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1890-1915.

CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK, PH.D., 1978

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"LITTLE CITIZENS" : WORKING CLASS AND IMMIGRANT CHILDHOOD IN NEW YORK CITY, 1890-1915

by

MARTIN E. DANN

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1978

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in History in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

May 17, 1978

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Abstract

"LITTLE CITIZENS": WORKING CLASS AND IMMIGRANT CHILDHOOD IN NEW YORK CITY, 1890-1915.

by

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This study is an examination of ideological, experiential, and institutional aspects of immigrant and working class childhood in urban America - with specific emphasis on New York City - in the period from 1890 to 1915. This includes the ways in which children were perceived, their changing role and function in the labor force and the family, and their social organization, particularly in schools and in settlement houses. A fundamental concern is to understand the ways in which childhood was transformed and how this transformation affected the processes of assimilation and social change.

Industrialization and immigration fostered new conceptions of childhood and the family. The status of children was enhanced, if not idealized, there were major cultural conflicts between parents and children over issues of assimilation, and the content and context of experiences which constituted

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childhood changed substantially. Childhood was transformed from the private province and responsibility of the family to a symbolic representation of national destiny, protected by the state and its public agencies. The new "rights" of children - which became an essential aspect of the reform movement - did not involve choices on the part of children as much as they allowed professionals and reformers to intervene in socialization within the family and in public space, like schools and settlements. This involved an extension of childhood through restrictions on child labor and promotion of compulsory education. Children who did not work were required to attend school and encouraged to participate in new social organizations where expectations different from those at home or at work prevailed. As Progressive Reformers grappled with the problem of assimilation and the changes taking place in society they turned to children as vehicles for this transformation, conceptualizing them as "little citizens" in whose hands the destiny of America rested.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are no words which adequately express my appreciation to the many friends who helped me through the frustrations and burdens of this work. Without their generous and insightful contributions and their encouragement this dissertation would not be what it is.

Zeev Gorin's practical advice and personal concern sustained me through the organizational and preliminary periods of the first drafts. His sharp and relentless critiques were invaluable, second only to his friendship. Michael Brown, Eric Foner, Deborah Moore, Stan Nadel, Addy Richton, Peter Romanofsky, Steve Steinberg and Michael Wreszin read versions of this manuscript and made innumerable suggestions. Renee Marton discussed sections of this work with me, meticulously read the final draft and corrected errors on almost every page. Barbara Finkelstein, Marvin Gettleman, John Gillis, Gerald Grob, Herbert Gutman and Joseph Kett read drafts and made helpful suggestions. Brian Sutton-Smith discussed the section on games with me and gave me copies of his work. Diane Ravitch spoke with me about her work on the educational system. Lloyd deMause spoke with me in the early stages of my research and was encouraging. Frank Broadhead sent me a copy of his manuscript to read. Cary Goodman shared portions

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of his dissertation-in-progress with me. Elliot Zupnick read a draft of this work and was a source of constant support and comfort. Nathan Kaganoff of the American Jewish Historical Society sent me information on the holdings in the archives of the Society. Eli Messenger read portions of the manuscipt and offered helpful suggestions. Pete Eckel, a photographer with the Port Authority of New York, gave me books and photographs which he collected in conjunction with his work on Father Drumgoole, a priest who worked with newsboys at the turn of the century. Cecilia Doelger, Susan Kempler and Abby Moore were also helpful at various stages. I would also like to thank the staffs of the New York Public Library, Columbia University Libraries, New York University Library, Graduate Center Library of the City University of New York. Clarke Chambers allowed me to examine material on settlement houses at the archives located at the University of Minnesota. I would also like to thank the staff of the Children's Aid Society. Finally, I would like to thank my sisters, Judy Karbal, Miriam Adahan, Rachel Malkin and Rifka Insel for their constant encouragement and support.

Most importantly, my work would not have been possible without the love, confidence and sustenance of my parents. With deep respect and gratitude I dedicate this dissertation to the memory of my father, Sol A. Dann and to my mother, Anne B. Dann.

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INTRODUCTION

Childhood has always been an important aspect of social transformation. Yet, because children seldom left their own historical records, or did so only as adults, and because those adults who wrote about children were often biased, it is difficult for historians to understand precisely how childhood changed and why it changed. Most inquiries, therefore, have focused on institutions that dealt with children, the personalities that led reform movements on behalf of children, and/or the ideology of childhood and child-rearing. This study incorporates all of the above perspectives and adds an experiential dimension to examine immigrant and working class childhood in urban America, with specific emphasis on New York City, in the period from 1890 to 1915. This approach includes the ways in which children were perceived, their changing role and function in the labor force and the family, their social organization, particularly in schools and settlement houses, and their roles as cultural mediators in the processes of assimilation and social change.

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries the character of urban immigrant and working class childhood began to change. Children were increasingly expected to attend school rather than work as childhood itself was extended to allow for longer periods of tutelage. These changes were the result of structural changes in the social and economic composition of America, particularly

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industrialization, urbanization and large-scale immigration. Childhood was transformed from the private province and responsibility of the family to a symbolic representation of national destiny, protected by the state and its public and private agencies. The trend toward greater societal intervention in the socialization of children and in the area of the family was based on characterizations of the family itself as ill-equipped for its traditional role in child-rearing and socialization. For many reformers, the solution to problems raised by immigrants lay in institutions. Moreover, reformers preferred to focus on children as the more malleable material for assimilation rather than adults. The creation of a homogeneous and stable society depended upon molding what were commonly referred to as "little citizens," a future generation whose basic experiences were no longer in the workplace, or on the street as they had been, but in schools and social work agencies like settlement houses. These institutions provided the crucible within which a new definition of childhood was forged.[1]

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1. The term "child" is imprecise, reflecting the vagueness of some social definitions. Generally it refers to an age group between infancy and "youth," or adolescence. The Census at the time defined children as 16 years of age and younger; compulsory education laws at the turn of the century set the school-leaving age at 16. One could find older teen-agers as well as 4 and 5 year olds included within this category/definition. The term is meant to be as inclusive as possible without distorting the nature of the group to be studied. See Joseph Kett, Rites of Passage (NY:Basic Books, 1977) Chapter 1 for an extensive discussion of this problem of definitions.

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At conceptual and practical levels, prevailing notions of childhood at the turn of the century emphasized the distinctiveness of specific age groups within the general category of children. These notions were increasingly tied to school grades. Moreover, reformers spoke constantly of the "rights" of children. These rights were presented in terms of the restriction of children from the work force and promoted by compulsory education. Children who did not work were required to attend school where expectations different from those at work or home prevailed. In fact, there was a growing tendency to regard child labor per se as incompatible with what was considered to be "American" values. New roles and expectations of children were forward-looking rather than tradition-bound. Often expressed in terms of "liberating" children, the new roles stressed the development of self-discipline within the context of becoming citizens. The "liberation" of children and the development of "little citizens" implied a new form of socialization. Children were expected to assist in the Americanization of their families. The children were thus under dual pressures. Their parents expected them to preserve aspects of European culture while transmitting the requisites of assimilation on behalf of society. The schisms often created between parents and children and the consequent alterations in family relationships which resulted were essential aspects of becoming "American."

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The emphasis on liberating children from adult responsibilities and on children's rights, however, did not involve choices on the part of children as much as they allowed professionals and reformers to intervene in socialization within the family and in public space, like schools and settlements. In this sense, programs to Americanize children and inculcate in them the qualities of "good citizens" represented not only the development of a class ideology but provided the point of intervention for social reformers. Social agencies mitigated tasks and authority structures traditionally assigned to the family. Often these agencies acquired the power to enforce legally their intervention, resulting in transformations of relationships within the family. In addition, an increasing distinctiveness was made separating adults and children and the further distinction between children and adolescents with emphasis on limited age-group and age/stage related tasks. In concert with the recognition of special educational and recreational needs of children and the emergence of a special psycho-social perspective apparent in the child study movement new conceptions of childhood provided modes of assimilation. In addition, enhancing the status of children - if not idealizing them- and presenting this in terms of determinants of citizenship provided a new context for childhood itself.

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While strict periodization need not be imposed on this area of inquiry - nor is this explicit in the material itself - there are various indications that distinguish the period around 1890 as a significant starting point for this study.

Massive immigration from Eastern and Southern Europe characterizes the period. Not unlike previous periods of immigration, this large influx over a short time created pressures on existing institutions, intensified problems of assimilation and altered family life. In addition, it stimulated the rapid growth of cities and the development of a wide variety of social, political and economic - both private and public - which sought to contain and ameliorate the stress of dislocation and adaptation. In an attempt to preserve their cultural heritage, immigrants established special religious and/or language schools, newspapers and mutual aid societies. The response of the larger society was reflected in specific institutional developments - e.g. public health, education and settlement houses, which directly served children and sought to influence norms and values. Public education, for example, became the primary agency of Americanization and socialization. At first overwhelmed by the demands made upon it by the new immigration, public education experienced major changes, both in philosophy and in the expansion of its facilities. Settlement houses were established at this time to deal with the problems of urban and immigrant poor.

