A study of the origin and program of Blossom Hill School for pre-delinquent girls, Brecksville, Ohio from 1914-1947

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A STUDY OF THE ORIGIN AND PROGRAM OF BLOSSOM HILL SCHOOL FOR PRE-DELIQUENT GIRLS, BRECKSVILLE, OHIO FROM 1914-1947

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

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The treatment of socially maladjusted children as separate from adult offenders was inaugurated in a few states early in the nineteenth century.¹ At that time, society was beginning to realize the danger of placing youthful offenders with hardened criminals and experienced adults. Some private social agencies took the lead in providing separate quarters for those children who could not make an adequate adjustment in their community. The first House of Refuge for delinquent children was established in 1825 by the Society for the Reformation of Juvenile Delinquents in New York City. Similar houses were opened in 1826 and 1827 in Boston and Philadelphia. The programs of these early institutions were based largely on confinement, custodial care and industrial work.

Near the middle of the nineteenth century, the movement for state care of delinquents had begun, and in 1847, the first state institution was established in Westboro, Massachusetts. Later, all state governments and many city and county governments established some type of institution for the detention and training of delinquents. These

institutions were widely known as residential schools.

By the twentieth century, there were approximately 166 residential schools under public auspices in this country. Of this number, 115 were state and national schools, and fifty-one were county and municipal institutions. In 1944, an average of 30,000 children were served by them.¹

Residential schools are now recognized as specialized child welfare institutions. Their chief function is to re-educate and treat those children committed by a juvenile court. In this instance, re-education means something much broader and deeper than any amount of improvement in the academic instruction or vocational training which the individual child is to receive. It means reshaping behavior patterns as well as giving thoughtful attention to the emotional development of a child. It also implies that a child must receive sufficient re-education or re-direction before release to enable him to make those personal adjustments that are necessary if he is to lead a fuller, happier and more productive life. These measures are essential if a child is to avoid those difficulties which previously brought him and may again bring him into conflict with society and its laws.

Realistically, the residential school's task is to discover the assets and limitations of each child in

¹Ibid., p. 267.
relation to his social needs and then by the means of individualization help him to develop a personality capable of satisfactory self-direction.1

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to trace the origin of Blossom Hill School, Breckville, Ohio, to review its program, and to see how it is designed to meet the needs of the girls committed.

Scope of Study

This study includes the historical development of Blossom Hill School, Breckville, Ohio, from 1914 to 1947 and points out the significant aspects of its program for the year 1947.

Method of Procedure

The material in this study was secured through personal interviews with the superintendent and other members of the staff and through visits to and observations in departments of the institution and its population. Documentary data, annual reports and other unpublished agency records were reviewed, and literature pertinent to the subject was used to supplement the data obtained.

CHAPTER II

THE DEVELOPMENT OF BLOSSOM HILL SCHOOL

Early History

In the Statute Laws of Ohio, Blossom Hill School and kindred institutions are known as "Houses of Refuge." Their establishment was first authorized by the Act of Ohio of April 16, 1857 which stated that "municipalities have special power to establish, erect, maintain, and regulate jails, houses of refuge and correction, work houses, station houses, prisons and farm schools."\(^1\) The law further decreed that "a house of refuge is generally understood to mean an institution organized and maintained for the reformation of juvenile delinquents."\(^2\)

The first reference to a school for girls in Ohio is found in the 1909 annual report of Dr. Harris R. Cooley, Director of Charities and Correction. At that time, he said:

"We hope in the future to have a School for Girls. It is wiser for a municipality to spend money in preventing vice and crime than to spend it in the trial and punishment of criminals."\(^3\)

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\(^{1}\)Statute Law of Ohio, LIV (1857), 162.

\(^{2}\)Ibid., p. 164.

\(^{3}\)Annual Report of the Committee on Charities and Correction, City of Cleveland, Cleveland, Ohio, January, 1909 (unpublished).
But the hope expressed by Dr. Cooley did not materialize until 1914.

