A TREND IN SETTLEMENT WORK:
"GRASS ROOTS" LEADERSHIP AMONG
CIVIC GROUPS HAVING MINIMUM STAFF SUPERVISION

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

ATLANTA, GEORGIA
JUNE 1959

R= iii; T= 53
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A note of thanks is extended to Mr. Charles Cacace, Executive Director of Saint Martha's Settlement House, and Mr. Barry M. Freeman, Community Services Director and Field Work Agency Supervisor, who originally suggested the topic studied and made available helpful suggestions in the formative stages of the study.

Deepest appreciation is expressed to Miss Frankie V. Adams, Professor of Social Work and Faculty Advisor, Atlanta University School of Social Work, who provided immense and invaluable guidance in helping to organize and clarify the material.

Sincere gratitude is owed to the writer's wife, parents, and undergraduate and graduate instructors for their support, concern, and prayers in helping to make this thesis possible.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Significance of the Study

Historically, settlement work has been a story of pioneering and fighting for equal privileges for the economically dispossessed, the educationally deprived, the physically handicapped, and overcoming the stigma of race, foreign birth, or religion. It's the story of a movement that finds solutions for needs, originates, and constantly teaches cooperation in dealing with local needs and citizenship in the world. According to the findings of the Arden House Conference the settlement movement is:

(A many splendored thing). Its early leaders fought misery and privation wherever they found it in city streets and slums and sweatshops. They established kindergartens and well-baby clinics, worked for playgrounds and better housing, fought against child labor and other labor abuses, studied causes of sickness and poverty, supported public action to prevent and eradicate social ills. At the same time, they sought to enhance the pride and personal assets of their individual neighbors through services such as language and citizenship classes, visiting nurse care, mothers' clubs, music schools, theatre groups, work in arts and crafts.1

As one looks at the contemporary picture as reflected in the program of the National Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Centers, there appears a laudable flexibility of agency attempts to work for greater citizenship participation and neighborhood goals in a rapidly changing world.

Apparently, "mobility" was the key word linked with settlement problems uppermost in the speaker's minds at the Arden House Conference. Set-

tlements in the United States came into being when cities were being heavily populated by thousands of immigrants from abroad and throngs of young people from established farm homes in search of city opportunities and excitement. Many central areas in big cities have changed their ethnic character several times in the past five or six decades, as the children of earlier immigrants have grown up and moved elsewhere and new national groups have come into the areas. 1 Recent years, however, have seen perplexing changes in the extent and tempo of movement through the central areas and in the types of people who move in and out of them.

Within and outside the city, change, as a kaleidoscope, has been sorting out new patterns in which people are clustered according to income, race, age, and sometimes occupation. Business and professional people have been moving to suburbs that have zoning and other self-imposed restrictions relative to middle-class and well-to-do conformity. In contrast, poverty and prejudice herd many low-income families into racial and ethnic ghettos from which escape is difficult. Yet, mobility has been a characteristic of cities for as long as mankind has records. According to sociologists and population theorists, mobility — social, economic, and geographical — has always been a part of the "American way of life". However, the minus side of mobility is that many people feel bewildered and helpless in the face of changes in which they feel they have no voice or power of decision. 2

Apparently, people — regardless of income — are likely to forget their commitments to society, to lack an interest in local government, schools,

1 Op cit., p. 2.
hospitals, and other social resources that require sustained support. All families, and especially low-income families, need the protection and positive sustenance of relationships with the people and social institutions about them. Nonetheless, good or bad, mobility will continue for a long time in the United States and must be expected to increase.¹ These migrations will continue to include groups whose plights give the settlement and neighborhood center particular concern — Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, Indians leaving the reservations, "hill-billy" whites from isolated back country. In essence, mobility becomes a problem only when it is combined with lack of resources — personal, social, and financial.

Hence, in the midst of the Twentieth Century, generally referred to by many as the "Space Age" with the increasing complexity of our social structure and our rapidly expanding population and continuous and growing demands on society to carry the burden of social services, what are to be the purposes and functions of the settlement and neighborhood center in a changing and challenging environment? According to The Cleveland Settlement Study, settlements are living organisms. As living, growing things, they accept challenges growing out of their changing environment. Changing needs must be met by adapting or abandoning old services and procedures and by instituting new ones.²

Arthur Hillman says that the settlement program is experimental, flexible, ready to demonstrate a method, to meet a need and then relinquish the

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particular activity to another organization.\textsuperscript{1} The primary function of the settlement and neighborhood center, then, is not a program. Program change as needs change and as other resources are developed. The lasting function is a relationship with the community. It is evident that settlements are reconsidering their functions today, voluntarily or by necessity, as their areas change and decline in population, as staff shortages develop, as sources of financial support diminish, and as supporters and workers demand satisfying proof of services rendered.

What then is the distinctive role of the settlement in coming decades, granted the continuation of many other social agencies and resources affecting fields in which the settlement broke ground? Speakers from both the consultant and settlement groups at the Arden House Conference cited functions which the settlement now provides, should continue, and extend. In brief, these functions may be listed as follows:

1. To serve as one of the few agencies in contemporary society that is not "wholly formally, bureaucratized, channelized..." that offers a personal, face-to-face relationship in which a whole human being can be seen and talked to in something like his entire life situation.

2. To help give people roots, a sense of identification with a place, other people, existing agencies of their society and, if they stay long enough, with the ongoing goods and traditions of that society.

3. To experiment in using new knowledge and social techniques for dealing with human problems.

4. To provide decentralized service to people who need help in areas close to their homes. "The people who need you most need you near".

5. To help directly or indirectly to promote cultural activities—"an active participant culture"—in the United States, Countering pressures toward passivity in American life, helping to develop ways of using our increasing leisure for creative activities.

\textsuperscript{1} Arthur Hillman, Community Organization and Planning (New York, 1950), p. 149.
6. To provide important services in the planning and execution of programs for urban renewal.1

More specifically, the Education and Recreation Consultant of the Health Welfare Council of Philadelphia asserts that the program of the Association of Philadelphia Settlements and Neighborhood Centers be continually focused toward:

1. Helping people to manage their own neighborhood affairs by developing citizen participation.

2. Bridging cultural and racial differences.


4. Aiding the adjustment of multi-problem families.

5. Developing joint public-private services for urban neighborhoods.

6. Providing opportunities for older persons to make their maximum contribution to society.2

One is made cognizant of the settlement's need for greater involvement in community organization and citizen participation for neighborhood improvement. Therefore, current trends in neighborhood work make it "inevitable" for the settlement to scrutinize and evaluate continuously its services and program in view of the needs and resources of the neighborhood. A broader community services program has evolved from these attempts to sustain a worthwhile and constructive program.

The history of Saint Martha's Settlement House in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania is one of an agency's attempt to meet the needs of its ever-

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1 National Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Centers, op.cit., p. 13.

changing environment. In the preface of the Annual Report, 1956-1957, the following statement appeared:

The basic premise on which we have operated has been to provide the people of this community the opportunity to have a greater voice in expressing the needs and activities they wish to be met and provided... We will continue to provide increasing effort in this area in order that our program may continue to be a vital one, ever working to meet the needs of this community.¹

In light of this statement, Saint Martha's House has found it necessary to broaden its community services program to further citizen participation for neighborhood improvement.

