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A study of the history and development of united neighbors association

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A STUDY OF THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF UNITED NEIGHBORS ASSOCIATION

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

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SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Significance of the Study

General recognition is now given to three basic processes of professional practice in social work, each with its own relatively definable skills, and yet each related to the other by a common philosophy and certain common skills and principles. These three areas are casework, or services to individuals; group work, or services to groups of people; and, community organization, or services to promote and coordinate activities among groups and agencies.¹

The Settlement House or Settlements frequently are referred to as agencies utilizing the group work process. The United Neighbors Association is an agency which, contrary to some earlier classification, makes use of, in some degree, all three of the social work processes. As a settlement, it has undergone many changes to serve better the needs of its clients.

During the early days of unrestricted immigration, the Settlement was all things to all people. The settlement nurses were usually a combination of health scout and provider of the relief needs. Sanitation and Public Health were also accepted as the responsibility of the settlement with pure milk stations as an adjunct of most of them. The protection of children and women from prolonged labor in the sweat shops all had its start with Lillian Wald at Henry Street. Classes in English were also considered as part of the program of the settlements as well as preparation for naturalization. As these functions were absorbed by specialized agencies, both private and public, the settlements did not always meet the challenge of new situations as they arose, particularly the integration of national and racial groups into harmonious neighborhood living.²

¹Campbell G. Murphy, Community Organization Practice (New York, 1945), p. 5.
With the varied functions of the settlement having been absorbed by specialized agencies, the settlement became largely an agency for education and recreation using primarily, the group work process. This emphasis, however, began to receive severe criticism, in a number of communities, from the community chests because schools and recreation centers were offering programs closely allied with those of the settlements. Consequently, questions arose among chest directors as to whether or not the best use of the community dollar was being made.

In Philadelphia, in order to make the best use of the community dollar, three settlements, located in the southeast section, were merged into one association—United Neighbors. While it is not the only organization of its kind, it is believed to be the most complete merger that has taken place up to this time. The Executive Director of United Neighbors stated:

We are told that United Neighbors Association is the most complete merger that has taken place. The managing Board of United Neighbors is made up largely from the previous managing groups of the individual houses who have submerged their interest and turned over the property and management to the United Neighbors Board of Directors which is able to use each house in a manner that can best serve the neighborhood. The staff of the three houses are also united through a central staff council from which come all major decisions on policy and program within the framework established by the managing Board and the House Councils.¹

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this study were (1) To give a brief history of the early social work efforts. This seemed important in that it would point out the early practices in program and the consequent reasons for changes in program. (2) To give the reader some general idea of the trends in

¹Chester R. Leighty, "Facts About the Merger and How it Works," (Paper presented to the Health Institute, Philadelphia, February 27, 1948).
settlement work, and (3) To indicate the potentials of rendering service through the merged agencies.

Method of Procedure

General background material was gained through reading all available literature concerned with settlement. Main attention was focused upon agency records and publicity material released by the United Neighbors Association. Another main source of information was found in interviews with the Executive Director of the United Neighbors Association. All material was carefully analyzed so that only those portions of primary importance appeared within the thesis.

Scope and Limitations

The writer worked in the agency concurrently with making this study over a six month period. Therefore the study is not as inclusive as the writer would have liked it to be.

The study gives in general some of the early social work efforts on a neighborhood level, and how the United Neighbors Association began, its original philosophy, board construction, types of programs, and methods employed.
CHAPTER II

EARLY NEIGHBORHOOD SOCIAL WORK REPORTS

In England

The settlement movement was founded in England during the time when various social and economic changes were occurring. With the coming of the industrial revolution, the feudal manor disappeared, men and women, who once had been tied to the land, found their way to towns and cities to seek work in the factories. The concentration of people in relative small areas created problems of overcrowding, vice, and other social evils at a rapid pace.

With the rapid growth of cities and all the attendant effects of the industrial revolution in England, the village came to be extolled as the social unit of most manageable proportions for maintaining accepted social norms. The belief was current that by encouraging in the crowded cities the close personal relations between neighbors which were characteristic of the small town, much could be done to counteract the material and moral ravages of the industrial revolution.¹

A modern humanitarian movement emerged to counteract the evils incident to the new industrial order. At the universities, students began to ask questions of how they might use their advantages of education and culture to help individuals who were less fortunate than they. Such inquiries led to two undertakings, both of which were redolent of the university, and both proposed the implementation of carrying the students' motive of sharing advantages with those affected in great industrial strongholds.

In 1867 students of the universities began extension courses with lectures in manufacturing towns, with the hope that, men coming under the influence of these students might strive to better their conditions

socially as well as economically.

The church also sought to further the cause of democratic neighbor-
liness along with an increasing sense for reality in religious thought.