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These organizations sought to ease the problems attendant to social change, devoting primary attention to the guidance, care and control of children.

In the process of transmitting norms and values appropriate to the demands of the emerging corporate society, reformers focused on the special needs and place of children as a means of assimilating families and future workers. While this phenomenon is not unique to this period, the form which it took was new. Just as the Childrens'Aid Society was established amidst the waves of Irish and German immigrants in the 1850's, settlement houses and other institutions arose in response to immigration at the turn of the century. In this way, the lives of working children were more carefully controlled and directed than before, whether in the classroom or playground.

Economic transformations, depressions and dislocations and the demands of industrial and urban environments exacerbated problems of adjustment in the workplace and the home. The depression which lasted from 1893 to 1897 has been considered more devastating than the depression of the 1930's. But this was also a period in which giant business enterprises began to exercise greater domination of the market. During this decade business placed greater emphasis on labor discipline and "scientific technology" - techniques for controlling workers during a time of widespread and powerful labor unrest. The introduction

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of new forms of technology and new production methods began to alter the nature of work and the lives of workers, manifested in demands for a new kind of labor force with greater educational background and more highly developed skills. The attack on child labor is thus linked with the demand for more highly trained workers, and with the increasingly availability of adult workers.

Governmental social regulation and organization reflected the importance placed on children in the new industrial order, expanding the role of government in what had been the domain of the family. Although public pressure against child labor appears to increase during the 19th century, it was not until federal, state and municipal agencies took more active roles in child welfare and social reform generally that child labor declined. Extensively employed throughout the early part of this period, child labor increasingly encountered legal obstacles and regulations. Private organizations, like the National Child Labor Committee, organized in 1904, were able to mobilize broad support for legislative campaigns and investigative research. This attempt to eliminate child labor was part of a widespread program to reach children.

The first juvenile courts were established in Chicago and Denver in 1899, setting a precedent which other states soon followed.[2] In 1909 the first White

2. In 1903 New York City established a Children's Court.

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House Conference on Children met and held hearings on the proposed Children's Bureau (established in 1912). This conference gave national prominence and leadership to the movement to protect children who worked and coordinated these efforts on a nation-wide basis.

At the same time an increasing number of legal restrictions concerning children were enacted. The sale of liquor and of obscene literature to minors was prohibited; kidnapping became a felony; administrative and public health procedures governing children were instituted, for example the registration of births and required vaccinations for school attendance. This type of governmental support gave reformers a powerful weapon, for their crusades were no longer seen as particularistic but in fact representative of the national purpose.

National perspective and organization of the child labor movement contributed to its ultimate success. Such a national scope began to emerge in this period in many domains of social and economic life. This was clearly reflected in the development of a national market, a national concern for social issues, the national organization of social groups, and a sense of national (and international) destiny. There was, however a distinct difference between achievements in heavily urban centers like New York City, and rural areas. Widening the scope of social reform not only brought various groups together but provided a sense of patriotic fervor as well.

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Through the creation of national groups, coordinated pressure could be applied to specific issues and enlisted in the cause of child welfare. This powerful intermediary could and did change the nature of the impact of reform movements. The child protective movements owed a measure of their success to the increasing role of the national government, both in its actual power and in the growing acceptance of its right to intervene in areas which had been matters of private or community concern. The emphasis on national standards and national unity (whether of railroad gauges, state child labor laws, or ideology, as in Americanization programs) shifted the burden of responsibility for social ills from individuals to society, from private to public/governmental/institutional concern. The national campaign to control and eliminate epidemics and encourage public hygiene, for example, was important in the promotion of a large number of programs, many of which had originated at the local level. Medical inspection in schools began in the 1870's, but it was not until 1892 in Boston and 1897 in New York City that it became a regular part of school function. In 1893, Nathan Strauss, a wealthy businessman, established a distribution system for pasteurized milk on the Lower East Side and other low-income areas. In 1908, the Division of Child Hygiene was established in New York City's Health Department. Housing reform received national attention. Reformers who focused on tenement houses as breeding grounds for crime and

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looked to solutions in terms of changing living conditions. They promoted national studies of the problem which linked conditions in several large cities and sought to deal with the problems of overpopulation, lack of sanitation, hygiene, and other "slum" conditions, with the growing problems associated with rapid urbanization and assimilation. This was allied with the playground movement, which sought to direct leisure time as well as inculcate through games a specific ideology and patterns of behavior appropriate to American industrial society.

The child study movement began, in large part guided by G.Stanley Hall whose periodical Pedagogical Seminary first appeared in 1890.[3] This movement was the first concerted effort to understand the nature of childhood through observation and scientific analysis and it helped sharpen the focus on changes occurring in the role and function of children. As such it provided important intellectual underpinnings for the new place children were to assume in society. Every field recognized the special place of children. Lightner Witmer established the first psychological clinic for children in 1896 and in 1909 William Healy established the Juvenile Psychopathic Institute as part of the Juvenile Court in Chicago. The National Educational Association, established

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3. In 1904 Hall published his influential book, Adolescence. (NY: Appleton, 1904)

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in 1857, gained prominence by the 1880's. The Report issued by its Council of Ten in 1893 exercised a major influence on the direction of public education throughout the period. The first Parent-Teacher Association (then known as the National Congress of Mothers), organized on February 17, 1897 in Washington, D.C., reflected the more assertive and public role of women in society and a linking of family with institutional concerns regarding children. In addition, nearly all the professional services for children were established during the period from 1890 to 1915. This correspondence between government and professional groups in the area of childhood contributed to the creation of a substantially new outlook and mode of childhood in which children were not expected to work, the period of childhood was extended, children were more "protected," and controlled.

The onset of the first World War closed the era. The war disrupted patterns of immigration and emigration, and profoundly affected the socio-economic structure of the country, particularly in the development of industrial production. Indeed, the war itself launched America into a new position, domestically and internationally. During this period nativist and racist ideologies attacked the "new" immigrants as inferior. In popular and professional journals and books references were made to the threat that these new immigrants presented. The pervasiveness of these notions became evident in the mass deportations of

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"radical" immigrants in 1919-1920, and legislation which restricted immigration, such as the establishment of "quota systems" in 1924, with the passage of the Immigration Act. Anti-immigrant sentiments, visible in legislation and in more subtle attitudes created conflicts in families eager to shed their "greenhorn" status, but wary of what would take its place. Reformers who tried to grapple with the problem of assimilation and the changes taking place in society relied on institutions and public agencies to accomplish their goals. By the War, settlements, juvenile courts, and a variety of child-oriented agencies were now firmly established as integral parts of the American way of life. Laws regarding child labor in most industries were on the books (if not always enforced), and compulsory education was more extensive. With these changes a new era for children began, one in which they were no longer workers, responsible and independent, sharing family and financial responsibilities, but students, dependent, protected and subject to new expectations characteristic of the middle class. It was this new world of childhood that led many to characterize children and youths as "self-indulgent," "rebellious," and hedonistic in the 1920's. These descriptions reflected responses to changes in the nature and function of children which had taken place in previous decades when childhood became shrouded with an air of sanctity and when a separate and distinct environment for children was created.

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Reformers[4] and the crusade for children; the social function of ideology

Reform movements concerned with children sought to preserve and defend traditional attitudes and beliefs in a new context. They attempted to find new ways of adaptation consistent with an ideology that would rationalize and integrate new conditions (industrialization, immigration, urbanization and Americanization) and the requisites of the corporate state. Thus, though the form and content of reform ideology shifts under the influence of social and economic forces, a basically conservative theme persists. Because the new attitudes towards and expectations of children were largely influenced by reform movements, it is necessary to examine the ideological basis of these movements in order to understand later developments.

Reform movements in this period have been the subject of historical and sociological inquiry. Some, like Allen Davis and Walter Trattner[5] have accepted these movements at face value, as idealistically motivated efforts of altruists to achieve social justice. While recognizing

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4. It is inaccurate to lump all reformers together, for this distorts the diversity of their motives and blurs distinctions and variations among them. Yet, it is possible to consider reformers as a whole to emphasize their basic approach and philosophy towards social reform.