However, the agency was operating on a limited budget because its major means of financial support came from the Community Chest of Southeastern Pennsylvania. The latter had been unsuccessful in reaching its fund-raising goal in past years. In 1959, Charles Cacace, Executive Director of Saint Martha's House, reported:

For the past two years the City of Philadelphia has experienced a shrinking chest dollar - the results have been a closer look at supported services in the light of current social needs and in light of growing public services".²

Hence, it had become practical and necessary for Saint Martha's House to draw more heavily from the vast resources of "grass roots" leadership to supplement a limited staff.

One of the neighborhood's pertinent problems concerned a lack of sufficient recreation for children and young adults. An approach of Saint Martha's house to this problem had been to encourage citizen par-

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¹ From the Preface of the Annual Report, 1956-57 of Saint Martha's House, ( Mimeographed.)
ticipation through its existing block organizations to provide leadership among neighborhood groups and mass activities with a minimum amount of agency staff supervision. This endeavor appeared to be a feasible one to overcome some of the disadvantages of trying to meet the neighborhood's increasing demand for new and extended services from an agency with a limited staff and budget. Because similar steps to develop and to utilize volunteers are of major concern to all agencies, whether public or private, it seemed that a study of "grass roots" leadership among neighborhood civic improvement groups having minimum staff supervision is significant to the field of contemporary settlement work, in particular, and to community organization, in general. From such a study, possible recommendations could be derived for program planning involving the need or lack of need for greater staff supervision and volunteer leadership training in this area of an agency's community services program.

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this study were: (1) to ascertain who these "grass roots" leaders were - noting their age, sex, number of children, length of residency, occupation, and how these leaders were developed by their experiences as volunteers associated with Saint Martha's House; (2) to describe their roles as leaders in terms of what they did in reference to the particular neighborhood civic group or groups with which they were associated; (3) to find out some of the problems, if any, and how they were handled; and (4) to get their opinions on the adequacy of supervision from Saint Martha's House.
Method of Procedure

The procedure for collecting material used for the study was as follows:

1. Personal interviews (informal) with the executive director of Saint Martha's House, the director of community services program, and the full-time agency garden club and community worker relative to the topic.

2. Examination of agency community program records, annual reports, and other material from the files in relation to the agency's involvement in community services program for the period of 1950 to 1958.

3. The reading of material from books, pamphlets, papers, and periodicals pertinent to current trends in settlement work and in community organization.

4. Scheduled interviews by an interview guide with nine (9) neighborhood persons, who provided leadership for neighborhood-sponsored mass activities, to ascertain their functions, problems, and opinions in relation to same leadership roles. The writer initially planned to interview three persons, one from each of the three neighborhood civic groups discussed in Chapter III of this study. However, further research by the writer made it apparent that there were at least six other persons who played significant roles within these civic groups, particularly, in the area of planning conducting mass activities for neighborhood pre-school age children, teen-agers, and young adults. Therefore, because the roles played by these additional six group members seemed significant to the study, the writer in-
terviewed a total of nine neighborhood persons or "grass roots" leaders.

Scope and Limitations

This study was descriptive and no evaluation to determine the effectiveness and/or correlation of previous experience, methods, and techniques of the leaders of the mass activities was attempted. This study was limited to those persons who were designated by their respective neighborhood civic groups to provide leadership and supervision for mass activities. The research for this study was confined to a five months period, October, 1958 through February, 1959.

Definition of Terms

"Grass Roots Leaders": This term was used herein to mean those neighborhood persons who were members of the groups they served and for which they provided leadership. In addition, these "leaders" lived in the same neighborhood with the civic groups served, had similar educational, social, and religious backgrounds, and had no professional leadership training (as in schools of social work, etc.).

Minimum Staff Supervision: In this study, the term was intended to describe agency work with those neighborhood civic groups and their mass activities in which professional help was not necessary during the conducting of the activities. Although staff guidance and consultation were made available to the groups for program planning, the actual leadership and supervision for the mass activities were provided by the neighborhood persons themselves.
CHAPTER II

SAINT MARTHA'S SETTLEMENT HOUSE

Brief History and Church Relations

Saint Martha's Settlement House was a nonprofit corporation located at Snyder Avenue and Eighth Street in the Southeastern part of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Saint Martha's House was given by Mr. Samuel Houston as a memorial for his first wife, Edith Atlee Corlies Houston, in 1901. Its relationship to the Diocese of Pennsylvania was very close; and the Bishop was named in the Charter as the Chairman of its board. During the agency's early years, until it became a part of the Welfare Federation (now the Community Chest of Southeastern Pennsylvania), much of its support came from the Women's Auxiliary of the Episcopal Churches. However, the agency was strictly non-sectarian in program and no religious services were held in its building, except in the little chapel for the residents—and these were not compulsory. The residents did work very closely with the All Saints parish at 11th Street and Snyder Avenue, helping particularly in the Sunday School, until the expanding work at the agency made this a burden and it was discontinued.¹

Deaconess Colesberry, a comparatively young woman, was chosen as headworker. Her garb and the cross on the front door of the building were the only ways in which the church relationship was shown to the neighbors.

In the days before there were social service schools, all settlements trained their own workers and much of the work was done by volunteers. Saint Martha's House was used for post graduate work by members of the Church Training and Deaconess House, and in-service training for hundreds of volunteers who were mostly members of the Church. ¹

With the advent of the Community Chest and changing ideas, Saint Martha's House gradually changed its relationship to the Church. Help with the agency's budget was no longer necessary. Church-sponsored Christmas parties and gifts continued for some time; but with the higher standard of living, these were discontinued as unwise gestures. The Bishop of Pennsylvania in accordance with the Charter of Saint Martha's House, continued as the chairman of the Board; in his absence the powers of office were automatically given to the vice chairman. ²

Significant Changes in the Program Focus

Following Board discussion after the Settlement Study of 1947-48 (a co-operative study sponsored by the Community Chest, the Health and Welfare Council, and the Association of Philadelphia Settlements and Neighborhood Centers), Saint Martha's House's purposes were amended to read as follows:

1. To assist the individual to develop to his fullest potential so that he may work more effectively as a member of his group.

2. To integrate the surrounding community into a neighborhood


² Saint Martha's Settlement House, "Revised By-Laws" (Philadelphia, January, 1956), p. 2. (Mimeographed.)
conscious of its resources and needs and willing to work toward meeting them.¹

In light of these purposes, Saint Martha's House remained flexible in its program in order to meet present and foreseeable community needs. During the early years of the agency, this flexibility was conducive to the pioneering and discontinuance (when public and private agencies came into being) of a number of important services as the following:

1. A medical clinic - 1910-1950
2. A kindergarten - 1905-1948
3. A dental clinic - 1923-1954
5. A public library - which in 1910 was incorporated into the Free Library of Philadelphia - discontinued in 1956.²

Therefore, the program conducted at Saint Martha's House was indicative of services based on the necessary on-going knowledge of the community needed to enable changes when the neighborhood conditions and the people indicated. A broader community services program was realized from these attempts to develop and sustain a constructive and needed program.