In 1883, Mr. Barnett, Vicar of St. Jude's Whitechapel, was in-
formed that some men at St. John's College at Cambridge were wishful to do something for the poor, but that they were not quite prepared to start an ordinary college Mission. Mr. Barnett was asked to suggest some other possible and more excellent way. Mr. Barnett wrote a letter suggesting that men might hire a house, where they could come for short or long periods, and living in an industrial order, learn to sup sorrow with the poor. The letter pointed out that close personal knowledge of individuals among the poor must precede wise legislation for remedy-
ing their needs, and that, as English local government was based on the assumption of a leisurely, cultivated class, it was neces-
sary to provide it artificially in those regions where the educa-
tion ended at thirteen years of age and with the three R's.¹

Mr. Barnett's letter suggesting university settlements in working-
class quarters of large towns immediately resulted in a meeting of under-
graduates of St. John's College for the purpose of finding ways and means of implementing the idea. A small committee was formed, money was obtained on debenture bonds, and Mr. Barnett accepted the job of turning the idea into a fact.

One of the men who devoted much of his time to the new idea was Arnold Toynbee.

Toynbee believed in and cared for the working people as men and women, and was eager that they should inherit all good and beautiful things. While devoutly religious, his Christianity reached its depths in the search for universal fellowship rather than in dogmatic forms. His contribution to the settlement lies in his insistence upon the spread of reciprocal first-hand con-
tact between university and working men for fulfillment of the life of each as well as for salvation of the nation. This note had been struck before, but Toynbee re-echoed it with peculiar fulness and sweetness. In the minds and hearts of devoted student friends at Oxford, it grew into a hunting strain. After delivering several lectures he was seized with an illness which proved so serious

that he had to return to his home in Wimbledon. There, on March 9, 1883 he died in his thirty-first year.1

Since the death of Arnold Toynbee was still fresh in the minds of his friends, it was suggested that the new settlement bear his name. A small group of men moved into Whitechapel, availing themselves of improvised quarters in an unused public house, and began their work as the first residents of Toynbee Hall. This was the beginning of a movement destined to spread throughout England and later into the United States.

The new power of devotion and aspiration which earlier in the century had come to the Oxford movement, so remarkable in quickening the inner life of the established church, was beginning definitely to seek its secular application. Oxford House (1894) in Bethnal Green was opened only a few months after the establishment of Toynbee Hall. The Women's House (1887) in Southwark followed hard after. Mansfield House (1890) in Canning Town, four miles down the river, became the outpost of the spiritual descents of Puritans who had lately gained an institutional foothold at Oxford. University Hall (1890) was established under the Unitarian auspices by Mrs. Humphry Ward. Bermondsey Settlement (1891) was founded under Wesleyan leadership; and Newman House (1891) by Roman Catholics.2

In America

Beginning immediately after the war of 1812, industrialism and the growth of population, in complicated fashions, were changing the course of American civilization in the East. The way had been opened for vast industries insistently stimulated by the seemingly unlimited resources of the country. Capital was massed and industrial management concentrated in the hands of a relatively decreasing number of leaders.

Such an expansion of industry within so short a time could obviously have been accomplished only by means of an easily available and practically unlimited supply of labor. During the twenty years preceding the new century nearly 9,000,000 immigrants sought our shores, or as many as had entered the country

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2 Ibid., p. 27.
during the previous six decades. The changes in racial character of immigrants which began about 1890 greatly intensified the difficulties of national assimilation. In many cases whole districts passed in a few years from the Irish, who were typical of the early influx, to the Russian Jew, who as they landed represented the extreme of all that was in contrast with the American way of life. The need of a determined and far-reaching policy of assimilation was vaguely felt although a strangely hypnotic optimism a sense of Manifest Destiny prevented any adequate realization of the nature and difficulty of the task. 1

The continued influx of immigrants of different ethnic origins created problems of prejudice and bias within communities. Persons of the same origin tended to congregate together simulating, as much as possible, life as it was in the old country. This difference among those individuals comprising the laboring group, prevented them from organizing together for the mutual protection, later to be found in labor unions.

Every attempt at association among laborers was looked upon as an irrelevant and dangerous intrusion from out of the decaying civilization of Europe. The thought of any form of control over industry and commerce by government, except through a protective tariff, was hardly in the national mind. That the municipality should assume responsibility for conditions under which its citizens lived, aside from elementary defense against disease and disorder, was considered subversive of the principles under which alone American citizenship could thrive. 2

The next recourse, naturally, was to agencies of charity. American cities had not been lacking in men who had striven to sustain the responsibility of well-to-do people for the extremity of need among the poor. Some Americans of means and education were going across town to come in touch with struggling immigrant groups and separate bodies of visitors were devoting themselves continuously to families in a given

1Ibid., p.34
2Ibid., p.35.
district. Thus for one human purpose at least, a plan of voluntary service as comprehensive and exhaustive as municipal administration itself was framed in outline and for specific function.

The first American Settlement, Neighborhood Guild, was established by Stanton Coit, a graduate of Amherst College, where strong missionary influence was fused with a developing new philosophy of human relations.

In the summer of 1885, while pursuing graduate studies in the University of Berlin, Coit had learned about Toynbee Hall through its first American resident, Howard S. Bliss. As soon as Coit had received his Berlin degree, he sought from Barnett the privilege of residence, living at Toynbee Hall from January 1886, until his return to New York in March. While at Toynbee Hall, Coit determined to undertake similar enterprise in New York, and during the spring of 1886 he spent some time in searching out that particular part of the East Side in which family life most obviously lacked the moral initiative a group of young resident educators and reformers might bring.