5. Allen Davis, Spearheads for Reform: The Social Settlements and the Progressive Movement, 1890-1914 (NY: Oxford University Press, 1967)
Walter Trattner, Crusade for the Children: a history of the National Child Labor Committee and child labor reform (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970)

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the humanitarian aspects of reform movements, more critical studies, like those of Richard Hofstadter and Christopher Lasch have illuminated psychological, social and class aspects of these movements. Hofstadter attempted to explain why middle class intellectuals and professionals were "awakened" to social reform. He postulated that they had been cut off from the centers of power in society and, as "victims of an upheaval in status," were more sensitive to the plight of others. Moreover, they were deeply influenced by the message of the Social Gospel and the Protestant Ethic which served to "heighten the sense of personal responsibility."[6] Lasch saw the rise of reformers and social criticism as part of the "emergence of the intellectual as a distinctive social type," as alienated yet seeking to make their lives relevant by translating their religious energies into secular activities.[7] Similarly, Robert Wiebe attempts to show how industrialization disrupted or altered traditional social structure, particularly in terms of the development of bureaucracies in business and government. In his view the informal and personal relationships which characterized preceding periods was replaced by a centralized, rational and regulative approach which was expressed in the rise of bureaucracies and institutions.[8]

6. Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform (NY: Random House, 1955)
7. Christopher Lasch, The New Radicalism in America, 1880-1963 (NY: Random House, 1965)
8. Robert Wiebe, The Search for Order, 1877-1920 (NY: Hill and Wang, 1967)

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Although there is much to praise in these reform movements, it is also important to explain the contradictions and ambiguities that coincide with social change. In particular these movements and their supporters legitimated and integrated social change. Gabriel Kolko, Raymond Callahan and Joel Spring have considered reform movements as functions of political and economic interests, more often concerned with efficiency than quality of a product, and shaped primarily by corporate interests.[9] Anthony Platt sees the reform movement as a vehicle for the legitimization of new careers for women (i.e. as social workers) and sanctions on youth as part of a protective mechanism. Platt, following the work of Joseph Gusfield, sees the "child saving" movement (basically delinquency control) as symbolic and ceremonial, "not so much a break with the past as an affirmation of faith in traditional institutions..."[10] Still another point of view focuses on the social function of ideology. This perspective is demonstrated by David Brion Davis, whose

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9. Gabriel Kolko, The Triumph of Conservatism (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1963;1967)
Raymond Callahan, Education and the Cult of Efficiency (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1962)
Joel Spring, Education and the Rise of the Corporate State (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972)

10. Anthony Platt, The Child Savers: The Invention of Delinquency (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969)
see also Joseph Gusfield, Symbolic Crusade (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1963)

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framework for understanding the anti-slavery movement in England can be applied to this work. Davis asks how a reform movement (for our purposes child labor or other child-protective movement) ensured stability while also accomodating society to political and economic changes. Davis, relying on Gramsci's insights into the function of hegemony, notes, "the predominance obtained by consent rather than force, of one class or group over other classes" by virtue of its social and intellectual position is a basic dynamic of reform movements. How does the movement to save children legitimize this hegemony? For Davis, "ideology is a mode of consciousness, rooted in but not reducible to the needs of a social group, indeed, it helps to define those very needs and interests, as well as to frame the boundaries of conscious tactics and objectives." Referring to Eugene Genovese, Davis observes that "the success of a ruling class in establishing its hegemony depends entirely on its ability to convince the lower classes that its interests are those of society at large - that it defends the common sensibility and stands for a national and proper social order." He continues:

> At issue, then are not conscious intentions but the social function of ideology; not individual motives but shifting patterns of thought and value which focused attention on new problems, which camouflaged others, and which defined new conceptions of social reality. 11

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11. David Brion Davis, The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975) p.349

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Again, to rephrase Davis, the crusade for children "

> ...helped to define the permissible character of a "popular" or "spontaneous" social movement...(it) not only reflected the needs and tensions of a transitional social system, but provided a new conceptual and categorical framework that imposed its own "logic" on events.[12]

As we look back on the challenge raised by the issue of child saving and the ways in which it was confronted by reformers we are not surprised at the terms of the argument, as a struggle between the forces of good and evil, progressive/modern and reactionary. It seems to us proper, even inevitable, for the reformers present their positions in humanitarian terms. Legislation restricting child labor and expanding educational opportunities to absorb and homogenize a vast and growing population are generally equated with progress and modernity. In addition, the "crusade" occurred at a time when there were serious problems of labor discipline produced by the introduction of new forms of industrial production. This required reforming rural and immigrant working class values and patterns of behavior. To accomplish this, reformers turned to children both as mediators and as future citizens separate from their parents.

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12. Ibid., p.350

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Beyond the question of language or ideology, however, is a more profound and complex problem. The "crusade" for children provided a mechanism for integrating and translating social change in which children were cast in dual and often conflicting roles: they were expected to maintain family traditions by parents and they were expected to represent American values. As a basis for assimilation reformers used the issue of children's rights to legitimize the interests of the state, as well as their own participation, leadership and status. The new ideology of childhood reflected increasingly circumscribed roles and functions of children, while compulsory schooling lengthened the period of dependency. As a result, the reform movement provided mechanisms by which dominant cultural values were transmitted while masking the inequalities of the system itself. In this sense reformers expressed a politics that was tied to the maintenance of class hierarchies and differentiations. They thus transformed a moral question into a political one, making children, as potential citizens, symbolic of the future of the Republic as an idealization of the American dream.

Ultimately, movements for social change which did not threaten basic economic and social relations became control mechanisms that undercut more radical alternatives (e.g.socialism). If people could mobilize around reform movements and win (regardless of the extent of the impact upon society), they could claim accomplishment and feel a

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sense of achievement.[13] It was not a question of whether things were improved as a result of these reform movements. It was deliberately cruel to exploit children. But it was cruel to exploit anyone - not just children - and more conservative reformers seldom understood the magnitude of that issue. Although deeply concerned about child abuse and neglect, reformers saw solutions in terms of institutional reforms which subjected children to different restrictions, the consequences of which were not as easily discernible.[14] The fact that their crusade helped to eliminate child labor and facilitated the growth of mass public education side-tracked attention from other areas of inequality and exploitation - particularly of adults who remained in the labor force.

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13. This tendency to remain at the level of the obvious and simplistic led some to promote the aggrandized picture of Rockefeller (and how he "made it") and other businessmen including some of the most notorious railroad presidents (whom others would characterize as "robber barrons") as success stories calculated to inspire readers. Instead, they simply confused the nature of a class society and reinforced rather than offered alternatives to the basic sctructure of capitalist society. See World's Work.

14. " 'Survey' was a key item in the reform outlook. A survey, like a map, assumed that the world is comprehensible to rational understanding and that understanding can result in social action. It assumes, too, that once the plain facts, the map of the social terrain, are clear to everyone, then change, or reform will naturally follow." Alan Trachtenberg's introduction to Walter and Naomi Rosenblum, America and Lewis Hine. (NY: Brooklyn Museum, 1977)

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Reformers thus provided an antidote for contradictions and reinforced the belief that where such inconsistencies occurred they could be resolved. The crusade against child labor gave the aura of benevolence to a system that exploited everyone. Giving up child labor was often not that great a sacrifice in industry for children could be replaced by adults, often women, or machines as technology improved. But the crusade did legitimate the system by making it appear to be concerned with suffering and injustice. At the same time, it stimulated institutional developments, such as public schooling, health and recreational facilities.[15] On the one hand such involvement perpetuated the myth of mobility and success; on the other hand it provided the mechanism of accomodation and social control. This process was essential to prepare children for roles in an increasingly standardized society, roles which assumed the marginality and dependence of children while constantly stressing their importance as future citizens.

As part of the reform movement, the "crusade for children" was not limited to humanitarian concerns and alleviating hardship. In a more subtle sense it gave a sense of satisfaction and faith in the efficacy of bourgeois reform, thus insulating the more enduring and deeply rooted forms of exploitation and inequality from

15. The NCLC helped to develop what became the Child Health Organization of America.

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exposure. Raising living standards of the poor and inculcating in them a set of values and norms appropriate to the dominant notions of what constituted social order and progress could be transmitted best through work with and for children. For those who worked within it, the reform movement provided an aura of self-sacrifice, dedication, patriotism, loyalty and a deep sense of spiritual and social regeneration.

The reformers identified themselves as moral stewards, as vanguards of change. They intended to impress upon non-Americans (immigrants) the requirements of loyalty and patriotism which they saw as embodied in the adoption of the dominant culture's patterns of behavior and values. Those who succeeded in jumping the barrier of"greenhorn" could themselves aspire to become mediators of social and cultural transformation (as in the relationship of German Jews to Russian Jewish immigrants). The proliferation of magazines and journals devoted to social issues not only created an awareness of conditions but enhanced the status of reform movements. There were, however, antagonisms between immigrants and reform movements, especially when reformers sought to intervene in politics, schools, and other areas which touched the daily life of people. Although well-meaning, reformers seldom understood the basis for the unpopularity of their reforms, and less the struggle of immigrants to overcome their fears and suspicions in an alien homeland.