In February of that year, he opened an old farm house on Kinsman Road in Cleveland, Ohio, to provide a better opportunity for the girl who could not adjust in the community and who, at that time, was being confined in "an infirmary" with all types of people. She was assigned to household duties such as peeling vegetables, scrubbing and cooking for neurotics, psychopaths, chronic offenders and derelicts. This treatment was not constructive for a girl, but it at least punished her according to society's views at that time concerning the care of delinquents.

During the year 1914, twenty-eight girls from twelve to eighteen years of age were committed to the school. The reasons for commitment of these girls from the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court were as varied as incorrigibility, immorality, staying out at night, running away, stealing, untruthfulness, truancy, misuse of funds, lack of proper parental care and dependency.

In the beginning, the school did not provide formal education, but by March of 1915, the Board of Education had appointed one teacher. The thirty-three girls who constituted the population, attended school one-half day and worked the rest of the day. In Dr. Cooley's report for that year, he stressed the advantages of a cottage plan and the dire need for additional shelter facilities.
He also requested that the Cleveland Council increase the appropriations for the school. The council, however, did not comply with his request because of a lack of funds.\footnote{Annual Report of the Committee on Charities and Correction of the City of Cleveland for the Year Ending December 1915, Cleveland, Ohio, January, 1916 (unpublished).}

By 1916, financial difficulties were more acute. The school was closed in March of that year because the superintendent could not get funds to carry out the program as needed. Later, the Cleveland City Council requested that the superintendent submit his plans for the abandonment of the school and give reasons for his actions. He stated that he recommended closing the School for Girls because a one-cottage school did not permit for classification nor separation according to the problem, age or mentality of the population.\footnote{Annual Report of the Council, School for Girls, Cleveland, Ohio, December, 1916 (unpublished).}

A group of club women, however, came to the rescue of the school. A committee of fifteen women suggested that the appropriations be increased and that the school be enlarged to a capacity of from fifty to seventy-five girls on a cottage plan. The school was re-opened May 31, 1916, and during the following year it continued to operate with two employees, a matron and one assistant. Not withstanding the limited amount of funds, by 1918 an east wing was added to the
building and equipped with gifts donated by a group of club women.

The situation improved for the school in 1919. The salaries for the matron and assistant matron were both increased. Two years later, another assistant matron was added to the staff, and cooking apparatus, utensils, laundry equipment and necessary furniture were installed. By 1924, a third assistant matron was employed who was a health and recreation specialist. In addition, the superintendent was assisted by two school teachers and a visiting clergyman.\(^1\)

In June of 1925, the first commencement was held, and the School for Girls was standardized as a part of the Cleveland Public School System. At that time, there were forty girls residing at the school, and they remained for approximately six months.\(^2\) In November, a bond issue was voted to provide funds for four new cottages, an administration building and a matron. The Cleveland City Council passed a resolution authorizing the purchase of eighty-three acres of land in Brecksville, Ohio, as a site for the Girl's School. The land was acquired, and architects were engaged to prepare plans for the new buildings. The school was transferred from Kinsman Road in Cleveland to the new site in Brecksville, Ohio,

\(^1\)Statement by M. LaVinia Warner, Superintendent, Blossom Hill School, Brecksville, Ohio, personal interview, May 24, 1947.