High Lights of the Community Services Program: 1950-58

Because of the changes in neighborhood conditions and changes in the program focus of the agency to include more needed community services, the position of Community Worker was officially established on the staff of

Saint Martha's House in June, 1950. This was made possible by an increase in the Community Chest grant. At that time the following projects were considered as the tentative operating plan:

1. Continuing work with the Emily-Mercy Civic Association in reference to Operation Fix-Up and the strengthening of the association as a neighborhood improvement group.

2. Continuing service to the 5th and Cantrell Tot Lot Association in the effort to assure and develop a satisfactory Tot Lot program and to develop better neighborhood relations.

3. Continuing service to the Key Neighborhood Committee.

4. Exploring Social Welfare needs of Tot Lot and Playfield age groups in East and West Areas.

5. That the Community Worker would act as liaison between the agency and other public and private agencies operating in the Community Organization field.1

It was agreed that changes would be in order as this was a new area of work for Saint Martha's House.2

When this study was being made, the Community Services Department of Saint Martha's House included a director of program, a full-time garden club worker and community worker, a graduate student trainee in community organization from the Atlanta University School of Social Work, several neighborhood volunteers, and a community services advisory committee made up of some members of the Board of Directors. The director of program also served as co-ordinator for the community council of the Southwark community, the area in which the agency was located.

In general, the duty of the director of community services program

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2 Ibid.
was to ascertain needs in social welfare in the community served by Saint Martha's House and to interpret such needs in a meaningful way for future programming; and, to develop and organize civic and social action groups and activities to meet those needs and to do related work as required.

Some typical tasks of the director for community services program were:

1. To explore community needs and trends in the neighborhood served by the agency in such areas as housing, or improved conditions for minority groups.

2. To organize groups in the neighborhood and assist them in carrying out projects for the improvement of civic conditions.

3. To maintain up-to-date information on the activities and leadership in local neighborhood and community groups.

4. To establish relationships with local neighborhood leaders with the aim of helping these leaders assume responsibility for participation in local and area committees when needed.

5. To speak before organizations concerning social welfare resources and needs.

6. To relate the programs of neighborhood community groups to larger community.

7. To co-ordinate departmental work for a neighborhood newsletter and other publicity and interpretative material.

8. To perform varied tasks such as supervising a small group of volunteers and/or students.¹

Apropos of these general tasks of the director of community services program, community worker I, staff members of his department also had had a continuing relationship with the following neighborhood groups:

¹ Saint Martha's Settlement House, "Job Description for Community Worker I" (Philadelphia, n.d.), (Mimeographed.)
1. Emily-Mercy Civic Association
2. Fifth and Cantrell Lot Lot Association
3. Greenwich Civic Association
4. Southend Civic Association
5. 700 block Daly Street
6. 2200 block Darien Street
7. 900 block McKean Street
8. Little David Baptist Church Young Men's Council
9. Home and School Associations of neighborhood schools
10. Garden Clubs
   a. Gardenia Club (700 block Mercy)
   b. Morning Glory (700 block Winton)
   c. Silver Star (6th and Cantrell)
   d. 500 block Dudley Street
11. Southwark Community Council
   a. Executive Committee
   b. Urban Renewal Committee
   c. Housing and Zoning Committee
   d. Youth Council
   e. Program Committee
   f. Research Committee
   g. Dickinson Square Improvement Committee.¹

Working relationships with local agencies during the 1950-58 period had included:

1. Southwark Community Council
2. Wharton Community Council
3. South Philadelphia Citizens Conference
4. Health and Welfare Council, Southern Area
5. Health and Welfare Council, City-Wide
6. Citizens Council on City Planning
7. Philadelphia Housing Association
8. Philadelphia Housing Authority
9. Association of Philadelphia Settlements and Neighborhood Centers
10. Parent Youth-Aid Committee
11. Board of Education, English and Citizenship classes
12. Planned Parenthood Association

It seemed that from the foregoing listing of community services activities for the 1950-58 period there were clear manifestations of Saint Martha's House's attempts to develop and maintain a constructive and

needed program in view of changing neighborhood conditions and the de-
veloping new social welfare services.
CHAPTER III

BRIEF HISTORY OF THREE NEIGHBORHOOD CIVIC GROUPS

Due to the nature of this study, it seemed significant to describe briefly the historical background of the three neighborhood civic groups from which the nine "grass roots" leaders were selected as interviewees. These groups were the Emily-Mercy Civic Association, the Fifth and Cantrell Tot Lot Association, and the Silver Star Garden Club. All were organized with the assistance of members of the Community Services Department of Saint Martha's House.

Emily-Mercy Civic Association

The Emily-Mercy Civic Association, whose membership was concentrated in a four-block area (the 600 and 700 blocks of Emily and Mercy Streets) two blocks north of Saint Martha's House, grew out of neighborhood work for a tot lot in the 700 block of Emily Street.\(^1\) According to the Philadelphia Citizens' Council on City Planning, the story of "Yardville, U.S.A.", the Philadelphia backyard project, was the stimulus to a project transforming a vacant lot on Emily Street into a playground.\(^2\)

Miss Blanche Nicola, former headworker at Saint Martha's House, together with her community worker, began the project by conducting a house-to-house survey. Findings showed that there were 31\(\frac{1}{4}\) children over

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\(^1\) According to the "Proposed Recreation Standards for Philadelphia", by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission October 20, 1949: "A tot lot is a small area intended for the use of pre-school children. It is a substitute for the individual backyard."

six and under eighteen, and 125 under six who would benefit by a play-
ground. The next step was organizing a steering committee made up of in-
terested adult neighbors. Their first problem was to attain permission
to use the empty lot on Emily Street.

Much investigation found that the property had been deserted
by its original owners and then purchased at a Sheriff's Auction.
Mr. Rawls, attorney for the "Committee of 70", worked out a verbal
agreement as to the use of the land with Mr. Hays of the City
Solicitor's Office. This was the real beginning, the securing of
the lot. Now they could begin working on the actual transformation.

The Association completed the building of the tot lot approximately
four months later. Its major function was the operation of the tot lot
during the summer months. The men and women of the Association took turns
as leaders on a regularly scheduled time. The lot was scheduled to be
open from 10 a. m. til noon; two to four p. m. and six to eight p. m.
Average attendance was sixty children a day. However, the Association
was not successful in trying to operate the tot lot in this manner. There
were clear indications of the shortcomings of the original plan to operate
the tot lot:

The Emily-Mercy Civic Association projects have moved slowly, ....
During the summer of "50" the tot lot was operated sporadically by
Mrs. -'s Committee. The neighborhood people were not very reliable
in coming out to chaperone the children.2

The fourth problem arose from the mixed feeling of the group at
having an outside person supervise the tot lot. Some thought that
one of the mothers should have been given the job. The belief held
that someone with experience was needed, and so it was carried
through. The arrangement was that Emily-Mercy and the Fifth and
Cantrell hire a person and share her time.3

1 Op cit., p. 1.
2 Saint Martha's Settlement House, "Report from Community Worker to
3 Saint Martha's Settlement House, "Annual Report of Charles Cacece,
Community Worker and Program Director" (Philadelphia, 1953), p. 2.
The arrangement mentioned proved unsuccessful because the residents were unable to raise the necessary money with which to pay a trained tot lot supervisor. The alternative was to hire on a part-time basis a neighborhood person. Saint Martha's House provided professional guidance and leadership training to enable this person to operate and function more effectively in the role.