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Attempts to impose values and behavior patterns on immigrants created tensions within families and in some cases contributed to a sense of alienation. To some extent this effect was intended, for there was resistance from immigrant parents who did not want to conform to the demands of the dominant culture, and who sought to avert cultural conflict in the home. Though often sensitive to this problem and aware of the discontinuities that were raised in the process of assimilation, reformers confidently looked to these children as the basis for a new society, one which blended the best of the old and new in the proverbial "melting pot." At this point new notions of childhood became significant ingredients of the new cultural amalgam. For in the eyes of reformers, the promise of America would be fulfilled not in the lives of the immigrants, but in the lives of their children.[16] To accomplish this, reformers turned to educational institutions as the primary mode of assimilation and basis for upward mobility. By emphasizing the special

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16. see H.F.Freeman, "University Settlement," Lend a Hand v.5 (1890)
Jean Fine (of the College Settlement) believed their programs should be directed toward children since adults were already too ingrained to change their habits. The WTCU, by 1890 emphasized the role of children in changing parental values and behavior. See Frances Willard Settlement House (Boston), Annual Reports.

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and unique needs of children and their critical role in the transformation of populations from immigrant to American, reformers thus attempted to bridge cultural gaps at one level while creating them at another. Though they recognized the inevitability of conflicts in this process, they viewed this as the necessary price of progress. Patterns of socialization of immigrant children were rooted in the tension between retention or abandonment of ethnic and religious traditions. One well-known educator remarked:

> Our task is to break up their (immigrants') groups and settlements, to assimilate or amalgamate these people as a part of the American race and to implant in their children...the Anglo Saxon conception of righteousness, law, order and popular government...[17]

On the surface, social reformers sought to play ameliorative roles, focusing attention on flagrant abuses and speaking about the vulnerability of children as a "precious resource" and a "promise of something that is to be."[18] But beneath this humanitarian effort was a nagging and pervasive doubt and mistrust in the ability of new immigrants to sustain the social and political bonds that had brought previous generations together into

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17. Elwood Cubberley, Changing Conceptions of Education (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1909) p.16

18. Albert Beveridge, "Child Labor and the Nation," Annals v.29 (190 There are abundant examples of pseudo-scientific studies at the time which characterized immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe as inferior to Northern Europeans. For example, Edward Ross, The Old World and the New(NY:Century Co.,1914), Madison Grant, The Passing of the Great Race (NY:Scribners, 1917); John Higham, Strangers in the Land (NY: Atheneum, 1963)

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nationhood. Their crusade sought to fulfill the "promise" of the American way of life, but it also reflected anxieties about cultural and racial engulfment, problems which directly affected their notions of assimilation. To the more xenophobic, haunted by the spectre of "race suicide" and "national degeneration" at the hands of "uncivilized" immigrants, the very future of America was at stake. Even milder expressions of concern over the destiny of American civilization contained an implicit notion that the masses, especially "new" immigrants (i.e. those from Eastern and Southern Europe at the turn of the 19th century) were to be feared. Moreover, it was assumed that the state had the right to "immunize" itself from their influence (to use an analogy from the public health movement). The concern for building an American national character and protecting civilization was thus only a profile of the face that often regarded its "huddled masses" with suspicion and paternalistic apprehension.[19] Some reformers distrusted the immigrants

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19. Barbara Solomon's Ancestors and Immigrants (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1956) has an excellent portrayal of reformers, like Joseph Lee, who believed that immigrants were "human rubbish" - a common notion among supporters of the Immigration Restriction League. See also Thomas Gossett, Race: the History of an Idea in America (NY: Schocken, 1965). G. Stanley Hall was also concerned about the "contagion of vice" associated with "various nationality backgrounds" - an attempt to link criminal behavior to ethnic background. See: Hall's address in Proceedings of the NCCC, 1899, pp. 177-180; and his Moral Ideas and Religious Training (1891) p. 196

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whom they saw as unfit for the kind of democracy America offered, and incapable of teaching their children, or providing the proper basis for assimilation. No less a leader in the field of child welfare than Owen Lovejoy, the General Secretary of the National Child Labor Committee noted the problem of "alien races bringing their traditions and customs wholly foreign to the ideals of democracy." [20] Even more enlightened reformers, like Jacob Riis, were not without prejudice. He referred to immigrants as the "refuse" of Europe and supported restrictive legislation. For those who had already arrived Riis urged, "The immediate duty which the community has to perform for its own protection is to school the children first of all into good Americans and next into useful citizens." [21] Another reformer wrote:

> Illiterate, docile, lacking in self-reliance and initiative and not possessing the Anglo-Teutonic conceptions of law, order and government, their coming has served to dilute tremendously our national stock and to corrupt our civic life. [22]

It was in this context that reformers sought to shift the locus of social instruction (i.e.cultural values, national loyalty, norms and behavior) from home to institutions like the school, from parents to social and educational "professionals," experts who were deemed more

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20. Owen Lovejoy, "Some Unsettled Questions about Child Labor" American Unitarian Association, Social Science Series, #5 (1912)

22. Edward Cubberley, Changing Conceptions of Education,

21. Jacob Riis, Children of the Poor (1892) in Francesco Cordasco, ed., Jacob Riis Revisited (NY: Doubleday (1968) p.113

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competent than immigrant parents.

> The traits of foreign nationality which the immigrant brings with him are not to be mixed, or interwoven. They are to be abandoned.[23]

Such anti-immigrant attitudes underlay the emphasis on children, rather than parents, in the process of assimilation and in the consequent development of new notions of childhood to reinforce it.

> Our foreign neighbors bring with them habits which cannot be followed in this country without danger to our standards...They must be taught a loyalty to a larger civic group than their own circle of friends and relatives. The danger in immigration...is not in the immigrant assimilated, but in the immigrant who in America is not and will never become Americanized.[24]

In their desire to become Americans, immigrants learned that survival often imposed practical standards which conflicted with more idealistic social reformers. While immigrants struggled to overcome their vulnerable social and economic position, reformers exhorted them, and particularly their children, to think in other terms. The notion, for example, that "capitalist and wageearner sit at the same board, having equal voice in the plans for redeeming the city from partisan machine control,"[25] expressed an idealistic belief that dishonest government

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23. Henry P. Fairchild, The Melting Pot Mistake (Boston: Little, Brown and Co. 1926)
24. Elizabeth Peabody House, Annual Report, 1910
25. Lillian Betts, The Leaven in a Great City (NY:Dodd,Mead & Co.,1902) p. 289

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would be redeemed by concerned citizens who had been taught in "civics" classes. In more practical experiences children and their parents learned that corruption was a condition of American politics. Immigrants thus often opposed political reform because it shifted power away from local communities and into a centralized bureaucracy to which they had little access. To offset this antagonism to reform, the appeal was made in terms of children. In attacking Tammany, for example, one reformer sought to dramatize the effects of flagrant abuses of political power by demonstrating its effects on children.

> one result of the Tammany system is that it enslaves and blasts the innocence of the little children...[26]

A child whose parents had political connections (and was therefore relatively immune from punishment) provided a poor example of how "democracy" functioned. In analyzing the role of Tammany, this social critic spoke in terms of the vulnerability and susceptibility of immigrant children in an urban environment. The competition between ethnic groups provided an opportunity for politicians to manipulate one group against another and build their "machine" on the ability to provide services to constitutents in return for loyalty at the polls. Such attacks on the corruption of the political system, however, were often

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26. Ibid., p.48

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limited to castigations of the immigrants' naivete and their ability to obtain voting rights "too early," rather than present a critique of the inequities of the system itself, or the conditions that encouraged it.

> Often, his (immigrant's) unrest undermine his moral nature, blind his intelligence, and he forges the chains that bind him in slavery to a system that will cast him aside...[27]

Some reformers contended that immigrants themselves were responsible for the conditions in which they lived. For example, a family moved to a slum after the father lost his job. This was interpreted as an "act of the Gods"; the man's unemployment was "not an accident but the inevitable working of things as they are."[28] The conclusion that was drawn from this incident was that those who lived in slums chose - or even deserved - to do so.

Such "explanations" of social conditions attributed failures to individual, rather than structural inadequacies.