\(^2\)Ibid.
on December 22, 1928. A third teacher, a probation officer and a dentist became members of the staff. The Cleveland City Council named the School for Girls "Blossom Hill," and the buildings were formally dedicated in 1929.\footnote{Ibid.}

Recent Administrative Practices

According to the institutional personnel, the year 1930 marked a radical change in the type of girls committed to Blossom Hill School. Whereas for the preceding years the majority of the girls committed were dependent and neglected, the personnel was now faced with a real problem of caring for, training and adjusting the "very delinquent girls" from the city of Cleveland. The situation was marked, at first, by the large number of escapes and attempted escapes on the part of the girls. There were so many that the superintendent was compelled to recommend the enclosure of the school by a fence. The Juvenile Court judge went so far as to urge that bars be placed on the cottage windows. Neither of these recommendations, however, were accepted. The personnel approached the problem and situation with great concern, sympathy and study and developed a program which they thought would help the girls adjust.\footnote{Ibid.}

When the position of superintendent at Blossom Hill School became vacant in 1933, a group of club women selected...
Dr. M. LaVinia Warner for the position and convinced the City Welfare Director that she was a capable person.

The council and the superintendent determine the administrative policies of Blossom Hill School. This Council is composed of representatives from the community served by the school. The regular attendance of the superintendent is required at all council meetings. These meetings are held at least once a week to hear reports from the superintendent and special committees and to discuss and to act upon problems presented by the institutional staff.¹

Blossom Hill School is owned and financed by the City of Cleveland through its Department of Health and Welfare.² National and local organizations also make contributions to the school, either in money or material goods. Landscaping, furnishings, books, flags, musical instruments, art materials, clothes for girls and funds for dental work have been furnished by these clubs at one time or another.

Physical Facilities and Personnel

As previously mentioned, Blossom Hill School is located in Cuyahoga County on an eighty-three acre plot in the hills of Brecksville, Ohio, fourteen miles south of the city of

¹Staff of Blossom Hill School for Pre-Delinquent Girls, "Practices of Blossom Hill School" (Brecksville, Ohio, 1947) p. 18 (mimeographed.)

²Ibid., p. 19.
Cleveland. An administration building, a school building and four cottages constitute the living quarters at Blossom Hill School. The cottages are of two-story construction. The living rooms, study rooms and dormitories are ample in dimension, well-lighted and attractively decorated and furnished. The ninety girls enrolled in the school appear, by any criterion, to be adequately housed.

No institution, small or large, can be better than its personnel. They are the people who put a program into action in its important day by day aspects, who influence through their thoughts, feelings and actions the individuals with whom they come in contact, and who determine to a very great extent the atmosphere and the spirit of the institution.¹

In the selection of the superintendent, systematic training, responsible experience in case work with children and proven executive ability are required. She must understand the principles and problems of child welfare services in the community as well as inside the institution.

Dr. Warner, the present superintendent, of Blossom Hill School, received her Bachelor of Science degree from Ohio University in psychology and special education, her master's degree from Columbia University in psychology and education and her doctorate from Indiana University in clinical psychology. Other positions that Dr. Warner has held include those of clinical psychologist and director of the School

for Psychopathic Children, State Bureau of Juvenile Research, Columbus, Ohio, and director of the Department of Special Education, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio. The assistant superintendent is also a professionally trained person.

The other personnel at Blossom Hill School consist of a recreational director, a social worker, a secretary, a registered nurse, a physician, a dentist, a farmer, two engineers and six teachers.

Blossom Hill School prefers that a member of the teaching staff be a college graduate. Before the war, the institution was able to secure qualified teachers, but at the present time, because of the shortage of personnel, there are a few staff members who have not completed their college training. These have, however, received some special training in a college or university.

Teachers must be between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-five. The school employs young teachers as they are "an inspiration to the girls" and generally prove more flexible and more readily fit into the program of the school. Blossom Hill School is not confronted with the problem of a rapid turn over in personnel and attributes this to the fact that, among other things, the workers are paid satisfactory salaries. ¹

The superintendent is in charge of the in-service training

¹M. LaVinia Warner, op. cit., p. 19.
program for the staff and is assisted by the head social teacher. A faculty meeting is held once a week when all personnel attend, and special conferences are conducted as the case might warrant. At these meetings, staff members are encouraged to discuss individual or group problems.
CHAPTER III