The Association's overall program was centered mostly in general neighborhood improvement. The 700 block of Emily Street was most active, largely due to the presence of the tot lot. However, the 700 block of Mercy Street contributed workers and developed one of the best flowerbox displays. Money-raising projects were organized to help finance the operation of the tot lot. Committees worked on improving the tot lot facilities and providing summer supervision. A housing committee was activated and achieved improvements on approximately half of the houses (twelve) in the 700 block of Emily Street. Some houses were painted by tenants.

In the fall of 1950, plans were formulated with the guidance of Saint Martha's House and with the approval of the Redevelopment Authority to conduct and "Operation Fix-Up" to improve the housing conditions in the neighborhood. The Philadelphia Housing Association cooperated and made a survey of the houses on Emily-Mercy. In almost every one of the twenty-five rented houses - ten were owner occupied - serious and insanitary housing code violations were found: unsafe kitchens, leaking pipes, wobbly stairs, water-logged cellars.¹

³ "In Our Town", Philadelphia Evening Bulletin, September 10, 1951, p. 4-h.
The tenants agreed to cooperate in making repairs and keeping blight out once the place was made more desirable for living conditions. More important, they signed agreements saying in return for improvements they would pay from four to seven dollars more a month for rent.

Thirty-three landlords agreed to sign up for "Operation Fix-Up"; three would not. Though the Association appealed to City Hall for help in getting the cooperation of the three, it was to no avail. The whole project was rendered non-productive.

Two years later a community worker from Saint Martha's House wrote:

The Emily-Mercy Civic Association began its activities with our leadership this program year in September.... The problems which confronted the group were: (1) The failure at operation fix-up which had a demoralizing effect on them.

In regards to operation fix-up, a good deal of time and effort was spent in studying the past records of the project, discussing the problem with Mr. Angelo Monaco, area director of the Health and Welfare Council,..., the Redevelopment Authority,... We then found that the Redevelopment Authority due to a cut in budget, could not allocate any financial or leadership aid. The present building code is not adequate, but a new code is being formulated which may help us....

When this study was being made, Saint Martha's House had made available to the Association a community worker to work directly with the Housing Committee. The basic objective was to stimulate the interest and participation of the residents as a social action force to further efforts and work to improve the housing situation in the Emily-Mercy area.

It was evident that Saint Martha's House played an important role in helping the residents of Emily-Mercy to organize as a civic group to

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build and to operate the Tot Lot. Most of the Association's interests and efforts were centered in the Tot Lot program. Yet, it was noteworthy that Saint Martha's House stood prepared to guide and to enable interested persons in becoming involved in more community-wide activities for general neighborhood improvement and development.

Fifth and Cantrell Tot Lot Association

The Fifth and Cantrell Tot Lot Association grew out of the expressed interests of residents in the Spring of 1949 to provide supervised recreation for the pre-school age children of the neighborhood through the operation of a tot lot. The area served included the 400, 500, and 600 blocks of Cantrell and Winton Streets.

In June, 1949, the first committee meeting was called and held in a neighborhood church. The executive director, then called the headworker, and the community worker from Saint Martha's House were invited to attend this meeting with several interested male residents of the neighborhood, including the minister of the nearby church.¹ It was decided to go ahead and conduct a survey similar to the one taken in the Emily-Mercy area.

Other important dates and activities in relation to the formation of the Fifth and Cantrell Tot Lot Association included:

6/29/49 - Mass meeting in church yard.... Film, "Make Way for Youth" shown. Presentation of survey facts. About 150 present.

7/7/49 - Sponsoring Committee plan block party to raise funds for equipment.

7/15 - 16/49 - Block party. Over 500 in attendance. First sign of united action by neighbors.

7/13/49 - Sponsoring Committee make plan to purchase equipment and plan for work party. Officers elected and meeting date set.

7/ -/49 - Tot Lot opened in the yard of Mt. Enon Church. Volunteers from neighborhood under supervision of Mrs. Gibson of Saint Martha's House.

8/8/49 - Mass meeting. Films and speakers. Over 200 present. The Italian and Jewish neighbors came to watch the films....

10/22/49 - Children's Hallowe'en Party held at Saint Martha's House. Seven committee members conducted entire program.


May and June - Spent maneuvering with Tax Office and Mr. Wyche, who has been renting the lot for the past twelve years. Finally, in desperation, a letter was sent to the Receiver of Taxes and a petition was signed by 60 Association members and sent to City Hall.

6/26/50 - Mr. Frank Marshall called Mr. Sennott in reply to ... letter and petition and said that the lot would be turned over to the community group to make a lot Lot of it.

July - Spent working on improvements on the lot.... Neighborhood men difficult to interest, but once they started, they are vitally interested.

July 30, 1950 - Dedication of Tot Lot. 1

The staff of Saint Martha's House worked with the residents to help them meet a need, leaving open for the latter the opportunity to participate in all aspects of the planning to meet that need. As one writer suggests:

The volunteer helps make the agency adaptable to the needs of the time and situation. His amateur standing often brings him closer to the recipient of services than the professional can be. He calls the agency's attention to needs.

The volunteer helps the agency to be creative, to try new approaches and new procedures. The professional is trained in the skills and techniques that work best in certain situations. The volunteer is without training, and he frequently improvises. Some-

1 Saint Martha's Settlement House, "Work Sheets of John Sennott, Community Worker" (Philadelphia, 1951), pp. 6-8.
times he makes a mistake, but sometimes his improvisations are a new and better way of handling a specific situation. Eventually, these new methods may be incorporated into the agency's procedure.1

In 1953 Charles Cacace reported that:

The Fifth and Cantrell Tot Lot Association has met bi-monthly this program year with 28 members on its membership roll. The group is well organized, they have good membership participation and a good group spirit.

Their interests are still on a local level revolving around the Tot Lot. They are doing an excellent job at this, and as the group continues to develop, their interests will also be motivated to broader scopes.2

Inherent in the above was agency philosophy in working with the Association through the years. Attempts were made to stimulate the group's interest in more community-wide projects such as sending representatives to the meetings of the area council (the Southwark Community Council) and to the Home and School meetings at the neighboring schools and chaperoning dances at a nearby high school. Some progress was had in these areas; and Saint Martha's House continued to proceed in accord with the expressed interests and pace of the neighborhood people themselves.

Silver Star Garden Club

The Silver Star Garden Club was organized in October, 1956 with the assistance of Mrs. Bertha Corbin, garden club worker from Saint Martha's House. Most of the Club's fourteen (14) members lived in the 500 block

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of Cantrell Street and the 2000–2100 blocks of 6th Street. The remainder lived within a five-block radius of Saint Martha's House. Many of the members were also participants in the program of the Emily-Mercy Civic Association and the Fifth and Cantrell Tot Lot Association.

The purposes of the Club were to enhance the physical appearance of the neighborhood through the use of flowers and plants; and to stimulate non-members to participate in the group's program. These purposes were broadened and made more inclusive. This step was facilitated, in part, by the principles on which Saint Martha's House operated. There appeared in the "Annual Report for the year 1957–58" the following:

The principles by which we have operated are:

1. That people must do for themselves if changes are to be lasting and if people are to grow in their abilities.

2. That community people be involved in all parts of St. Martha's operation, from the board of directors level to assisting in the office. Once contact with the people is lost, then we no longer offer the program they want and have worked for but a program that professionals and outsiders impose.