> All persons catch the "slum sickness" who for one reason or another are driven to live in our city slums. In New York half a million are inoculated with this disease or are directly affected by it through contact with its victims...It is probable that there was a physiological as well as psychological reason for John's inability to stand strong against misfortune...He had been sure, hitherto, that this country was a pretty fair sort of place, where, if there was not much for a middle-aged man, there was at least opportunity and hope for his children. Now he saw the country only as a place of oppression.[29]

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27. Ibid., p.294
28. Henry Oyen, "Down to the Slums" World's Work v.21 (November, 1910-April, 1911) p.14106
29. Ibid., p.14275

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> Political progressivism was bent not on the destruction of capitalism but rather, on rationalizing and stabilizingthe system. Stability, predictability, and security were the expected consequences of a controlled, rational process of social change. Federal control and regulation of labor, management and the consumer market became the trademark of the political progressive movement...
> The trust of progressive reform was, indeed, conservative. In this was, many socialists were also, in effect, conservative. They were conservative in their quest for efficiency and orderly change and in their desire to maintain the system...
> The role of the liberal within American society was essentially that of the knowledge expert dedicated to the survival of the system through growth.[30]

The acceptance of a corporate society, with social and educational "exprets" and "professionals" as managers was fundamental to emerging concepts of childhood and to the emphasis on citizenship as the structure in which it was to be expressed. The result was an exaggerated notion of childhood which was linked to modes of assimilation and formulated around the creation of "little citizens." This process, however, profoundly affected the family. Idealizing the "sacredness" and "innocence" of children justified the prolongation of childhood dependence and the parental sacrifices necessary to achieve and maintain it. The ability to endure present frustrations in the hope that one's children would "make it" helped to justify these sacrifices. But this placed children in an awkward position: they were expected to compensate for what their parents could not (or did not) achieve.

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30. Clarence Karier, "Liberalism and the Quest for Orderly Change," The History of Education Quarterly, vol.12 no.1 (Spring, 1972) pp.57-77

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I. CHANGING CONCEPTIONS OF CHILDHOOD

The concept of childhood is not an isolated, absolute or constant condition or category. As part of a conceptual paradigm "childhood" reflects subtle and gradual shifts within society itself - at the level of social as well as individual and familial relations. Notions of childhood can elucidate not only definite and particular qualities and activities, but also can function as metaphors for self-consciousness and can create epistemological distinctions. As an attempt to give meaning to experience, such notions of childhood are ways of resolving contradictions that arise between individuals and society by altering the terms of that interaction. Childhood is not simply a chronological marking, it is also a category of cultural/social awareness that extends to experience and relationships.

Childhood also denotes a power relationship. References to an adult as a child ("boy" or "girl") connote a sense of static immaturity, inferior status and dependent irresponsible character. The inappropriate usage of "child" in this context, whether as a condition of race, sex, or occupation, reflects hierarchy and the distribution of power.

As a measure by which society evaluates maturity (i.e. the assumption of responsibility for one's actions) the category of childhood when applied to specific age groups becomes a social definition of relationships and

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of obligations incumbent upon adults and institutions. But as the term came to be applied to progressively longer periods of life, it also became a way of distinguishing and insulating age groups, in particular with relation to the labor force. Equating childhood with "primitive," "dependent," "innocent" or "little citizens" were useful descriptions for rationalizing social control. As a result a more narrow category was created for the roles available and behaviors expected. This development can be observed by the end of the 19th century in America with the appearance of three major intellectual/conceptual trends which helped to consolidate and focus new attitudes toward children: the introduction of techniques and ideology associated with the child study movement, the idealization/projection of children as "little citizens" and the utilization of the concept of adolescence as a conceptual and physiological stage between childhood and adulthood -- a period of hiatus in which one was engaged in a process of growth and self-exploration rather than employment. Adolescence identified a stage of life which was becoming increasingly restricted by specific cultural and generational notions of childhood which encompassed its own limitations, definitions and distinctions. "Coming of age" meant precisely, and only, that: it was its own raison d'être.

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New conceptions of children and childhood indicate changes in the social and economic milieu in which they arise. Such conceptions had begun to appear in European society by the Renaissance, for example in the works of the great humanists Erasmus, Montaigne and Comenius. In order to understand more fully these themes as they appear in a variety of forms in the 19th century, it is necessary to briefly delineate some of their historical references in the preceding centuries.

According to Philippe Ariès, childhood was "discovered" as a distinct phase of life in 16th and 17th century Europe; the notion of the "innocent child" developed as a modern theme in the 18th century. This change in the perceptions of children was part of a broad change in the nature and function of the family from the ancien régime to the private, nuclear family of the industrial period. For Ariès, this involved a lengthening of the time a child was nurtured and trained, and alterations in family structure and relationships. The nuclear family of the 15th century, in Ariès' paradigm, was followed by a cult of the child in the 16th century. The family became more intense, insulated and private as its role shifted from that of production and child rearing, to the protection from and preparation of family members for roles in the industrial order. This was characterized by isolation, control and privacy which differed from earlier periods. For Ariès, the specialization

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of the family was a limitation; the division of labor within families encouraged the separation and distinctiveness of children, and assumed new modes of child-rearing, formulated outside of adult experiences and processes of maturation.[1]

The importance of children and interest in their distinctive attributes vis a vis adults thus appears to have emerged during the Reformation, and was part of a major doctrinal dispute. Catholic theologians stressed the notion that children were born in sin and that salvation would be found in and through the Church exclusively.[2] Protestantism, while accepting the notion of Original Sin, postulated inner and communal sources of authority and salvation. From a Calvinist perspective, all were equal before God. Children were characterized as animal-like and primitive, whose natural instincts were virtually synonomous with sin and thus had to be curtailed by subordination to designated authorities. This coincided with and reinforced hierarchical and deferential notions in society and the family.

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1. Philippe Ariès, Centuries of Childhood (NY:Random House,1962) see also: Richard Senett, Families Against the City(NY: Random House, 1974) pp.62-68

2. As a reaction to inroads of Protestantism, the Jesuits sought to educate children as early as possible. Their approach is embodied in the phrase commonly attributed to them (though not exclusively theirs): "Give us the child; you take the man."

Lawrence Stone, The Family Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800 (NY:Harper and Row, 1977) argues for the evolution of the nuclear family from a restricted patriarchical mode (1550-1700) to one that was closed and domesticated (1620-1800).

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This notion of children was moderated by Enlightenment philosophers. John Locke, writing at the end of the 17th century believed that children were tabulae rasae in whom both good and evil tendencies existed. Locke's work reflects the political/theological implications of toleration and moderation taking place in English society at the time.[3] For Locke, an educational system based on understanding rather than harsh discipline would better elicit the innately positive qualities and self-development of children. His approach did not condone permissiveness, but was rather attuned to the ever-changing needs of children in the process of their explorations of the world and themselves.

Rousseau, writing in the mid-18th century, followed this more positive approach developed by Renaissance humanists and Enlightenment philosophes.[4] He posited the basic goodness of children and stressed that children be treated as individuals in their own right. Referring to nature as the source of educational goals, he believed that children were born without sin and only later corrupted by society. This theme would strike a sympathetic chord in Progressive reformers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries who contrasted the evils of city life with the healing effects of a rural environment. Such idealizations

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3. John Locke published Some Thoughts Concerning Education in 1699.

4. Rousseau's Emile was published in 1762; see especially Book IV.

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of the child and the setting represented aspects of a fundamental change in child-rearing which sought to find in the child that unspoiled and blossoming sense of self. More particularly, there was a recognition by the 18th century that children had their own uniqueness. By the end of the 18th century some male children wore distinctive clothing, like long trousers, rather than imitations of adult dress. According to Philippe Ariès, children wore special clothing as early as the 17th century. Lawrence Stone, however, argues that there were no such distinctions in clothing, only the age at which certain clothing was worn.

> At all times, English children have either worn special clothes, or been dressed as minature adults. The choice seems to have depended more on whims and fashions than on deep-seated psychological shifts in the attitudes towards children.[5]

Stone further argues:

> There are, however, more revealing types of evidence than clothing to prove that the 18th century was a turning point in the recognition of children as a period with its own distinctive requirements. [6]

He notes that there was a rash of children's literature, including the first children's magazine and 2,400 different books for young readers. Educational games for children were introduced, as well as mass-produced toys. He concludes:

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5. Stone, Family, Sex and Marriage, p.410
6. Ibid., p.410

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> But what is important is that large numbers of parents were now willing to pamper their children by buying them these frivolous toys and books. England was clearly moving towards a child-oriented family type.[7]

Stone also argues that there appears to be "evidence of a growing solidarity between parents and children, as exemplified by the growing popularity of family portrait groups, no longer stiffly and formally posed, but with the children in postures and attitudes which indicate friendly and playful association with their parents." There was also a moderation of "symbolic acts of deference"[8] and other formalized styles of demonstrating respect. Changes in other forms of child care included the abandonment of swaddling.

> Swaddling gave way to loose clothing, mercenary wet-nursing to maternal breast-feeding, breaking the will by force to permissiveness, formal distance to empathy, as the mother became the dominant figure in the children's lives. These changes reflect a general easing of those tensions which justified the iron discipline of the post-Reformation century, and in their turn they helped to produce individuals less suspicious of the world at large, less prone to violence, and now capable of intense personal attachments to other individuals in particular to their wives and children.[9]

Despite this, Stone goes on to argue that there was a partial breakdown in the way children were socialized as a result of the parental abandonment of responsibilities. This suggests a tension between repressive and permissive modes

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7. Ibid., p.411
8. Ibid., p.412
9. Ibid., pp. 424-426 and 448.