THE PROGRAM OF BLOSSOM HILL SCHOOL

Whenever a program is proposed for any institution, the following points should be considered; first, for whom is the program? second, what is to be accomplished? and third, why should it be accomplished? Any institutional program must have a valid foundation geared to the needs of the child for whom it is planned. Furthermore, it should be fairly certain that a child really needs the things which the program is offering.¹

Population

White and colored girls between the ages of thirteen and eighteen are committed to Blossom Hill School by the Juvenile Court of Cuyahoga County. The girls remain at the school from nine months to two years depending upon their needs. The court has never remanded a girl to the school who could not make use of the program or who would not respond to the institutional plan of treatment. No contagious cases are committed as there are no isolation facilities. Nor does the school accept pregnant, physically handicapped or mentally disturbed girls.²

Medical Care

Medical care is one of the most important features of the


²Staff of Blossom Hill School, op. cit., 16.
work in a residential school for girls.

It is largely futile to attempt to develop character and provide vocational training for girls with physical defects unless at the same time an adequate medical program is being carried out.\(^1\)

Although a girl has received a routine physical examination at the Detention Home prior to commitment, upon entrance to Blossom Hill School, she is given an examination by the school physician. A second blood test is administered if the case seems doubtful, and special physical examinations are given throughout the girl's stay at the school. A tuberculosis patch is made of each girl, and if positive, the girl is taken to the County Tuberculosis Dispensary for an x-ray. The County Tuberculosis Mobile Unit comes to the school once a year, and every girl is x-rayed.

The physician visits the school once a week and may be called in case of an emergency. A registered nurse lives at the school and schedules sick-calls twice a day. She is also responsible for the fitting of health shoes.

The girls receive routine dental examinations at the school or through their family dentist. The girls may have their eyes tested at the city hospital, and glasses are secured for them if needed.

Education

A contract with the Board of Education of Cleveland

places Blossom Hill School under the supervision of the city superintendent's office through the Department of Special Education. The public school supervisors visit the school in the same capacity in which they serve any other school of the city. The Board of Education furnishes books and classroom supplies, including paper, pencils, mental and educational blanks, art and handicraft materials and garden plants. The girls are given credit by the Board of Education for all the instruction received.  

The educational program at Blossom Hill School is divided into four areas namely: academic, aesthetic, vocational and social hygiene. The academic subjects taught are: English, social studies, general science, biology, reading, writing, spelling, personal regimen and remedial work. The program is planned on a departmental basis. Each girl follows an individual schedule and progresses from one class to another at her own pace. Each teacher is acquainted with the girl's social and educational history, her intellectual capacity and personal behavior patterns.

Aesthetic education provide an invaluable means of self-expression. In this area, the Blossom Hill School teaches: music, jewelry making, ceramics and art.

The personnel at Blossom Hill School is aware of the fact that the older girls must be self-supporting upon

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1Statement by M. La Vinia Warner, op. cit.
discharge. Therefore, the school provides certain industrial activities and pre-vocational training. These girls are taught child care, first aid, home nursing, horticulture, floriculture, domestic science and commercial subjects.

Social hygiene, properly developed, is a definite part of character training and should be an integral part of an institutional program for socially maladjusted girls. The course in social hygiene at Blossom Hill School is taught by the registered nurse, for whom the girls have the greatest respect. In this course, such subjects are covered as the physiology of the human being, the dangers involved in irregular relationships, "illegitimate" pregnancy, masturbation and venereal diseases. The purpose of the course is not so much a matter of giving detailed information as of creating a proper attitude toward sex.

Recreation

Blossom Hill School employs a recreational director, who helps the girls plan their leisure time pursuits. There are both group and cottage activities. The program consist of dancing, hiking, baseball, swimming, coasting and picnics. During the winter months, the emphasis is placed on passive activities such as table tennis and parlor games through which the girls learn to entertain others as well as themselves.