The above principles during the 1957–58 program year resulted in:

The decision by the Silver Star Garden Club to broaden their scope of interest by providing a Canteen dance program for teen-agers.

The Canteen Dance mentioned above was held monthly in the auditorium of Saint Martha's House. Members of the Club and male neighborhood volunteers chaperoned. Oftentimes, these volunteers held active memberships in the Emily-Mercy Civic Association and in the Fifth and Cantrell Tot Lot Association.

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1 Interview with Mrs. Bessie Overton, President of the Silver Star Garden Club (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, January 8, 1959).

From the minutes of the Silver Star Garden Club there were other indications of the scope of the program of activities of the Club as:

Minutes of October 10, 1957 Meeting
Representatives (from the block will) work with Salvation Army and Brotherhood Project at 5th and Snyder Methodist Church.

Minutes of October 29, 1957 Meeting
Mothers (agreed) to chaperone dances at Southern High. Stressed importance of colored parents to take a more active part in the different affairs of the schools. Joined St. Martha's for recognition as an individual club. Membership drive, donations (taken up) for Xmas lights in Cantrell Street. Names (of needy children) gathered for "Toys for Tots".

Minutes of October 30, 1958
...Planned for meeting with Planned Parenthood Ass'n on November 10, 1958...to be held at St. Martha's.1

It was therefore apparent that the Silver Star Garden Club broadened its scope of operation with the guidance of members of the Community Services Department of Saint Martha's House. The situation was not dissimilar to the growth and development of the Emily-Mercy Civic Association and the Fifth and Cantrell Tot Lot Association. Actually, the histories of the three neighborhood civic organizations were closely allied with the expanding program and work of the Community Services Department of Saint Martha's House.

CHAPTER IV

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF "GRASS ROOTS" LEADERS

Nine neighborhood persons were interviewed as "grass roots" leaders for this study. Social and economic characteristics pertaining to the leaders' sex, age, number and age range of children, length of residency in the neighborhood, resident status, and occupational status were presented in tabular form; whereas, the leaders' previous similar civic work experience and the general description of leadership roles were descriptively shown.

In keeping with the agency's policy of confidentiality regarding records, the leaders were referred to as "A", "B", "C", ..., "J", the first three being the males of the group and the remainder the females.

Sex and Age

Three of the interviewees were male and six were females. The age range of the interviewees was from thirty-two to sixty-one years.

TABLE 1

SEX AND AGE OF NINE "GRASS ROOTS" LEADERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>61 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>34 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>32 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>58 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>47 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>43 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>41 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>39 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>36 &quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Number and Age Range of Children

In regards to the number of children in the interviewee's own families, there was a total of forty-eight. The number of children for the individual interviewees ranged from none to thirteen. The age range for the total group of children was from nine months to thirty-four years.

**TABLE 2**

**NUMBER AND AGE RANGE OF CHILDREN**
**OF NINE "GRASS ROOTS" LEADERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Number of Children</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12-34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9 mo.-19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Interviewee A had no children of his own, but had two adult step-children.*

**Resident Status**

The number of years that the individual interviewees had lived in the neighborhood ranged from three years to thirty-four years. Only one of the nine interviewees had been born in this neighborhood.

Five of the interviewees were home-owners and four were tenants.

It seemed to the writer significant that of the nine interviewees only one planned to move out of the neighborhood "as soon as he was able to do so." Thus, most of the "grass roots" leaders planned to establish
permanent residency in the neighborhood within a five-block radius of Saint Martha's Settlement House.

TABLE 3

LENGTH OF RESIDENCY AND RESIDENT STATUS
OF NINE "GRASS ROOTS" LEADERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Length of Residency</th>
<th>Resident Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>21 yrs.</td>
<td>Home-owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3½ &quot;</td>
<td>Home-owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>3 &quot;</td>
<td>Tenant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>22 &quot;</td>
<td>Home-owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>22 &quot;</td>
<td>Home-owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>25 &quot;</td>
<td>Tenant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>22 &quot;</td>
<td>Tenant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>18 &quot;</td>
<td>Tenant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>4 &quot;</td>
<td>Home-owner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Occupational Status

The occupational status of the individual interviewees was varied. All male interviewees were regularly employed. Of the female interviewees,

TABLE 4

OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF NINE "GRASS ROOTS" LEADERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Occupational Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Treasurer of a longshoreman union.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Truck driver in slaughter house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Supervisor of maintenance men in large dept. store.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Housewife.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Machine operator in laundry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Part-time paid tot lot supervisor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Housewife.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Part-time tot lot supervisor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Housewife.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
only one was employed on a full-time basis outside of the home; two were employed part-time; and three worked only as housewives.

**Previous Similar Civic Work Experience**

With the exception of one, all of the interviewees had had some related and widely varied civic work experience other than that connected with the three neighborhood civic groups, the Emily-Mercy Civic Association, the Fifth and Cantrell Tot Lot Association, and the Silver Star Garden Club, discussed in **CHAPTER III** of this study.

Interviewee A was active in work for civic improvement through his church and local labor union. In addition to helping organize the tot lot in his block, he worked with staff from Saint Martha's House to initiate action for tot lots in blocks beyond the neighborhood. This interviewee was one of the most active in civic matters in the neighborhood. In part, this was attributed to his positions as an officer of the area council and as a member of the Board of Directors of Saint Martha's House.

Interviewee B had been a regular participant in the neighborhood activities of Saint Martha's House from childhood. He had been a member of a Boy Scout troop sponsored by the agency and had chaperoned teen-age dances sponsored by the Emily-Mercy Civic Association.

Interviewee C had had work experience for three years with an overseas youth organization while in the military services. On a volunteer basis, he helped to provide recreational and educational supervision for approximately two hundred foreign children whose ages ranged from twelve to eighteen years.
Interviewee D had supervised the play activities of the children of a fraternal organization prior to her work with the neighborhood civic group of which she was president.

Interviewee E, the president of one of the three neighborhood civic groups, was also president of a neighborhood social club which had contributed financial support to help build one of the tot lots in the area. She had been a member of a mothers' club until it was discontinued at Saint Martha's House. Interviewee F had also been a participant in a mother's club at the agency.

Interview G, prior to becoming a member of two of the neighborhood civic groups discussed in CHAPTER III, had served as chaperone at teenage dances and neighborhood social affairs held at Saint Martha's House. She, too, had been a member of a mothers' club sponsored by the agency.

Interviewee H had had no previous similar civic work experience. Interviewee J had had some similar experience with civic social organizations in another neighborhood.

Therefore, a clear majority of the interviewees had been involved in some related aspects of civic work before becoming members and/or participants in the program of activities of the three neighborhood civic groups. It was noteworthy that six of the interviewees had been connected with other civic activities supervised by staff from Saint Martha's House prior to the former's participation in some neighborhood groups.