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modes of child-rearing. It is unclear, however, whether permissiveness means lack of discipline, or leads children to indulgence or poor socialization experiences. These examples of the ascendence of a more permissive mode of relationship between parents and children, Stone argues, are part of what in our time came to be called a"child culture." The implication of this argument is that forms of parental affection, concern and interest can be related to cultural notions about childhood.

> What was happening in the 18th century was a steady shift away from prime reliance on physical punishment in the upbringing of children to reliance on the reward of affection and the blackmail threat of its withdrawal. 10

A further example of the shift towards affection and permissiveness was the increasing use of contraception.

> Contraception is therefore only likely to happen in a child-oriented society in which bringing up the child and launching him into the world is becoming so burdensome in its demands for love, time, effort and money, that some reduction in numbers is highly desireable. 11

These European developments, however, while important, were characteristic of upper classes, those who had the opportunity to indulge their children. They did not apply

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10. Ibid., p.435; see also p.437 for examples of permissive styles of child rearing, p.438 for the reaction to indulgence, and p.439 for the significance of the abolishment of flogging in schools.
11. Ibid., p.418. Stone's argument for the emergence of "affective individualism" with deeper capacities for intimate relationships in the 18th century is associated with changes in child-rearing, particularly the creation of a sense of trust (see especially his Chapter 6).

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to lower classes, nor to those who came to America in the 17th and 18th centuries. Forms of indulgence were neither theologically nor practically part of the Puritan world. Breaking the land and farming it required every available hand, and the more children (preferably males), the better. There were carryovers of a more liberated notion of children brought by the settlers. The founders of New England thought of themselves as a "covenanted community."

> Their confession of faith, their search for regeneration and sanctification, their techniques of self-trial and self-denial all spring from the same community of experience.[12]

Democratizing tendencies implicit in such notions of community, however, were offset by strict hierarchies, both within families and the society. Puritan parents were constantly admonished to prevent idleness in their children as early as possible. Boys from 10 to 14 years old were expected to have begun their training as apprentices so that by the time they were 21 they would be able to support themselves and a family. Often such apprenticeship was carried on in other families by adults who could better deal with assertions of independence and impose discipline, for parents might be swayed by personal affections.[13]

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12. Alan Simpson, Puritanism in Old and New England (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1955) p.22
Larzer Ziff, Puritanism in America (NY: Viking Press, 1973)

13. Edmund Morgan, The Puritan Family (NY: Harper and Row, 1966) especially chapter 3, "Parents and Children"

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A study of family life in Plymouth Colony revealed that accomodations were often limited. There was apparently little privacy or opportunity to "differentiate between various portions of living space."

> Life in these households was much less segmented, in a formal sense, than it usually is for us; individuals were more constantly together and their activities meshed and overlapped at many points.[14]

This study also found that childhood did not extend much beyond the ages of six or seven, and afterwards children took their place alongside older people as "little adults." Gradually, however, the nature of the family changed as other institutions took over family functions. This was particularly true in the preparation and training of children for roles and tasks they would assume as adults.

In more recent work, changes in patterns of family organization and socialization were found to have begun as early as the late 18th century and were apparent subsequently in the concept of adolescence.

> ...the concept of adolescence was conditioned by social forces that reflected the demographic and industrial conditions of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. I depart from others, however, by insisting that moral values which often masqueraded as psychological laws were at the root of the concept, and that these moral values grew out of a particular cultural heritage . The concept of adolescence did not develop as a mere by-product of the later stages of industrialization but was an expression of distinctive values relating to children and the family that originated in America as early as the 1830's.[15]

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14. John Demos, A Little Commonwealth (NY: Oxford Univ.Press, 1970), p.181

15. Joseph Kett, Rites of Passage (NY: Basic Books, 1977) p.6

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The transformation of Puritan society during the 18th century as a result of the growth of population, emerging commercial centers and theological and political factionalism also witnessed increasing attention to children as sources of stability and continuity. No longer "redeemed sinners" of the Puritan world, children were to assume their place as future citizens. Basically, the family and church taught the principles of life that guided individuals; the family, as a replica of the wider society in microcosm , was the place where children first learned the meaning of democracy as well as respect for authority. Yet, within the structured world of Puritan society, fundamental social and economic changes began to erode traditional notions of the role and function of children. There was a reevaluation of notions of sex and salvation by the beginning of the 19th century which had profound impact on notions of childhood. There continued to be a tension between images of children as innocent or evil (damned and in need of salvation) and between permissive and restrictive methods of child rearing. These were not simply abstract theological notions; they had practical relevance as well. The intellectual debate over children which took place in the context of a somewhat traditional struggle between the preservation of the "purity" of the child against the corrupting influences of society (and "the street," or "the city" as its social representation) was in part a response to fundamental changes within society itself.

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Numerous sermons and pamphlets appealed to youths to attend to their obligations to God and community. Along with an emphasis on spiritual conversion of young people went the notion that the rising generation alone would save society from corruption; their committment to the values and ideals of Puritan culture insured the survival of that society. But commitment, especially for youth, carries with it resistance, an inevitable struggle to be free of the constrictions and limitations of the past in its search for identity. The need to assert personal autonomy thus conflicted with attempts by society to carry on its traditions.

The development of a new kind of childhood was recognized by perceptive observers of American society in the 1830's. Trollope and DeTocqueville noted this phenomenon as part of the new democratic character. DeTocqueville contrasted the austere and distant relationship between fathers and sons of the aristocracy with the intimacy, affection and sense of equality of democratic families.[16] Trollope also noted the independence and brashness of American children.

> Any man's son may become the equal of any other man's son, and the consciousness of this is certainly a spur to exertion; on the other hand, it is also a spur to that coarse familiarity, untempered by any shadow of respect, which is assumed by the grossest and the lowest in their intercourse with the highest and most refined.

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15. Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America (NY: Random House, 1945), Volume II, Chapter 8
16. Mrs. Frances Trollope, Domestic Manners of the Americans (NY: Random House, 1960), p.121

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By the 1840's a gradual shift was evident in the nature and function of childhood. Children were no longer thought of as miniature adults but as entering a "separate biological and psychological stage of human life with problems and promises of its own,"[17] with its own determinants and distinctions. Moreover, for those who could better afford the gradual lengthening of childhood as a separate stage of life, "prolonged periods of marginality" coincided with new and wider occupational choices, more privacy, higher literacy rates and a variety of "formal educational alternatives."

> Thus, biologically and intellectually mature young people were expected to accept several years of social and economic dependence even though their awareness of the possibilities for autonomous behavior was growing. Youth was beginning to take on the character of a moratorium with its opportunities for intellectual and psychological growth and its potential for tension, ambiguity and uncertainty.[18]

These new attitudes towards children can be seen in the movements established to protect them, particularly in child labor laws, but also in the concerns of pre-Civil War reformers about the commitment of youths.

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17. Stanley Schultz, The Culture Factory (NY: Oxford Univ. Press, 1973), p.50
see also: Joseph Ilick, "Child Rearing in 17th century England and America," and John Walzer, "A Period of Ambivalence" in Lloyd DeMause, ed., The History of Childhood (NY: Harper and Row, 1974)
John Frisch, "Youth Culture in America, 1790-1860," Unpub. Phd, University of Missouri, 1970

18. H. Ray Hiner, "American Adolescence," History of Childhood Quarterly, v.3, no.2 (Fall, 1975) p.259

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As Joseph Kett points out, there was a

> ...veritable culture of early conversions, teenage temperance pledges, and institutionalized revivals for young people, all aimed at fixing character so firmly that no amount of jarring in later youth could drive the individual off course. Thus the ultimate paradox of nineteenth-century thought about youth was that it viewed the postponement of choice and fixed purpose as inconsistent with the protection of young people from a worldliness, while in the twentieth century we have come to view the prolongation of adolescence as a corollary of protectiveness. 19

It is possible that these earlier ideas were carried over to a later period and applied to secular problems: new conceptions of childhood, removing children from the workforce, and providing them with new forms of care and control largely in institutions run by "professionals." The question thus becomes why these liberal ideas were implemented as a rational policy at the end of the century and not before. For an answer we must look to changes in the mode of production, the work force, demography, and the desire to assimilate large numbers of immigrants. Just as earlier reformers and leaders were concerned about the spiritual loyalties of youths, those of a later period were anxious about the ability of immigrants to accept the ideals and realities of American life, which included the prolongation of childhood and new conceptions of childhood.