Margaret Reeves, op. cit., p. 220.
Blossom Hill School receives books for its library from the Cuyahoga County library and through gifts from friends and clubs. The girls are allowed to visit the library and select the books which they would like to read. The girls read an average of four books a week.¹

The school provides its own sixteen millimeter sound projector which gives entertainment and instruction through films secured from the State Department of Education. Regular movies are shown occasionally by the operator's union. The girls also take trips to hear the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra, and visit the art museum and the playhouse. The entire recreation program is for social guidance and the recreation of the girls.

Religion

Because religious education is a vital factor in the re-education and re-adjustment of socially mal-adjusted girls, it is more than worthwhile for superintendents of residential schools to cooperate with those in the community who have the most to offer in terms of religious training.² The religious life of the girls at Blossom Hill School is exceptionally well planned by the ministers of various denominations headed by the Church Chaplaincy Service of the Episcopal Church for

¹Staff of Blossom Hill School, op. cit., p. 15.

the non-catholics and by the Catholic Diocese for the Catholics. As yet, the school has not been able to provide special religious services for the girls of the Jewish or Lutheran faiths. These girls, therefore, may attend other religious services.¹

¹Statement by M. LaVinia Warner, op. cit.
CHAPTER IV

THE SERVICES RENDERED

Social case work, psychological and psychiatric services should not be thought of as three separate and different processes, but as parts of the study of the total individual. The anti-social behavior of a girl may be the result of social, emotional and mental factors. It is evident that there is need to unify all three services when treatment is to be planned and carried out. The social case worker has need of the psychologist and the psychiatrist, and they, in turn, have need of her.

Social Services

Children's institutions have become aware of the need for social case work to meet the social and emotional needs of each child. A number of institutions have secured the services of a social agency in the community giving foster care to provide social case studies for all applicants for service. Other institutions have considered that the social case history is a vital part of the institutional service and have added social case workers to its staff.¹

There is no question as to the benefits that may come to

the child and the institutional staff if the institution is equipped with well-trained social service as an integral part of its program. Under this plan, the information regarding each child and his family becomes woven into all phases of the treatment process in the school. Whatever is done for the child in planning his individual program and future adjustment in the community is based on this fund of available knowledge.

There are certain steps into which the planning for a girl and her family may be divided namely: intake, service while under care, discharge and after-care. In considering the needs of both the girl and her parents, the worker responsible for intake must guard against the possibility of being influenced in favor of some plan by a parent or other interested persons. If commitment is to be made, an important part of the social case worker's job is to prepare the child to accept the change with the least amount of traumatic response.

The social case worker at Blossom Hill School serves as a link between the school and the community. She visits the girl and her family, in order to become acquainted with its members and to secure their cooperation in the treatment program for a girl. The social worker attempts to make a social study and to obtain those factors which have contributed to a girl's maladjustment and proposes measures to remedy them. Consequently, the social case
worker takes an interest in the whole family situation and tries to help whoever is strategic in the difficulty.

The day for the girl's arrival at Blossom Hill School is well planned. She is brought out to the school early in the day when the social teacher to whom she will be assigned is available, and when the superintendent can spend considerable time in conference with her. The girl is told that she is accepted as an honor student, that she is on the Honor Roll, and that she is a member of the Student Council. These are means of helping her to identify with the school. Many explanations are made and questions are entertained. The social teacher welcomes her into the cottage life, holds a conference with her, introduces her to the girls in the cottage and acquaints her with the school's practices. This first conference is followed by many more depending upon the girl's needs throughout her stay at the school.¹

The girl's assignment to a cottage is made upon the basis of the combined opinions of the social case worker, who has seen the girl in court, and the clinical psychologist, who has some knowledge of the girl's emotional make-up and stability. Placement of the girl from cottage to cottage is made as time goes on if the girl so desires or if her worker feels that it will facilitate treatment.