General Description of Leadership Roles

As indicated in CHAPTER III of this study, some of the interviewees were active in the program of more than one of the three neighborhood civic groups.
Interviewee A, who was instrumental in building the tot lot in the 500 block of Cantrell Street, was treasurer of the Fifth and Cantrell Tot Lot Association and chaperoned at the monthly teen-age canteen dances sponsored by the Silver Star Garden Club at Saint Martha's House. He was one of the oldest and most active of the twenty-three members of the Tot Lot Association. The interviewee stated:

I helped to organize block parties to get the tot lot, planned for children's trips to playground and zoo, chaperoned dances at Saint Martha's for the Silver Star Garden Club. Since 1948 I have been a member of the Tot Lot Association and am now the treasurer and business manager.¹

Interviewee B, the only "grass roots" leader born in the neighborhood, was a member of the Emily-Mercy Civic Association and served regularly as a chaperone for the canteen dances of the Silver Star Garden Club. The interviewee remarked:

My responsibility is to see that the kids are kept under control, stop violence before it starts, keep troublemakers out of the dances, and get the teen-agers to abide by the rules of the canteen.²

Interviewee C was a member of the Emily-Mercy Association, advisor to the sub-grouping of the Association known as the Emily-Mercy Teen-Agers, and a chaperone for the canteen dances of the Silver Star Garden Club. Most of his work was, however, concentrated with the teen-age sub-grouping. The interview held that his aim in working with the teen-agers of the neighborhood was:

... to try to discover something that would interest the teen-agers beyond dancing and parties. We've had pizza-pie parties. The group needs a broadening of horizons. I am willing to lend time

¹ Interview with A (Fifth and Cantrell Tot Lot Association, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, February 13, 1959).
and efforts to help them get whatever they would like. Some of
them can possibly be interested in crafts and woodwork. Saint
Martha's told us that we could use the woodshop and crafts room
some evenings. Do you (the writer) know that some of them have
lived in Philadelphia all their lives but have never been to the
Museum of Art.1

Interviewee D was president of the Silver Star Garden Club and
supervisor and program planner for the group's canteen dances. She was
one of the most active of the Club's fourteen members. Under her lead-
ership and with the guidance of the garden club worker and community
worker from Saint Martha's House, the Club was successful in obtaining
permission to convert a vacant lot at Sixth and Snyder Avenue into a
neighborhood flower garden.

Interviewee E was president of the Emily-Mercy Civic Association
and acting chairman of the Association's Housing Committee. Her activities
included serving as leader for the group's approximate twenty-two members,
helping the tot lot supervisor or teacher plan mass activities for chil-
dren and young adults, and co-ordinating work to improve the undesirable
housing conditions in the Emily-Mercy area.

Interviewee F was a member of the Emily-Mercy Civic Association
and had been hired by the group to supervise the Tot Lot activities for
children during the summer months. Her role was to plan and supervise
program for approximately thirty-seven to fifty pre-school age children
from Emily-Mercy who used the Tot Lot. To a small degree, the interviewee
taught the children arts and crafts. Other time was spent in supervising
the children in regular play activity on the Tot Lot.

1 Interview with C (Emily-Mercy Civic Association, Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania, February 17, 1959.)
Interviewee G was secretary of the Fifth and Cantrell Tot Lot Association, secretary of the Silver Star Garden Club, and chaperone for the Club's canteen dances. In essence, the interviewee stated:

On assuming these positions in the two civic groups, I understood my duties and responsibilities to include secretarial work, participation in planning for dances and other activities such as group bus trips, beautifying the neighborhood with flowers, working to keep the streets clean, and organizing the children of the neighborhood to keep them from loitering on the street corners.¹

Interviewee H, the only "grass roots" leader interviewed who had had formal education beyond high school, was a member of the Fifth and Cantrell Tot Lot Association and had been hired by the group to supervise the Tot Lot activities for children during the summer months. When asked by the writer what was her role as tot lot teacher or supervisor, the interviewee replied:

I understand my responsibility is to work with about sixty preschool age children and teach them cooperation in a group as though they were in kindergarten. I teach them how to play together with the use of arts and crafts which I was taught by Mrs. Corbin of Saint Martha's. I use story telling. Most of all I try to teach them the proper utilization of time.²

Interviewee J was treasurer of the Silver Star Garden Club, social and program chairman of the Fifth and Cantrell Tot Lot Association, and chaperone for the Garden Club's canteen dances at Saint Martha's House. It was the interviewee's function to plan tentative programs of activity for the Tot Lot Association.

It was apparent that these nine interviewees or "grass roots" leaders played significant roles within their respective civic group or

groups. Their duties and responsibilities were varied in some respects but common in others, because their overall objective was to provide leadership within the neighborhood civic groups and outside of them as the need arose.

In this respect then, it is evident that planning in social work in general, and in community organization, in particular, ideally calls for initiative of neighborhood volunteers or "grass roots" leaders both in the creation of projects and in their execution. As Joseph C. Logan states:

You can't be intelligent for people. If you persuade people to accept your intelligence they develop none of their own, and with the loss of their intelligence departs the willingness even to be intelligently served.1

Another writer similarly contends:

..., it has been assumed by some social workers that only as agencies provide sufficient professional attention to volunteers will they secure the additional volunteers which they require for the successful operation of their programs.2

Therefore, the responses of the nine interviewed "grass roots" leaders tended to indicate, in part, Saint Martha's House's awareness and acceptance of the social work philosophy inferred in the above assertions.

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CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF THE FUNCTIONS AND SERVICES OF THE LEADERS

Problems Encountered by Leaders in Role Performance

The nine "grass roots" leaders were asked by the writer if they had had problems or difficulties in fulfilling their responsibilities in the group leadership roles. If answered in the affirmative, they were asked to categorize the problems under one or more of the six general headings listed in the interview guide as follows:

(a) Programming and planning for the execution of the mass activities. (Were you able to attain these to your satisfaction)?

(b) Co-operation and participation of other group members and parents and guardians in conducting activities.

(c) Discipline problems pertaining to children and teen-agers.

(d) Problems of finance in reference to available materials and equipment (including play) for activities.

(e) Space available as related to size of groups and needs of the neighborhood.

(f) Others.¹

Interviewee A responded to the interview guide as follows:

(a) Programming and planning were not done satisfactorily in relation to the activities of the Fifth and Cantrell Tot Lot Association

¹ See Appendix for a sample of the interview guide for this study.
(b) Co-operation in block parties suitable, not overall.
(c) No outstanding discipline problems involving children.
(d) Poor co-operation in raising money for group, did most of it himself.
(e) Space available fine.¹

In regards to the canteen dances of the Silver Star Garden Club, interviewee B found:

(a) No shortcomings in the aspect of planning programming for mass activities.
(b) Co-operation from parents and guardians was slow.
(c) Discipline problems with children were not out of the ordinary.
(d) Finance didn't seem to be much of a problem.
(e) Availability of space was considered adequate in the Emily-Mercy Tot Lot and in Saint Martha's House.²

Interviewee C, advisor to the Emily-Mercy Teen-agers, contended:

(a) 65% or 75% of planning and programming accomplished
(b) Members of Emily-Mercy Civic Association cooperate, some parents are a little lax.
(c) Discipline problems caused mostly by teen-agers from other neighborhoods. No problem from members.

¹ Interview with A (Fifth and Cantrell Tot Lot Association, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, February 13, 1959).
(d) No problem.
(e) Space adequate.¹

Interview D, president of the Silver Star Garden Club, stated that the only major problem was (a) getting cooperation from parents — some would agree to participate when approached by the Club’s member but most often would not respond when actually called upon to work.