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19. Joseph Kett, "Adolescence and Youth," in Theodore Rabb and Robert Rotberg, The Family in History (NY: Harper & Row, 1971), p.110

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The notion that children could resolve social problems and "redeem" society is not unique for this period, although it is an important aspect of Christian culture which emphasizes the place of an infant deity. Casting children in such roles is a constant and recurring form of intergenerational dynamics. A major difference, however, between Puritan and early 20th century American societies was the secularization of the "redeemer" role of children. Puritan leaders spoke to young people of the need to find salvation through inward and spiritual transformation - to save their souls. Children of a later period were admonished to save their civilization. The new goal was not a higher spiritual plane, with implications of salvation after death. Rather, it was a higher plane in terms of material rewards and social class, both of which were readily obtainable and could be interpreted in a secular fashion as salvation through upward social and economic mobility. The myths of Horatio Alger and the popular belief that any child (not adult) could become whatever he desired functioned as a secular equivalent of earlier theological notions which offered a personal/spiritual sense of power and choice though in fact little real choice may have existed. Both Puritan and secular notions of children as "redeemers" sought to inculcate obligations and responsibilities which would serve as internal mechanisms of control.

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The transformation of earlier notions of children as "redeemers" who would assume the tasks of purifying society into categories more appropriate to a secular state, "little citizens," invested children with new moral and political qualities while their status became more dependent, isolated and protected. But these qualities were not without their own ambiguities.

New standards, values and roles for children were paradoxical. Although the ideal was increasing self-motivation and direction, as children were schooled for longer periods of time and their opportunities for work were restricted, the point at which they became (at least economically) independent was postponed. Postponing the period at which children assumed responsibilities and independence altered the idea of what constituted maturity, when and how it was to be assumed, the nature and course of self-direction and self-actualization, and blurred these real distinctions between childhood and adulthood. But this postponement was was an essential aspect of reform.

> The progress of the race itself has often been shown to depend upon the prolongation of the period of childhood.[20]

The new place of children in late 19th century America was rooted in the concept that children needed longer periods

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20. A.J.McKelway, "Child Labor and Democracy" Child Labor Bulletin, v.1, no.1 (June, 1912)

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of time in which to prepare for roles as citizens and workers, and in the institutions which prepared them for their new roles. The extension of childhood moreover implied a departure from traditional expectations of work and responsibilities and created greater ambiguity about what children were to do and when they were to do it during the transition from childhood to adulthood.

> Protective measures are a two-edged device: while they may signify concern for the welfare of the young, they also define them as a separate, non-adult population, inhabiting a less than adult world. The need for protection and distinctive treatment underlies their less than adult status.[21]

The development of new roles for and expectations of children thus became a significant part of the assimilation process and maturation. As middle class notions of childhood were extended to immigrant and working class children their time had to be structured to correspond to economically non-productive activity (either in play or learning situations) and to child oriented institutions.[22] Despite an emphasis on the need for "free play" and the freedom to explore, efforts were made through institutions to prepare children to be cultural mediators and future workers.

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21. Frank Musgrove, Youth and the Social Order (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965) p.58

22. To some extent, the reformulation of family and kinship groups which is characteristic of industrializing societies can be measured by the development of social institutions which are intended to take their place.

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An aspect of the new conceptions of childhood is the increasing appeal to age as a critical social category. This is particularly apparent in legal developments. Laws which are age-related circumscribe activity by differentiating among age groups, functioning both as mechanisms of social control and power allocation. Indeed, the increasing imposition of such laws more clearly marks the outlines of generational conflict. These legal definitions were supported by the institutional separations of children according to age, and served to increasingly segregate children, particularly from the world of adults. As an attempt to define social categories, legal definitions of childhood suggest the standards by which a society judges the readiness of its youth to assume the obligations of a future generation. In this sense to ask what constitutes a "child" in relation to the determinants of maturity is to ask for a cultural definition as well. Establishing an arbitrary age at which people can work, leave school, drink alcoholic beverages, make legal contracts and are entitled to (or restricted from) special benefits and privileges also carries with it notions of authority in which <u>being</u> young is equated with <u>being</u> powerless and irresponsible.[23]

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23. In some pre-industrial, pre-modern societies, for example, it was possible (and not unusual) for royal children to become kings and queens (with regents until their majority).

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The new conceptions of children reconciled, postponed and reduced economic roles of children while elevating their social status (at least ideally). This shift was a mechanism for bridging gaps between old and new social relations within and without the family.[24] Childhood became a self-contained stage of growth with its own requirements, its own standards and values apart from those of adults. Rather than train children for adulthood, one reformer observed, children were treated as having a "status complete in itself..."[25] Traditions rituals and institutions which evolved along with these developments not only provided points of reference in the transition from childhood to adulthood, but legitimized new values and standards implied in this new cultural definition of childhood. Distinctive behavior patterns, groups, forms of language, clothing and material objects associated with youth gave an identity. Some rituals were lost altogether (e.g. those associated with religious and ethnic practices), others changed, and new ones flourished. For example, smoking cigarettes or wearing a certain type of clothing (like knickers) may have been construed by immigrants as constituting modes of assimilation and an indication of new self-image, values and expectations.

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24. Perhaps "old" may be seen as immigrant, rural, handicraft, or individualized, while "new" is characterized as American urban, industrial, mass produced.

25. F.A.Steel, "The Cult of the Child," Living Age v.237 (1903)

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One indication of these new forms can be seen in attitudes towards death and dying. In the Colonial period children observed death in their homes and in public places. Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries the ravages of epidemics and frequency of terminal diseases brought death into the everyday lives of children. Children attended funerals, were often involved in the experience of watching someone die (since this often occurred at home) and were accustomed to viewing and touching the body of the deceased. Gradually, with more protective notions and advances in the fields of health and hygiene, and the availability of hospitals, children were restricted from these experiences and encountered them less frequently.[26]

> Social legislation and changing social conventions made the adolescent. Areas of experience and knowledge were now designated 'adult' from which the less-than-adult must be shielded. The early acquaintance with birth and especially with death were no longer considered essential to a child's education...The young were now kept from the room in which confinement or death occurred; more spacious and elaborate architecture made it possible to segregate the young from such adult concerns.[27]

Reformers at the turn of the century encouraged this kind of distinction between children and adults. One wrote:

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26. Lawrence Stone, Family, Sex and Marriage notes a changing attitude toward death in 18th century England as part of a "trend to treat children as different in kind from adults." (see pp.246-253)
See also: Mary Cable, The Little Darlings: A History of Child Rearing in America (NY: Scribners, 1951)

27. Frank Musgrove, Youth and the Social Order, p.34

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> ...questions, topics and problems which engross the adult mind are discussed as if the child were not there...children live too much and too soon in the adult world...[28]

As opportunities for certain kinds of direct, concrete experiences were less available to children certain themes came to be associated with childhood. A child was someone who played, went to school, was protected and entitled to a respite from adult work and responsibilities. Children were thrust into a social/moral limbo which entailed different, more supportive and often restrictive standards of behavior and expectations. This was reflected in the establishment of separate and distinct institutions for children. Children were expected to be in school rather than learning a trade, and in organized playground activity rather than on the street. Freedom from work did not necessarily mean greater independence. In fact the opposite may have resulted as social institutions took the place of occupations.

> The adolescent peer group of today has become a subculture which both insulates young people from the intrusions of adults and at times protects them from an awareness of their own marginality and redundancy.[29]

The attempt to formulate new social categories for children, focused largely within institutional structures,

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28. Katherine Beebe, "Child's Place in the Home," Outlook, v.58 (1898) p.429

29. H.Ray Hiner, "American Adolescence" p.271

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was expressed in the idealization of children, whether negatively (as "little savages"), or positively (as "saviors" of civilization and "little citizens"). I have used the concept of idealization here to suggest two processes. First, an attempt to define and establish new forms of social hierarchy according to age, role and function complemented the development of new notions of childhood, and corresponded to changes in the economy and society as a whole. This was furthered through specific programs designed to socialize children according to the demands of and/or threats to American society. New forms of social control included Americanization programs and institutions devoted to the protection and nurture of children. Second, rather than confront fundamental problems in the society, a position which might have led to the condemnation of existing social and economic structures, a process of idealization occurred which was expressed, for example, in terms which characterized children as "savages," or "little citizens." An attempt was thus made to conceal real and concrete issues, conflicts and contradictions by transforming their direct appearance into abstract categories.[30] For example, rather than deal with the causes

30. By shifting a concrete argument (implicit or explicit) onto an abstract level and formulating the positions (either one of the two contradictory ones) in value-laden terms, an appeal can be made to emotions and/or primordial values or instincts rather than the concrete issues at hand.

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of the crisis which shook the country at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20 centuries - as evidenced by massive labor unrest and the depression of the 1890's - the conflict was presented by reformers as environmental (crowded living conditions, the "street," or theatres for example), or individual (e.g. subversive elements and criminals who sought to undermine the nation , or were innately inferior).