The very name "Neighborhood Guild" suggests the fundamental idea which the new institution embodies, namely, that irrespective of religious belief, or non-belief all people, men, women, and children, in any one street, or small number of streets, in every working class district, shall be organized into a set of clubs, which are by themselves, or in alliance with those of other neighborhoods, to carry out all the reforms, domestic, industrial, educational, provident or recreative—which the social ideal demands."

From the beginning of this movement in the founding of Neighborhood Guild, Settlements spread throughout America.

In Philadelphia

In Southeast Central Philadelphia, problems of illiteracy overcrowding, vice, and immigrants unable to adjust to the American way of

1Lorene M. Pacey, op. cit., p. 21.
life, caused the founding of several settlements along the waterfront. A close study of these settlements showed that people of means and of education became concerned with the living conditions of the poor and had sought ways and means of helping them.

Obviously, the settlement movement in Southeast Central Philadelphia was greatly influenced by the earlier movement in England. So great was the desire to help the less fortunate that three settlements sprang up in proximity one to the other serving a common clientele. In some incidents, many of the same clients were being served by more than one of the Houses. Out of this situation, eventually, the merging of these settlements resulted.
CHAPTER III

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRAM OF FOUR SETTLEMENTS OPERATING IN SOUTHEAST PHILADELPHIA

House of Industry

Houses of Industry were a British invention of the eighteenth century. "They provided work-relief, having at least one room for spinning and weaving - later, knitting, quilting, and sewing." ¹

In 1847 a group of philanthropic Quakers incorporated as the Philadelphia Society for the employment and instruction of the poor, to which objective their charter added the latter's "moral and intellectual improvement." Forwith was built, west of Seventh Street on Catherine Street, a House of Industry.

The first program stressed cleanliness, consequently, bathing and laundry facilities were provided for men only, later for women as well. The House provided educational service for children who could not attend regular schools because they lacked proper food and clothing.

During its early days, the Society supplied not only work-relief but also "outdoor relief." Later it began cooperating with another agency which finally absorbed this phase of work entirely; and that agency, today, is known as Family Society.

By 1923, it became apparent that conditions had permanently changed; the original Irish and succeeding Polish-Irish, inhabitants had been almost entirely replaced by Italians; the House was no longer suitable for a shelter. The House accordingly adopted a "settlement" type of program, with recreational and educational clubs and classes with an emphasis on


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English and Citizenship. Much of the credit for maintaining a flexible program, keeping pace with the changing times, is due to Miss Anna D. Bramble, who served for many years as Head Worker.¹

In 1949, the House of Industry moved from its original location to 719 Catherine Street. The old building had twenty-five rooms with only four of them suitable for group meetings or club activities.

The move to the new building posed a problem in that the building had previously housed the Hi-Boys organization. In the Hi-Boys organization, there were no small club groups that the members could join. Boys could wander in at their leisure to use the facilities, consequently, when the House of Industry moved into the building, there was a great deal of resistance to the "new type" of program. The young boys of the neighborhood wanted to know why they could not come in as they pleased. However, through constant interpretation, and involvement of members in program planning, gradually, acceptance of the House of Industry in its new location developed.²

Southwark Neighborhood House

Southwark House originated on the waterfront approximately a mile south of the site where Stanfield House was later founded. It had its point of origin in the Juvenile Court work begun in the area by Mrs. A. R. Ramsey in 1895. Five years later, Mrs. Ramsey organized a Women's Club which held meetings at 6 Legue Street. Four other groups, a working boy's club, a working girl's club, a free kindergarten and a "milk station," joined the Women's Club in forming the "Southwark Club" which

¹Ibid., p. 5.

was organized by a joining committee and in 1903, rented a house for its headquarters. The work was carried on by voluntary, untrained workers, and the financial burden was heavy. However, with assistance and guidance from the Ethical Society, a new Board was formed representing the five interested groups and the Ethical Society. At first, each group continued to be responsible for the raising of its own funds, but gradually the merger was perfected, distinctions were forgotten, and a pattern was unconsciously developed for the merger of Southwark House itself with other agencies forty years later.

In 1906, a building at Front and Ellsworth Streets along with three adjacent buildings were bought with funds raised by the Ethical Society. Three years later, two more houses were bought in the name of the Society. These were demolished and on their site was built a much needed gymnasium. To lighten the burden on working mothers, a Day Nursery was started under a separate Board in 1910. Four years later came a Men's Club and, in 1916, a Domestic Science Department to whose activities 107 and 109 Ellsworth Street were devoted. Refurnishing and re-equipping done in 1923 made frequent cooking classes possible. In 1932 the rear building was remodelled as a Girls' House with a complete kitchen and dining space. On the second floor, bathroom facilities and an attractively furnished sitting-room were installed. In addition to its use for cooking classes, it was also used as a gathering place for members and their friends. Several weddings and wedding receptions were held there.