Interview E, president of the Emily—Mercy Civic Association, remarked, "There are problems in getting our neighbors to work alone with us."² This may be related to item (b).

Interviewee F, supervisor and teacher for the Emily—Mercy Tot Lot, cited major problems under all six heading listed in the interview guide.

Interviewee H, supervisor and teacher for the Fifth and Cantrell Tot Lot, held that in addition to (e), a sparsity of adequate play equipment, a most outstanding problem was (b) in regards to the lack of cooperation and support from the parents and other residents.

Interviewee J answered that the only problems concerned (e) the non-availability of neighborhood facilities in which to sponsor teen-age dances and social events too large for the physical plant of Saint Martha’s House, and the lack of cooperation from the adult members of the area.

It was clearly indicated by all nine "grass roots" leaders that the major problem which they had encountered in their leadership roles pertained to the lack of interest and co-operation on the part of other residents, particularly those who were not active members of the three neigh-

¹ Interview with C (Emily—Mercy Civic Association, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, February 17, 1959).
borhood civic groups. These findings seemed indicative of a possible need for increased efforts on the part of the group members to try to involve more neighborhood persons in their program of activities.

In reference to Interviewee A who cited several problem areas, the writer's association with the leader enabled the former to note that the latter was usually overly critical of others and that with the slightest provocation, the leader would seize the opportunity to cite the apathy and lethargy of his neighbors; while emphasizing his own civic-mindedness.

Study made it apparent that Interviewee F had a general distrust of staff persons from Saint Martha's House. She seemed to have felt that the agency was attempting to influence the Emily-Mercy Lot Lot Association to replace her as tot lot teacher with a trained recreational worker. In light of this attitude on the part of the interviewee, the writer was able to get little cooperation during the interview.  

Action Taken by Leaders to Solve the Problems

Interviewees A and B responded that they had been talking with the adults of the neighborhood as a group and as individuals to get them to co-operate in the program activity and planning for same in relation to the three civic groups.

Interviewee C stated that he had been trying, with some measure of success, to get some of the neighborhood teen-age boys to help build sandboxes and benches in the woodshop of Saint Martha's House for the

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1 Interview with F (Emily-Mercy Civic Association, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, January 22, 1959.)
for the Emily-Mercy Tot Lot. The interviewee mentioned that another endeavor was to get the co-operation of skilled workmen in carpentry and masonry from the neighborhood to help develop the interests and latent skills of some of the teen-agers.

In essence, Interviewees D, E, F, G, and H asserted that they had made several home visits to inactive members and to non-members of the three civic groups in attempts to gain their participation. Interviewees D and J mentioned two diverse but significant plans of action that they had considered to cope with the lack of neighborhood support for the civic groups' programs. The former stated that her group, with the assistance and guidance of the garden club worker and community worker from Saint Martha's House, had made tentative plans to bring certain community resource persons into the neighborhood to conduct educational programs which could prove of interest to the residents. (One such program had been a public meeting co-sponsored with the Planned Parenthood Association). The latter interviewee remarked that her group which sponsored the canteen dances at Saint Martha's House had made plans to invite neighborhood teen-agers to their meetings to plan with the adult members the type of program of activities which would have stronger appeal to the larger group of teen-agers.

The plan of action cited by Interviewee J seemed particularly significant in view of the basic concept of democracy in the field and practice of social work. Relatedly, Herbert H. Stroup states:

Community organization is, ..., highly dependent upon citizen participation. Because it is grounded, like the whole of social work, upon democratic values it seeks to secure the most alert and intelligent participation of all the community members.¹

Certainly teen-agers might be involved in the programming and planning activities designed and intended to serve them. As mentioned by two writers in sociology: "Too often people are acted upon rather than with."  

Relations with Agency

All nine interviewees had had some relations with Saint Martha's House other than that related to their particular civic group and/or groups. Most of them had participated in the agency's house program for a number of years. Moreover, the total group responded in essence that this association with Saint Martha's House and its staff had been beneficial to their growth and development as "grass roots" leaders.

Interviewee A had participated in activities connected with the agency from 1949 when action for the Fifth and Cantrell Tot Lot was begun. When this study was made by the writer, the interviewee was a member of the Board of Directors of Saint Martha's House. For the past two years he had also served on the agency's Community Services Advisory Committee.

Interviewee B had been a member of the agency's house program from childhood. Over the years, he had held memberships in such agency sponsored activities as a Boy Scout troop, a vocal group, woodshop class and various other interest groups. When asked about his relations with the agency, the interviewee prefaced his statement by saying: "I feel thankful toward Saint Martha's House because it helped me by keeping me off the streets and out of trouble when I was a boy."  

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Interviewee D expressed positive feelings toward the agency. She said that some of her children had always been in the house program of the agency throughout the years in which her family had resided in the neighborhood. Two of her children were enabled to attend the Settlement Music School and an artist school through the recommendations of Saint Martha's House. She remarked that the former garden club worker from the agency had helped the group organize, which in turn, stimulated some co-operation among neighborhood residents.

Interviewee E had been a member of a mothers' club in the agency. She opined: "The work with the neighborhood workers from Saint Martha's House has been quite helpful. They are willing to give time and advice in our various undertakings."¹

The remainder of the interviewees gave similar examples of relations with and attitudes toward Saint Martha's House. In brief, all interviewees replied that theirs had been positive relations with the agency - i.e., for the most part.

Leaders' Opinions of Supervision from Agency

Eight of the interviewed "grass roots" leaders responded that the supervision from Saint Martha's House was sufficient. Some expressions were made to the effect that:

... I think that Saint Martha's give us enough supervision and help, very co-operative, very lenient and pliable. They have even opened up on Sundays to allow us to hold affairs in the auditorium."²

... No other way known that more help could be given. I noticed that at Saint Martha’s Annual Dinner Meeting that even somebody (the area youth worker) is doing work with those teen-agers who lounge around the hoagie shops and movie house. If only the neighbors would co-operate more.

The single negative reaction toward the supervision provided the neighborhood groups was expressed by Interviewee F. She remarked:

... the supervision is insufficient. I don’t see anything that they (the agency) do but come around each year, looking and trying to get us to hire some outside person to supervise the Tot Lot. If they really wanted to help they could get us some money to repair the cement in the Tot Lot. We need some new swings, too.

The writer learned in talking with the Executive Director of Saint Martha’s House and later with the president of the Emily–Mercy Civic Association that Interviewee F had hostile feelings toward the agency because it no longer gave material things like money, food and clothing to the neighbors. The president of the Association contended that:

... Mrs. __ is mad with Saint Martha’s because many years ago during the depression, they (the residents) used to be able to go around to Saint Martha’s and get food and old clothes. I am not saying that Saint Martha’s shouldn’t help the people as much as possible, but I think that a person should try to help himself before asking somebody else to do it.

It seemed that the attitude expressed by the Association president was representative of the thinking and sentiment of most of the "grass roots" leaders in regards to civic and social improvement — i.e., developing leadership aiming at themselves as residents and neighbors to work on neighborhood problems and to try to meet needs in relation to their abilities and readiness. It was made apparent through the findings

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of this study that Saint Martha's House's staff, in general, and the
members of the Community Services Department, in particular, had had some
measurable degree of success in helping the neighborhood people to re-
lease their potential - to plan and to act to meet their own social and
civic goals.