¹Statement by M. LaVinia Warner, op. cit.
After the girl has been committed to Blossom Hill School, the social case worker assumes even more responsibility for helping the girl. She encourages her to face the reality of her situation through the media of individual conferences. This was true in the case of Josephine, a girl of dull normal intelligence, age fifteen, thin, tall, but fairly attractive.

She was deprived of maternal and paternal love at an early age because her mother died in 1933, and the whereabouts of her father became unknown. She had been placed in numerous foster homes, which intensified her feelings of insecurity. She expressed much resentment against the rigidity of treatment accorded her in many of her foster home placements and reacted to this by her delinquent behavior. She stayed out late, began to steal and to associate with undesirable persons. When brought before the juvenile court, she was committed to Blossom Hill School on a charge of being incorrigible.

The social case worker at the institution was able to establish a meaningful relationship with Josephine who was able to express how she felt about her situation and was helped to clarify her thinking about her behavior. She was encouraged to take part in group activities and to take up commercial subjects. She continued, however, to get into difficulty, loved to gossip and tended to be a "goody goody." Nevertheless, she was helped in her social adjustments with others. A foster home placement was recommended for her, and
and she was returned to the community to be supervised by a worker in the child welfare agency.

Similarly in the case of Marie, age seventeen, who was rejected by her mother and showed much hostility to people, the social case worker was understanding of her feelings. A treatment relationship was attempted with Marie to help her release her concern about the fact that she was unwanted and not loved. Marie, however, was unable to make use of the contacts with the worker because her problem was so deep-seated, and because she had been hurt in her personal relationship with adults to the extent that she was not able to trust them. Consequently, Marie remained a problem and was not discharged from the school. It seemed advisable that psychiatric services be made available to her.

The case worker not only makes an effort to help a girl but also her family. Some fathers and mothers must be helped to accept a girl even after they have expressed feelings of apathy, cruelty, or frustration because they have rejected her. The parents are informed of illnesses, the development of serious behavior problems or the ordinary childhood changes through puberty to adolescence. If the parents lack understanding in these matters, they frequently respond unsympathetically and become indifferent to the girl and her problem.¹

¹Staff of Blossom Hill School, op. cit.
While working with the family, the social case worker also devotes time to the girl's substitute parent in the institution. Interpretation of the girl, especially, when she is in trouble, to the social teacher, pastor, physician, play director and even to her playmates is one of the social case worker's main responsibilities.

In addition to the efforts of the social case worker to keep in touch with the girl's immediate family, every effort is made to keep family ties for the girl. Relatives and friends are encouraged to visit her. Friends, both male and female may visit once a month if they are approved by the personnel. The girls may receive their guest in the parlor which allows for privacy, informality and comfort. The social case worker spends considerable time in persuading relatives to provide gifts and entertainment for the girl. Neglectful parents are visited by the worker or contacted through correspondence. The social case worker must also prepare the girl for all other contacts with professional people.

Psychological Services

The function of the psychologist is to help determine the capacity of each girl to learn and to make adjustments. This information should be interpreted to those who are in charge of her training, discipline and development. This is done through the media of psychometric or intelligence tests. Although the girls have usually been seen by a
qualified psychologist before admittance to Blossom Hill School, the school refers a girl to the psychological clinic at the Board of Education for further study. The tests given enable the staff to place a girl in a suitable educational class and to plan for her future.

An illustration of the value of psychological referral services in planning for a girl may be seen in the case of Alice, age sixteen. According to the Wechsler-Bellevue test given at the Board of Education, Alice's general intelligence was within the average adult range, and she received a score of ninety-seven. Her verbal abilities were found to be inferior to her non-language intelligence with deficiency found on tasks requiring attention and concentration. Marked strength was seen in manipulative skill, observation and ability to organize concrete material. The psychologist recommended that the personnel in planning for Alice's educational program allow her to take industrial training rather than academic work because she would be able to achieve on a higher level.