After a preliminary year under the leadership of Miss Janet Hayes, Southwark Neighborhood House acquired as its first resident head-worker, Mrs. Mary M. Adams, who continued in charge until 1930 when she was succeeded by Mrs. Ethel Walsh. Mrs. Adams' emphasis was largely cultural,
with stress on art, drama, and dance. During the period of the first World War, Poles became the predominant element in the neighborhood and this resulted in a prominent place in the program being given to Americanization. In 1916 a Polish resident first attracted Polish adults to the House; prior to that time, their children only had attended. On Sunday evenings, illustrated lectures on American life and history were delivered to audiences of two or three hundred people. The Annual Report of Southwark Neighborhood House 1917-18, states "In view of a rapidly increasing Polish and Lithuanian population in our district, the adjustment of these two groups to American life and the making of such splendid material into American citizenship, becomes the most important task in the future work of our settlement."\(^1\) Changing times, however, created new needs. During the depression of the thirties, the neighborhood was beset by unemployment and the settlement cooperated closely with such Government relief agencies as the National Youth Administration and the Work Progress Administration.\(^2\)

Workman Place House

In 1908 a daughter of Mrs. Edward Walter Clark joined with five other girls in forming "The Society of Alpha Pi," a female "Fraternity." The group began by starting a nursery school for eight small children in a room at 7 Workman Place Yard. With Mrs. Clark's backing, the work expanded until it occupied four band-box houses, commonly called an ace duce tres house, which is actually a house with three rooms, one on top of the other. These houses were rented from the Clark Estate for one dollar a year and

\(^1\) W. Edwin Collier, _op. cit._, p. 7.

\(^2\) Ibid., pp. 6-7.
were known collectively as Workman Place Neighborhood House. Located at Front and Fitzwater Streets, Workman Place House is a hollow square of buildings, two sides of which were built as servants quarters by George Mifflin in 1748 and the quadrangle was completed by John Workman who bought the property and whose name it has retained. Its area of primary responsibility extended from Front Street to Third Street and from South Street to Christian Street, so that it occupied a space intermediate between Stanfield and Southwark Houses. Alpha Pi furnished the members of the Board which, consequently, never included men. After the Community Chest became responsible for the over-all financing of the agency, Alpha Pi funds were used for special projects which would otherwise have been impossible. Until the creation of the Community Chest, a major portion of the annual income was derived from pony shows held at the Wynnewood Estate of Mrs. William J. Clothier.

The evolution of activities at Workman Place naturally paralleled those at neighboring agencies similar conditions producing similar results. With the influx of immigrants during the period of the first World War, the objectives of the settlement were stated as being "To form a link between the many neighbors, who had moved to America for the sake of personal and religious freedom, and to assist people in becoming adjusted to their new environment and in their many personal problems."¹ Many of the immigrants could not speak or understand the English language, it was difficult for them to cope with landlords, hospital clinics, schools et cetera. The staff of Workman Place House became in a very real sense the interpreter of American ideals and customs to our incoming citizens.

¹Ibid., p. 9.
In the thirties, unemployment superseded Americanization as the primary problem, consequently, Workman Place as other settlements, cooperated in the relief work of the W.P.A. and similar government agencies.¹

Stanfield House

In 1894, Richard and Sarah A. Smith created a fund, to be administered by the Fidelity-Philadelphia Trust Company, for the establishment of Smith Memorial Playgrounds and Playhouses in Fairmount Park. The projects were to benefit small children. Any child over ten was to have been excluded. In 1912, application was made for permission to erect and maintain playhouses outside the Park, in congested city neighborhoods. Miss Anna Davis, head worker of College Settlement from 1898 to 1941, assisted greatly in interpreting the need to the court. Consequently, once a long fight with the collateral heirs was finally settled in 1917, Smith Memorial Playground and Playhouse Fund monies were made available for the continued operation of College Settlement's branch on Front Street. At the same time, the houses were given the name of Stanfield in memory of Mr. Smith's son.

Finally, in 1921, the Estate of Richard Smith bought not only the Front Street houses in which College Settlement had been operating, but also another house at 100 Lombard Street. In 1923 the group of buildings was extensively remodeled and the name Stanfield House was extended to the entire property.

The depression of the early thirties necessitated a curtailment of the Smith Memorial's activities but Stanfield House was one of the projects which survived. During this period, work with the unemployed became a

¹Ibid., p. 8-9.
major part of the settlement's program. Problems were posed by the pre-
valence of liquor, stealing, and dope. In regards to the children, play
continued to be considered as an important factor in social stability and
social change. There was recognition of the value of happiness and beauty
in daily living and of the importance of a discriminatory judgment to which
the thinking process is a necessary prelude. Stanfield was the scene of one
of the first pre-school educational programs; other outstanding techniques
included the miniature village, in whose life children of all ages from
4 - 14 participated. Use was also made of art, dramatics, athletics, and
nature-study. Finally, a Guidance Clinic was maintained.¹

