delayed the execution of the life-long ambitions of its victims. Personalities were altered, some for good, some for ill. In their absences society, itself, changed. All of these factors must be recognized and understood. Veterans interviewed benefited by a military experience, although, at
the time of service, they had little or no appreciation for military life. Although the veterans studied engaged in a number of work experiences before entering military service, they were for greater part students actually attending some school or working temporarily with the intentions of returning to school. After discharge from the army, the GI Bill gave a wonderful opportunity to again strive toward their war-delayed ambitions. Almost half of the veterans selected the newer fields of social work and business administration, while the others selected the traditional fields of law, medicine, and teaching.¹

Practically all of the veterans had problems of educational adjustment to school. Their abilities to concentrate, to express themselves and their abilities to generally apply themselves to the academic routines had been impaired. The majority felt that the teachers wanted to be helpful but that they had a tendency to be over-sympathetic; an attitude that was resented by the veteran. It was their desire that teachers recognize their handicaps but with little or no emotions and display an understanding mannerism in their relationships. For the most part problems of educational adjustment were solved after a semester in school. Social problems were persisting for a greater length of time then the educational problems.

Majority of the veterans preferred to study in their rooms. And one third of those that selected the library designated the library stacks as the place to study. The men stated that the presence of many women students in the library was a distraction that they did not wish to face.

Majority of the veterans studied three and four hours each day and those studying more time were all in graduate school.

¹ Table 3, p. 11.
Veterans were interested in all of the conventional athletics and social activities of college and university life and were taking an active part in the clubs of the respective fields of study and the student organizations such as the councils. They also held membership in the fraternities and sororities or were seeking this affiliation.

Slightly less than half had social problems of an intensified nature. Of this number, a majority were veterans with medical discharges. These veterans had many complexities that were affecting their school adjustment and those problems were being aggravated by a lack of understanding by the other students. Disparity of ages and degree of maturity between veterans and other students on campuses was a problem of paramount importance.

Veterans were unable to reach any general agreement on the advisability of a veteran organization in the schools but it was unanimously agreed that a veteran advisor should be on the school staff and that this representative should be a veteran.

A few married veterans on the campuses had problems of a forced separation from their wives. This problem had a greater emotional intensity with men that had not had overseas assignments. Two factors were basic in the existence of the problem: First, employment of the wife, second, lack of housing accommodation in this area. This problem was critically affecting their school adjustment.

Educational goals and ambitions of veterans were pre-war established and the war merely delayed their efforts in gaining those objectives. Veterans aims were to regain skills and abilities comparable to their pre-war levels and to make the all pervasive adjustment to civilian life. Above all, they were striving to gain the necessary equipment for an economically secure existence.
QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE HISTORY OF A VETERAN

1. Name_________________________Age_____________________

2. Place of residence for majority of years_____________________

3. Marital status (check) Single____ Married_____ Divorced_____

4. School attended before going to the army_____________________

5. Type of school (check) Mixed_____ All Negro_____ Coed_______
   Non-Coed______

6. What were your pre-army work experiences (explain)_____________________

7. Income adequate (check) Yes____ No____ Did you like this type of work
   (check) Yes_____ No_____

8. What was your army status (check) Draftee____ Volunteer____
   Officer____ Enlisted Man_____?

9. What was your length of service?_____________________

10. How long were you out of the army before coming to school?________

11. Did you have any army experiences or military training that is of
    educational value (explain)_____________________

12. How do you feel now about your army experiences? (explain)________

13. What was your army general classification test score?________

14. Do you have a disability as a direct result of military experiences?
    (explain)_____________________

15. Do you have service aggravated disability? (explain)_____________________

16. What training program are you under?_____________________

17. Would you be in school now without this government aid (check) Yes____
    No_____

33
18. Do you have any other source of income? (check) Yes____No____

19. Did you have a good job offer or the opportunity to return to a satisfactory old job before coming to school? (check) Yes____No____

20. What is your major in school? _________________________________
   Classification__________________________

21. When you first returned to school did you feel capable of competing in classroom work with the other students? (check) Yes____No____
   How do you feel about this now?________________________________________

22. Did you have any difficulty in expressing yourself at first? (check) Yes____No____ Has this condition changed? (explain)__________________________

23. Did you have any difficulty in remembering classroom assignments? (check) Yes____No____ How is your memory now (explain)______________

24. Could you concentrate for any length of time at first? (check) Yes____No____ How is your ability to concentrate now? (explain)__________________________

25. What the teacher's attitude toward you? (explain)________________________

26. What was your attitude toward the teachers? (explain)__________________________

27. How did you feel toward the other students? (explain)__________________________

28. How were you received by the other students? (explain)__________________________

29. Have your feelings in any of these areas undergone any changes?__________________________

30. Have there been any changes in the teachers and other students attitude toward you? (explain)__________________________

31. Was there any contrast in your attitude toward other veterans as compared to the civilian students attitude toward them?__________________________
   (explain)__________________________
32. How much time spent studying daily? ________________________________

33. Where can you study best? ________________________________

34. Has the fact that women outnumbered the men in the Atlanta University system affected your school adjustment? (explain)__________________________

35. Are you a member of a Greek Letter organization? (check) Yes______
No____ If the answer is no, would you like to belong to one? (check) Yes____ No____

36. What social activities do you like? (list) 1.________________________
2.________________________ 3.________________________ 4.________________________

37. Are you getting sufficient opportunity to engage in these activities? (check) Yes____ No____

38. What athletic activities do you like (list) 1.________________________
2.________________________ 3.________________________ 4.________________________

39. Are you getting sufficient opportunity to engage in these activities? (check) Yes____ No____

40. Should the school have a special advisor for veterans (explain)________________________

41. Do you think a veteran organization should be set up in the school? (explain)________________________

42. Do you feel that you are forming life long friendships in the school now? (check) Yes____ No____

43. Do you feel that the school is helping your adjustment to civilian life (check) Yes____ No____

44. What are your problems of school adjustment? (explain) Social______
________________________________________ Family________
________________________________________ Income________ Recreation________

45. Are your plans for the future clearly outlined? (explain)________________________
46. Is the school the best method of arriving at your vocational goal or is there a better method that is blocked to you? (explain)
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