Relatedly, Murray G. Ross speaks of the role of the professional
worker when he asserts:

... the worker's role is consistently directed at freeing the com-
munity (through its leaders) to realize the potentialities and
strengths in co-operative work. Primarily, ...it is oriented in
the direction of helping people ... to express their concerns
about social problems, to find "common ground" their fellows in
community, and to achieve satisfaction in cooperative work.

Similarly, and in regards to movement at an acceptable pace with
the community; Campbell G. Murphy makes the assertion:

In community planning (as compared to casework and group work)
the same differences in readiness and pace are found. Some com-
munities, for one reason or the other have developed real co-
hesiveness and are able to move quite rapidly to the solution of
social problems. Others move very slowly.2

It seemed that Saint Martha's House was cognizant of the concepts
pertaining to the role of the professional worker and community pace in
relating with these "grass roots" leaders

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2
Campbell G. Murphy, Community Organization Practice (New York,
CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Settlements in the United States came into being when cities were being populated by thousands of immigrants from abroad and by throngs of young people from rural areas in search of city opportunities and excitement. Many central areas have changed their ethnic character several times in the past five or six decades, as the children of earlier immigrants have grown up and moved elsewhere and new national and racial groups have come into the areas. Apropos of this statement settlements have sought to provide and sustain a worthwhile program of services in their communities.

Since its beginning in 1901, Saint Martha's Settlement House, a nonprofit corporation located in Southeastern Philadelphia, Pennsylvania has sought to remain flexible in its program to meet more adequately the present and unforeseeable needs of its community. This flexibility was conducive to the agency's de emphasis of in-house program and the broadening of a needed and constructive community services program. This shift in agency focus was in accord with contemporary settlement work and community organization as was indicated in the publications of the National Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Centers. In light of this statement, the writer selected for study an aspect of the agency's community services program with neighborhood civic groups which had had minimum staff supervision and whose leadership was from the "grass roots".

The purposes of this study were as follows: to find out who the "grass roots" leaders were who provided leadership for three neighborhood civic groups (the Emily-Mercy Civic Association, the Fifth and
Cantrell Tot Lot Association, and the Silver Star Garden Club) — noting social and economic characteristics of the leaders; to ascertain how these leaders were developed by their experience as volunteers associated with Saint Martha's House; to state their role-playing as leaders in the civic groups; to note some of the problems, if any, and how they were handled; and, to get the leaders' opinions on the adequacy of supervision from the agency.

The following summary and conclusions were derived from the study:

1. When Saint Martha's House was established in 1901, its relationship to the Diocese of Pennsylvania was very close, but with the advent of the Community Chest, it gradually lessened its ties with the Church.

2. Since 1950, when the position of Community Worker was officially established on its staff, the agency has focused its program for a broader community services program.

3. At the time of this study, the community services department of Saint Martha's House was made up of two full-time workers (excluding the executive director), several neighborhood volunteers, a graduate student from the Atlanta University School of Social Work, and an advisory committee of board members and other volunteers.

4. The organization and growth of the three neighborhood civic groups from which the nine "grass roots" leaders were selected as interviewees for this study were closely allied to the services provided them by the staff of the community services department of the agency.

5. Through these three neighborhood civic groups, in particular, and in order to resolve, in part, the neighborhood's problem of inadequate recreation and supervision for children and young adults, the agency
encouraged citizens participation to provide mass activities with a
minimum amount of staff supervision.

6. In regards to the social and economic characteristics for the leaders
interviewed, findings showed that three of the nine "grass roots"
leaders were male and six, female. Their ages ranged from thirty-two
years to sixty-one years. The number of children for the individual
interviewees ranges from zero to thirteen; their ages ranged from nine
months to thirty-four years. The length of residency of the leaders in
the neighborhood within a five-block radius of the agency ranged from
three years to thirty-four years. Five of the leaders were home-owners
and four, tenants. Eight of the interviewees had had some civic ex-
perience prior to that with the three neighborhood civic groups mentioned
in this study.

7. Pertaining to the roles played within the civic groups around the
planning and programming of mass activities, two of the leaders were
paid by two of the groups to supervise the play activity of pre-school
age children in two of the neighborhood's tot lots. In general, the
other seven interviewees planned and chaperoned the mass activities
such as seasonal parties and teen-age dances which were held in the tot
lot of the neighborhood and in the auditorium of Saint Martha's House.

8. Findings showed that all nine of the interviewees had been associ-
ated with the program of activities at Saint Martha's House prior to
their roles as leaders in their respective civic groups. This may in-
dicate that in some way the leaders had developed their leadership po-
tential through their association with the agency.

9. The most outstanding problem cited by the leaders was the lack of
neighborhood support from the other residents, particularly those
persons who were not members of the civic groups. There were other
problems mentioned but the above was the most frequent cited one.

10. Eight of the leaders responded that the supervision provided by
agency was quite sufficient; however, more support was needed from
the neighbors themselves.

Finally, the writer concluded that the "grass roots" leaders were
helpful to the agency and many services of the agency would not be pos-
sible without their assistance.
APPENDIX
GUIDE FOR INTERVIEWS WITH "GRASS ROOTS" LEADERS (9)

Name of Organization
Parent Group
Leader's Name
Age of Leader
Sex of Leader
Number and Age Range of Children
Length of Residency in Neighborhood
Resident Status (Home-owner or Tenant)
Occupational Status

1. Was there previous work experience of this kind?
2. How long in this position/role?
3. As a member of your group, how did you come to occupy said position?
4. Can you explain the role or job that you play as a participant in the program of your group?
5. What are/were your duties and responsibilities as you understood them on assuming this role?
6. Do you think that you've been able to carry out successfully these duties and responsibilities as you've seen them?
7. If you've had difficulties relative to the above, what were the problems involved?

(A) Programming and planning for the execution of the activities (Were you able to do these to your satisfaction?)

(B) Co-operation and participation of other group members and parents and guardians in carrying out the activities.
(C) Discipline problems involving children and teen-agers.

(D) Problems of finance involving available materials and equipment (including play) for activities.

(E) Space available as related to the size of groups and the needs of the neighborhood.

(F) Others.

8. If one of the above was checked, give a brief description of the problem.

9. What have you done and/or doing to handle or solve the problem?

10. How long have you participated in the program and activities of Saint Martha's House? (Approximate length of time in years).

11. What has been your relationship to Saint Martha's House - i.e., in what activities and capacities have you participated?

12. In your opinion has your association with Saint Martha's House in any way influenced or aided your work within your block and group? (Explain your reasons for answering either negatively or positively).

13. What has been/is the role of Saint Martha's House in the program of your group?

14. (A) Planning with (Explain)

(B) Supervising with (Explain)

15. What are your opinions regarding the amount of supervision or help given your group by Saint Martha's House?

(A) Sufficient (Explain)

(B) Insufficient (Explain)

16. In conclusion and in regards to the value and/or potential value of the activities of your group for the neighborhood, can you make a brief statement as to how the neighborhood people can help in improving the activities?

16. How do you think Saint Martha's House might improve the activities through its services?
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