Camp Linden

As early as 1903, the old Southwork Club had arranged a week or two
at the seashore for about twenty boys. The Club's successor, Southwark
Neighborhood House, organized a summer camp within two years of its found-
ing. In 1908 "Camp Linden" was constructed on the banks of the Delaware
near Torresdale. The camp's location varied from year to year, the original
name being retained and applied to successive sites until 1915, when seven
acres were purchased a few miles above Norristown. This location also
proved inadequate. The Ethical Society, therefore, took the lead in
raising funds from its own members and the wider public, the success of
the appeal being largely due to the zeal of S. Burns Weston and others.
In 1925, Camp Linden was transferred for the last time. The 62 acre
Greenwood Dell Farm, six miles from West Chester, was bought in the name
of the society and became a permanent adjunct operated every summer during

¹Ibid., pp. 5-6.
July and August in four two-weeks shifts, half the time being devoted to boys and half to girls.¹

Physical Facilities in Relation to Early Program

The physical facilities of the individual settlements, already mentioned, were fairly adequate. In accordance with their early program stressing cleanliness, education, and interpretation of American ideals, the settlements involved in this study did not always have sufficient amounts of funds to purchase new equipment as the needs arose. Nevertheless, by hiring staff members, who were devoted to their work, the settlements were able to overcome some of the handicaps occurring from a shortage of facilities. However, as soon as the funds became available, through the chest and other sources, the needed facilities were secured.

The buildings have always imposed a limit to the number of people the settlements have been able to serve. This, too, was one of the reasons why a program was later developed to serve members outside the four walls of the settlement house.

Later Trends in Program

As one may discern from the preceding pages, the early trends in program were determined by the type of members being served by the settlements. The tremendous influx of immigrant groups into the neighborhoods served by the settlements made it extremely necessary to offer programs of an educational nature including classes in English and citizenship, cleanliness, and the interpretation of American ways of living.

After the population became a little more stable, the settlements were able to look toward other primary aims and objectives such as

¹Ibid., p. 8.
stimulating social reforms and carrying them into effect, and releasing dormant powers of the neighborhoods themselves. The settlements continued their former program also on a secondary basis. Through these aims, objectives, and practices, settlements everywhere perhaps were called the forerunners of the community organization movement. Dillick stated:

In the opinion of Jesse F. Steiner the settlements were the forerunners of the modern "community movement." They did not bring about a correlation of agencies in the community, but rather established a neighborhood center where the best representatives of education and culture could meet with those who did not have these advantages on terms of neighborly intimacy.

The point of view of the settlement worker continued to be different from that of the teacher, the charity worker, the mission worker, and the student of social research because his knowledge of the neighborhood was not regarded as limited or qualified by any special interest beyond that of becoming acquainted with his neighbors, knowing the facts about their struggles and aspirations, and the conditions under which they worked and lived. Since the settlement worker did not "profess" anything, he was not met by that defensive attitude on the part of his neighbors which the visit of the professional worker calls out.¹

Influences Leading to the First Merger

Soon after the first World War, Philadelphia in common with other progressive cities adopted the system of a Community Fund. At first known as the Welfare Federation, it included, from its beginning in 1921, all of the settlements mentioned in chapter three with the exception of Stanfield House which did not depend upon the Chest until 1946. Operating Funds for the houses ceased to be raised by their respective Boards and budgets were set by allocation from the Community Chest. It became apparent to the keen eye of the Health and Welfare Council of the Community Chest, that in Southeast Central Philadelphia there had come to be, as a natural result of the historical development already traced, an abnormal concentration of Settlement Houses. These were located in close proximity to one another, shared a clientele which differed little ethnically and vocational, and conducted quite similar programs. The Chest began to talk of amalgamation.

Surveys were made of the waterfront area served by Stanfield, Workman Place and Southwark Houses, and plans were discussed for joint operation of these institutions. On June 12, 1946, was held the first formal meeting of a central committee appointed by the Workman Place and Southwark House Boards to implement these plans. By September, an organizational chart had been agreed upon, this called for a coordinated Board on which Stanfield also was to have representation. On October 7, 1946, approval having been signified by the Boards of the different settlements involved,
and the Trustees of the Richard Smith Estate, a meeting of the combined Boards considered itself duly constituted as a meeting of a new association.\(^1\)

**Board Structure**

During the first meeting of the newly formed organization, by-laws were adopted providing for an Executive Board of not less than eleven nor more than fifteen of which four members were to be designated by Southwark House, four by Workman Place House, and three, later reduced by agreement to one, by the Trustees of the estate of Richard Smith.\(^2\) Mrs. Alexander C. Yarnall, President of Workman Place, was elected President of the new Board, with Mrs. V. Howard Reber, President of Southwark House as 1st Vice-President. Mr. Sidney Schulman, legal counsel for Southwark House as well as the new Association, was elected as 2nd Vice-President. The by-laws provided for monthly meetings of the Board and for quarterly and annual membership meetings.