Psychiatric Services

Many of the girls committed to Blossom Hill School are suffering from emotional problems which are deep-rooted. Some are not able to respond to case work treatment. Therefore, the case worker must seek the assistance of a psychiatrist. He is able to study the individual as a whole, to review all those factors internal as well as external
that may have influenced her behavior and to map out, in the light of psychiatric understanding of her case, an adequate plan of treatment. Blossom Hill School makes use of different psychiatrists depending upon the girl's need. Private psychiatrists are used when the girl's family is financially able to defray the cost of their services. In most cases, the services of psychiatrists at the city court and the city hospitals are obtained.

The use of psychiatric referral in planning for a girl may be seen in the case of Carolyn age fourteen. Carolyn was interviewed in the Psychiatric clinic at the request of the school because she was an emotionally, disturbed girl. Carolyn stated that she was unable to return home because of the presence of her step-father with whom she was not able to get along. She was, therefore, planning to take up residence in a rooming house or a club house for women and work as a clerk. She was unwilling to continue in school, and the results of the tests indicated that it would probably be better if she were not required to take any more academic subjects.

Carolyn presented a very serious problem and demanded a great deal in the way of personal attention. She was very suggestible, and it was felt that she might become an easy prey to anyone who would show interest in her if she were

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1Margaret Reeves, *op. cit.*, p. 250.
without supervision. The psychiatrist recommended that the school should not attempt to find employment for Carolyn immediately. It was felt that she was very childish, that she required much guidance and protection and still needed the regimentation of institutional living.

After-Care and Supervision

The adjustment of the child to the institutional program does not imply adjustment to life. The job of the institution is not to have the child adjust to the confines of the institution, but to prepare the child to be returned to the community and find her proper place in society.¹

It is in this area almost than in any other that the social case worker can be of invaluable service to the girl and the institution. Because of the social case worker's knowledge of the problem which brought the girl to the institution and with the girl in relation to her family and community as well as to the institution, she is in a better position to assist the girl in making satisfactory adjustments in the community.²

At Blossom Hill School, the planning for discharge begins with the girl's entrance into the school. The social case worker and the girl are constantly making plans for the

¹Frederick G. Behrends, op. cit., p. 4.

girl's release throughout her stay at the school. The girl is not discharged on the length of time she has spent at the school, or even on the girl's completion of some system of credits or merits, but on the basis of her ability to make a normal and healthy social adjustment in the community.¹

Based upon the decision that a girl is ready to return to the community, there are a number of steps which the social case worker must take before the girl is actually discharged from the school. The girl is given more freedom within and outside the school, while still under supervision. She is allowed to make a trip to Cleveland to purchase the clothes she would like to wear on leaving the school. If a girl plans to work in Cleveland, she may be given permission to have an interview with her future employer. These measures are necessary for encouraging and developing initiative.

The case worker must also prepare the girl's family for her return. This is done so that a girl will not be entirely without support even though she feels free. In cases where the social worker thinks that the girl will not make a good adjustment in her own home, a foster home or wage home placement is planned. Many of the girls are permitted to live at the Y.W.C.A. or other club houses in the community with supervision continued. There are certain adjustments which are made in regard to the neighborhood,

¹Staff of Blossom Hill School, op. cit., p. 22.
the school or the job to which the girl is returned. A group of club women in Cleveland who are very much interested in aiding and preventing juvenile delinquency have been of great assistance in developing positive attitudes on the part of schools, employers and others with whom the girl must come in contact.