The name of "The Riverfront Neighborhood Association" was adopted and a first order of business was the search for a suitable professional Director. He was secured in the person of Chester R. Leighty, a former Field Director of the American Red Cross with settlement work experience dating to 1915. Mr. Leighty was appointed to the position on November 4, 1946. One of Mr. Leighty's first suggestions was a change in name to United Neighbors Association, which proposal was adopted at a special meeting of Association on December 16, 1946.\(^3\)

\(^1\) Ibid., p. 9.

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 10.

\(^3\) Ibid.
Two years after the merger had taken place, Mr. Leighty, Executive Director had this to say about the merger.

This uniting of people began with the merging of the Boards or controlling groups of the three separate organizations in order to carry on a more unified program for the neighborhood which they cover. Although there is a trend throughout the country for the merging of individual settlements, we are told that United Neighbors Association is the most complete merger that has taken place. The managing board of the United Neighbors Association is made up largely from the previous managing groups of the individual houses who have submerged their interest and turned over the property and management to the United Neighbors Board of Directors, which is able to use each house in a way that can best serve the whole neighborhood.

The staff of the three houses are also united through a central staff council from which come all major decisions on policy and program within the framework established by the Managing Board and the House Councils.

Representatives of the teen-age, senior and adult groups make up a House Council for the house, in turn, representatives from these individual House Councils make up a central House Council representing the people of the whole area. The next step, which is now taking place, is the organization of a United Neighbors Council, made up of representatives of the Association, Board, Staff and neighborhood.

This cooperative self-help approach is the key to the philosophy and objectives of the United Neighbors Association. In actual practice, it is based upon the organization of teen-age, senior and adult groups built around their natural leadership, who belong to the various houses as groups, and as groups take full responsibility for the conduct and discipline of all their members. The pattern on the waterfront is one of rugged individualism with little respect for persons or property. It is not easy to effect the change from ten individuals in a group, to a group of ten persons who function as a unit, but once the democratic process is accepted, the whole concept of responsibility changes, not only relating to their group, but also to family and neighborhood. Thus a start is made toward constructive citizenship.¹

The delegate by-laws were legally changed in 1955. The Association elects the Board; the Board elects its own officers. The Association may increase the number of members of the Board if it so chooses.²

¹Ibid., p. 2.

Influences Leading to the Second Merger

By 1949, pressure for a further step in agency federation was being felt. Mr. John McDowell, Executive Director of the National Federation of Settlements, as a result of an exhaustive study, recommended the unification of agencies from Front to Broad Streets in the area north of Washington Avenue. His report emphasized the purpose of settlements as being to create real neighborliness and the conditions of a good life, with recreation simply as a tool, and with programs which were "fun plus" and which allowed for a high degree of membership participation at the planning stage. Mr. McDowell further stated that:

There is a clear sense of purpose and a persistence in pursuing it that distinguishes the United Neighbors Association from most other settlements. The staff, judged on the basis of training and experience, is well qualified to carry out the purpose which is essentially to help people to help themselves through developing leadership, social responsibility and self-reliance. Activities and program emphasis are chosen with adequate appreciation of their usefulness to achieve the agency's purpose. Good use is made of agency organization and structure to develop better inter-group relations. The camp is used to deepen relationships and further promote the year-around agency functions. As to purposes, educational use of group experience, and staff. United Neighbors rates excellent. The facilities are adequate.¹

The more serious questions regarding the United Neighbors Association do not relate to our work but to the community setting in which the agency finds itself. The recommendation concerning the need for re-thinking, re-organization and perhaps relocating settlement functions in southeast central Philadelphia affects United Neighbors unless it can clearly demonstrate that the waterfront is psychologically so separate as to need special services. The purposes and emphases of United Neighbors Association are just as significant for the whole district as for the waterfront.

Operating on a decentralized basis is already accepted as a way of work. But United Neighbors needs a greater potential constituency than it now has to do its best work in neighborhoods organization as well as in group work. Until constituency is located, questions concerning the community's investment in the agency will probably persist. Therefore, United Neighbors has a good reason as any agency to take an active part in the reorganization of settlement services in the district. Its clarity of purpose and the professional training and experience of its staff may give it an advantage in such negotiations as well as impose upon its special responsibilities. The ratio of cost to number of participants is not likely to improve as long as two or three other settlements carry on programs within six or seven blocks of United Neighbors Centers. As long as that situation exists, United Neighbors best claim for support is that it provides a laboratory for high quality group work with special value in improving relations between ethnic groups. Laboratories are expensive and in days of reduced voluntary funds, the support of United Neighbors may be in jeopardy until it reaches agreements assuring it of an adequate community to serve.

There is such an exciting and vital quality about the United Neighbors Association that it merits elbow room and adequate resources to fulfill its potential role. It is very important that the constituent community be defined before the Association loses its imagination and vigor. It deserves a better fate than gradual deprivation of essential support or continuous questioning as to validity of area functions.¹

Concurrently with the study the United Neighbors Association was feeling the desire to become a permanent legal corporation upon the rapidly approaching termination of its initial five-year experimental period.

In March, 1950, Mr. John B. Dawson and Mr. W. T. McCullough presented a plan, on behalf of the Chest's Health and Welfare Council, whereby the United Neighbors Association was to be dismembered, Stanfield House was to be attached to the House of Industry. (The name, United Neighbors, being transferred to this new grouping). Workman Place was to be abolished, and Southwark House operated as an "outpost" to the Reed Street Settlement.

It was fortunately, too late to unscramble the loyalties which had

¹Ibid., p. 3.
been mingled in the previous four years or to jeopardize the progress already made in interracial work and in community participation. The United Neighbors Joint Council, representing neighbors, board, and staff, having after a long period of growth and preparation just attained its first meeting, objected vigorously to the dismemberment, as did the United Neighbors Association's Board and also the Ethical Society, property owners of Southwark House and Camp Linden. A modified plan was accordingly adopted in June, 1950; whereby the United Neighbors Association extended its boundaries to Broad Street north of Washington Avenue, but retained the traditional Southwark area down to Mifflin Street east of Fourth Street; the House of Industry became a member of the federation, with a representation of eight nominated members on a Board of seventeen to twenty-five members; Workman Place was closed.¹

The reorganization was completed in October, 1950, and the association was formally incorporated in June, 1951.² By a final amendment to the by-laws in October, 1951, it was provided that, if the parties to the federation failed to nominate their full permissive number of designees to the Board, vacancies might be filled by the election of additional members at large.

Thus in five years, the original "joint operation" had become so complete a merger that, of the three original organizations, the Estate of Richard Smith (Stanfield) had voluntarily reduced its representation from three to one; Workman Place had acquiesced in its own dissolution; and the Southwark House Board was, as a distinct entity, withering away to the point where it would soon be unable to fill its quota of nominees.³

¹ Ibid., p. 10.
² Ibid.
³ Ibid.
CHAPTER V

PRESENT TRENDS IN RELATION TO PROVIDING SERVICES

The Decentralized Group Work Program

United Neighbors, like most other settlements, at this stage of development, was still using predominantly group work methods and skills and this program being confined within the four walls of the agency with the exception of the camp. However, in view of the increased area for which United Neighbors Association was asked to accept responsibility it was felt that this could not be done by house centered coverage. At the same time, United Neighbors felt that their philosophy and objectives could be just as pertinent for field operations as those which took place in the buildings. Therefore, in order to direct their service more intensively toward their objectives, and in line with their increased responsibility, the United Neighbors Association began to consider work in the field.

The United Neighbors Association saw three requisites which must be met:

1. Group work on a decentralized basis as well as any other service of the agency must be directed toward the fulfillment of agency philosophy and objectives.

2. There can be no degree of difference in the quality of decentralized service and its counterpart to be found inside the agency.

3. There should be no confusion in the goals of the decentralized service, by this was meant that while neighborhood organization, as well as organization in the wider community, may come about through this service, the group work approach used demands its own specific goals which are primary in this case.¹

In the early planning, in terms of the job, three prongs appeared and reappeared. The group worker decentralized would:

1. Either work with groups of people who already had had some degree of organization; that is, women who met at each other's homes socially, men who might gather on the same corner, young people who were exhibiting signs of group feeling; or on the other hand, help groups similar to these to develop.

2. At the same time that the worker was involved in such organization, he would help the group to find meeting facilities.

3. In order that he might bring this service to as many groups as possible, he would help the group, either to develop its natural leadership or to accept leadership from the wider community, volunteer or otherwise, which he in turn would supervise.¹

The United Neighbors Association was often resented the fact that a building seemed to assume the proportion of a millstone. Being aware of the possibility of an agency's ability to draw people to it for meetings, and yet being, more or less, dependent on the mobility of the people themselves, constituted a problem. Consequently, "the decentralization of group work may transfer this mobility from the potential member to the agency's service."² In any event, it was an approach which distinguished the United Neighbors Association from the school, hospital, clinic, and other building-centered service. Included in the concept of mobility is selectivity, so that having the ability to move service to district areas carries with it the ability to select those areas.

Agency service being dispersed in the community itself rather than in the agency could be a distinct factor in the evolvement of program.

¹Ibid., p. 4.
²Ibid.
Living problems were constantly before these members. Here, there are no walls of any agency to act as a refining sifter to eliminate some of the cruder aspects of community life. Neither is there the home and comfortable appointments of the House to mellow their dissatisfaction with things as they were--inadequate housing, sanitation and health, proper recreation for their children, et cetera.

Groups thus begun with natural leadership developing, it is strongly probable that the surrounding neighborhood may begin to rouse itself and, through utilizing similar service, involve itself in community action. Utilizing the concept of the settlement as a vitalizing center, United Neighbors feel that their projects can take on some of the volunteered to act as leaders for younger girls' and boys' clubs.

Community Projects Department

The Community Projects department, provided for in the budget in 1949, actually came into existence in 1950. The first plan conceived by United Neighbors was to take three persons from the Houses on the waterfront and have them work in a dual capacity--in the House as well as in the community. Such a plan would have thereby, prevented an increase or decrease in the budget. These persons were to be called field workers. However, the original plan was never used because of the merger with the House of Industry and increased coverage. It was therefore decided that the community projects worker would devote full-time in the community, the office being located at Stanfield House under the supervision of the House Director.