All of these means of preparation, both with the girl and in the proposed community to which she will return, make her discharge from the school, a less traumatic experience and a much more helpful one. Instead of being a complete shift from repression to freedom, from dependence to attempted independence, the release from the school is, as it should be, one step in a whole series of educational steps toward normal self-support and independence.¹

The girl does not embark on this new experience alone. Since most of the girls are referred by social service agencies in Cleveland such as: the Youth Bureau, the Cuyahoga County Child Welfare Board and the Children's Service, these agencies supervise the girls when they are discharged. Blossom Hill School, however, retains the custody of the girls so that the school may assist the case worker at the agency if the need should arise. There are now 110 girls out under the after-care program.²


²Staff of Blossom Hill School, op. cit., p. 23.
The intensity of the supervision is related to the nature of the girl's problem as well as to her ability to develop her own resources within herself. It is important for a social case worker to know when to withdraw from supervision as it is to know when to offer help. To continue supervision beyond the point of the individual's real need may serve to perpetuate her dependence as much as if she were still in the institution. Moreover, the law states that although a girl is discharged from an institution under an after-care program, she is still under the jurisdiction of the court until she reaches the age of twenty-one.

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CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This was a study of Blossom Hill School, Brecksville, Ohio. It includes the origin of the school, and its present program as offered to the girls committed during the year 1947.

It was revealed that Blossom Hill School was established in 1914 for socially mal-adjusted adolescent girls, and that it is owned and financed by the city of Cleveland through the Department of Health and Welfare.

An administration building, a school building and four cottages constitute the living quarters at Blossom Hill School. The buildings are comfortable, spacious and attractive. The administrators, however, feel that there is a need for one or two additional cottages to accommodate those girls who would benefit from an institutional placement, but who can not be accepted because of the limited housing facilities. There is also a need for another administration building which would include a school building, a gymnasium, a hospital room and an office where the psychologist and the psychiatrist could hold conferences.

In regard to personnel, Blossom Hill School attempts to employ individuals who are young and have a reasonable amount of emotional security. These persons serve as an inspiration to the girls. The personnel is qualified to render medical, educational, recreational, religious,
psychological, psychiatric and case work services to the institutional population. Blossom Hill School does have a need for additional personnel. A clinical psychologist and a psychiatric social case worker would relieve a great deal of the responsibility assumed by the social case worker, and the superintendent who is the clinical psychologist. There is a need too for an additional social teacher and a landscape gardener.

The program of the school is geared to the needs of the girls. It is both flexible and interesting. Blossom Hill provides an excellent medical program. This is essential because a residential school should prepare a girl to be physically fit as well as emotionally sound.

The educational program is divided into four areas namely: academic, aesthetic, vocational and social hygiene. The purpose of the program is not merely to keep the girls busy, but to enable them to make a fairly good adjustment when they are returned to the community.

Blossom Hill School employs a recreation director who helps the girls to plan their leisure time activities. If a girl is taught to use her leisure time constructively while in the institution, she will not find it necessary to seek unwholesome channels for recreation upon being discharged.

The school provides religious services for the girls. Religion is an important part of an individual's training
because it often deepens a girl's respect for herself and others.

Blossom Hill School offers case work, psychological and psychiatric services. The problems of some of the girls are so deep-seated that it is necessary for a girl to make use of all three services. Where the treatment program is based on a scientific diagnosis of the individual case, and where the diagnosis is preceded by an intensive study of all factors social, emotional and mental, the school can expect greater success in returning to the community well balanced, wholesome girls who are qualified to take their places as upright citizens.

Blossom Hill School provides an after-care program for the institutional population. When a girl is released she is usually supervised by a social case worker in the community. Blossom Hill School, however, retains the custody of a girl so that the personnel may assist the case worker at the particular agency if the need should arise.

Blossom Hill School has established a correctional program that has proven beneficial to the girls committed. The true value of correctional education consists in the following:

The restoration of confidence and the respect of the individual for her own personality. This is best accomplished by the discovery of tasks within the strength and capacity of the young person, tasks, the performance of which win merited approval from the group.

Vigorous and joyous health, a sense of physical
well being.

The social status of the individual must be restored, that is to say, the girl must be absorbed into the community, which in its turn must be educated to recognition that the young person has been returned to full citizenship in our common humanity.¹

¹Mirian Van Waters, *Youth in Conflict* (New York, 1925), pp. 221-22.
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