In 1954 with the closing of Stanfield House, the Community Projects department moved into offices provided by the House of Industry. The
former Director of Stanfield retaining his position as head of the Community Projects department.¹

Community Projects, as they function within the agency, would not be possible without a real confidence in the people. A confidence that they want to help themselves and a confidence that the neighbor groups can develop leadership within themselves sufficient to carry through a program of neighborhood improvement.

The position of the agency and agency worker in relation to the community projects must always be kept clearly defined. They are self-contained citizen groups who are under the guidance but not under the direction of the agency. It requires a well-balanced combination of community organization and group work skill with the agency worker at no time in a dominant position.

The reason for organization and the history of the individual community projects is as varied as their number, which somewhere in the twenties. The number is never static. There are new request coming in all the time and those that seem dormant never quite die when the original objective is accomplished.

Hawthorne Area

A little over a year ago the city Housing Coordinator asked the agency to represent the community, its people and organizations, in the Hawthorne Urban Redevelopment area. This was a pilot project in putting the new Housing Code into effect in a slum area. Within the past few months, the agency has again been asked to represent the people relating to housing, this time by the City Housing Authority to advise them relating to the kind of community facilities for the Fitzwater Public Housing Site and how they should be operated. The boundaries for the Hawthorne Area are Eleventh to Broad Street and Lombard Street to Washington Avenue. This is the Western most end of the agency geographic area. The Fitzwater Housing Site is all within the above boundaries and includes a major part of the four blocks area--Twelfth Street to Broad Street and Catherine to Bainbridge Street. A committee of professional and neighborhood people has been organized for the Hawthorne area to cooperate with the agency in working out a plan for the coordination of all the various factors that are at work in this area today and particularly the Hawthorne Urban Renewal Project and the Fitzwater Housing Site.

The biggest problem, and an almost unsolvable one, is the removal or relocation of families that are dispossessed because of the workings of the Housing Code or of the new public Housing project. There are just not enough houses available in the city at a rent which confronts every social agency in their attempt to promote better housing.

¹Interview with Executive Director Chester R. Leighty, (United Neighbors Association, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, January 24, 1956).
Social action of one kind or another is a part of the activities of all our community groups. The agency and the local community council provide the opportunity for discussion of issues of broader community interest.

United Neighbors has made effective use of its policy of group thinking, planning and action in all parts of its program. It attempts to provide a climate where people of all backgrounds can work together for their common good. These people in their alleys, courts and streets are "coming to life" and with friendly guidance are accepting greater citizen responsibility. This association of agency and neighbor can never be static. Together we shall move forward to meet the challenge of living in the city of tomorrow.

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CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In studying the history and development of the United Neighbors Association, the writer was concerned not only with the history of the organization, but also with the program implications involved in agency mergers. The results of the study lead to the following conclusions:

1. Although settlements are usually referred to as group work agencies, the trend in settlements is toward the utilization of all processes of social work, and there is a growing emphasis on the utilization of community organization.

2. Early social work activities on a neighborhood level began in England as settlements with emphasis on bringing people affected by the industrial revolution into contact with those advantaged individuals of education and culture for the purpose of sharing their culture with the less fortunate. Similarly to the movement in England, America developed the neighborhood approach under the leadership of Stanton Coit, who had been a resident of Toynbee Hall.

3. In Southeast Philadelphia, three settlements operating on the neighborhood level, developed along the waterfront. Similar conditions in the neighborhoods produced similar results in program, consequently, the evolution of activities at each settlement paralleled each other. The three settlements were Workman Place House, Southwark Neighborhood House, and Stanfield House.

4. Since the three settlements were serving a common clientele and had similar programs, serious questions arose among chest directors as to
whether or not the best use of the community dollar was being made. This situation resulted in the merger of those settlements into one association, which was known as the first merger.

5. The newly formed organization had the potential to serve a wider community than that previously served. Therefore, with the support of a study made of Philadelphia Settlements, and with chest sanction, the United Neighbors Association expanded its boundaries and brought the House of Industry into the Association. In this second merger, the Workman Place House was closed.

6. The United Neighbors Association has been considered the most complete merger as yet organized. Former managing groups have lost their distinct identity and have come to feel as one.

7. An interracial policy affecting Board, Staff, and membership operated at the Association. This policy prevented any one of the Houses from being designated for any one ethnic or racial group. Consequently, excellent work in bringing people together across different ethnic and racial lines has been achieved.

8. In an effort to serve portions of the community that seldom if ever come under the influence of the settlement, a community projects department was organized.

9. Although community organization has been increasingly practiced in the community projects department, considerable group work also has been performed on a decentralized basis, thus making it possible to further, not only, the original settlement goals; but also, to move more easily into the total life of the community. As a result, people of different ethnic and racial groups have been brought together into the United Neighbors Association, this has made it possible for the organization
to serve the geographical area in a most production manner.
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