Characterizations of children as innocent and helpless, potential citizens or saviors of civilization, were offset by images of children as spoiled, lacking discipline and indulged. Both perspectives sought to reassert a sense of continuity and order which reformers believed was collapsing. At a personal level, such conceptions are also extensions and reflections of those who project them, and such admonitions to children reflect the idealized self-images of adults. In this context, dealing with children in idealized terms is a way of talking about one's own sense of deprivation or guilt for not having achieved one's goals. The elevation of children to a realm which was inaccessible to parents, or anyone else for that matter - "redeemers" of civilization - is also a form of control. Indeed, the need to control their own lives may be reflected in such characterizations of children.

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In an effort to justify the detachment of children from their families and the intervention of public and private agencies and institutions, reformers contrasted the child as "savage" and as "little citizen." The intent and meaning of these characterizations was quite subtle. Portraying children as "savages" or "animals" fit reformers' notions that in the process of evolution, the child would be brought from the "primitive," particularistic and ethnocentric stage to the "universal" and "civilized." The development from the particular to the universal was to be carried on in schools, which were, it was maintained, uniquely fitted to perform this transition. The success of this process would depend on training children to look to institutions like schools for norms and standards. The child would be made to understand that the rules of the school were not simply arbitrary, but were part of the "ethical world" and that the institutions which affect him (family, school, state, church, etc.) were "his universal self, made objective and substantial, and that in obeying institutions, he is obeying his highest, his permanent self."[31] The final process in assimilation therefore was the transcendental identification of children with the values and institutions of society.

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31. Joseph Carhart, "The problem educational" National Conference of Social Workers, Proceedings, v.19 (1892) pp.187-189

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Following are examples of the uses of the "savage" image by reformers:

> primitive...incapable of foregoing immediate good that a larger good may result. Incapable of generalizing, he is without the power of substantial combination with his fellows. He is a mere animal...[32]

> Whatever is young is in the stage of savagery and along with lack of the virtues which come of refinement, possesses the primal virtue of faith...The natural religion of childhood is simple faith in God. Before theologies confuse and contradictory teachings depress their understanding, they hold innocent, happy communion with the life of the world as revealed in nature.[33]

> The normal boy is more than three parts animal and it is the testimony of animal trainers that what they can do with their charges depends upon how young they catch them.[34]

> (The boy) climbs his 'ancestral tree,' in which he recapitulates the animal world, and his own 'race-life from savagery into civilization. (Boys are mostly a) bundle of instincts...The infant is like wild creatures of the wood...[35]

> If the man is to retain a wholesome humanism, it must emerge from the joyous savagery of his own childhood.[36]

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32. Ibid.,

33. Florence Hall Winterburn, From the Child's Standpoint; Views of Child Life and Nature (NY:Baker and Taylor,1899)

34. The Neighbor (Chicago: Northwestern University Settlement, v.1,no.4 ,1899)

35. William Forbush, The Boy Problem; A Study in Social Pedagogy (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1901) p.9

36. William Forbush, The Coming Generation (NY:Appleton, 1912)

See also the work of G.Stanley Hall and other proponents of the theory of recapitulation.

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The development and popularization of the concept of adolescence at the end of the 19th century is of particular importance. The concept arose at a time when it became necessary to make distinctions between older and younger children in the workforce (as well as between children and adults) and when the period of required schooling was lengthened well into what had been considered a time when occupations were begun. Furthermore, the concept carried with it specific notions of human development and specific characteristics of teen-agers as more impulsive and uncontrollable than adults. New pedagogical and psychological theories associated with the concept of adolescence emphasized this as a separate stage of development perhaps the most important aspect of which was the sexual drive, a notion which Freud had begun to explore at the time. This in part accounts for the renewed interest in teen-age youths, especially in the field of "boys work." The purpose was not simply to give more structure and guidance but to prepare a new generation of workers from the newly urbanized masses. Moreover,

> Concepts of adolescence as a distinct, critical, and incapacitating stage of life thus went hand in hand with a number of other attitudes - fear of fashion, a preference for nature's way, a strong feeling for the preservation of innocence, and a proclivity to borrow theological concepts and recast them in physiological terms.[37]

37. Joseph Kett, Rites of Passage, p.137

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A complementary perspective suggests that adolescence was "discovered" or invented by the urban middle class in response to a decline in the number of children per family and as an instrument of social control resulting in a prolonged state of dependency not characteristic of previous generations. The crucible for this new age-group was the elite secondary school which sought to instill the values of "conformity, self-denial and dependence." Gradually this concept of adolescence was "democratized," offered to, rather than required of, all teen-agers regardless of social class.[38] The specific focus on adolescent sexuality was a key issue.

> The earlier onset of puberty in the middle classes, extended schooling, and longer periods of training all combined to widen the gap between childhood and the time when a person was supposedly sexually mature and economically secure enough to establish a new household... the intensive repression of childhood became more extensive as more parents tried to control the sexual life of their children...[39]

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38. John Gillis, Youth and History: Tradition and Change (NY: Academic Press, 1974) pp.98-133

39. R.P.Neuman, "Masturbation, Madness and Modern Concepts of Childhood and Adolescence," Journal of Social History Spring, 1975 p.20

See also Natalie Zemon Davis, "The Reasons of Misrule: Youth Groups and Charivaris in 16th century France," Past and Present no.50 (1971) who shows that the concept of adolescence dates back to the Middle Ages.

Frank Musgrove, Youth and the Social Order argues that "School stories such as Tom Brown (1856), Eric, or Little by Little (1859), The Boys Own Paper (from 1879) and Stalky & Co.(1903) addressed themselves to and helped to create a specifically middle class adolescent world." p.33

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An important area in which attitudes towards children and adolescents changed was that of "sex hygiene" and sex education. In part this represented a corollary to Victorian sexually restrictive attitudes, the influence of theories of adolescence which emphasized sexual awareness and impulses of children, and Freudian theories of sexuality. Reformers in this area, uneady about expressions of rebelliousness among youths who questioned traditional forms of morality and values, urged youths to sublimate their energies into physical exercise, sports, clubs, and local and national campaigns around specific issues. Moreover, the increasing concern about adolescent sexuality and attempts to suppress it may have reflected personal ambiguities of adults. Portraying children as "animal-like" and "savage" and emphasizing the need to control these primitive impulses may have represented fears of their own repressed desires. Along similar lines, Christopher Lasch notes:

> The great discovery of the turn of the century was the existence of uncivilized man; the existence, that is, of a buried part of the psyche which had never accepted the restraints of adulthood or consented to become a responsible member of society. Hence the sudden interest not only in childhood but in primitive peoples. Hence also psychoanalysis, the most striking but by no means the only expression of the new preoccupation with buried levels of being. [40]

40. Christopher Lasch, The New Radicalism in America, pp.143-44

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The concern with sexuality among children and adolescents had a practical basis. As venereal disease became more wide-spread (or at least more known) at the turn of the century, public health figures revealed that children and adolescents were prominent among those who became infected.[41] In response, a number of organizations were established to combat the spread of these diseases and to promote new attitudes towards sexual behavior. They included The American Social Hygiene Association, the American Federation for Sex Hygiene, the American Society of Sanitary and Moral Prophylaxis, as well as the appointment of municipal "vice commissioners."

The movement to repress childhood sexuality, of which the sex hygiene movement was part, was not simply motivated by a concern for public health. In a deeper sense, it reflected an ambivalence toward the changing nature of childhood itself, questioning whether children were innocent and whether sex was natural in children.[42] A common problem addressed in major child-oriented journals, like Pedagogical Seminary, concerned sexual behavior of children (like "night emissions") and how to control these impulses. Drug companies advertised "cures" for such problems and printed excerpts of letters they received in popular journals which related personal experiences and

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41. See Survey, v.15 Oct-March 1905-6 for a series of articles on sex hygiene and venereal diseases.
42. Charles Rosenberg, "Sexuality, Class and Role in 19th century America," American Quarterly, v.25 (May, 1973)

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attested to the value of the product used.[43] These letters are indications of a growing public awareness of and concern for the problem of sexuality generally, and masturbation and nocturnal emissions in particular.

The relationship between sexual and social issues particularly as it concerns children is important. Modes of repressiveness at the turn of the century indicate an aspect of insecurity between parents and children. The belief that masturbation led to madness - a belief held by eminent psychologists such as G.S.Hall and Freud (as late as 1912) - derived from physiological theories popular in the 18th and 19th centuries. In this view the body was a closed system with limited energy and resources. The creation of sperm drew off energies from other parts of the body, and its dissipation was considered a loss to the system as a whole.[44] It was incumbent, therefore, for individuals to conserve their own resources - a theory which corresponded to current themes of natural conservation (e.g. the establishment of national parks, etc.) by society. At a familial and individual level the belief that lack of sexual control indicated or resulted from adolescent rebellion and rejection of parental values related to the nature of conflicts between generations.

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43. An important historical task would be to discover some of these letters (perhaps preserved by drug companies or in private collections).

44. See: G.J.Barker-Benfield, "The Spermatic Economy: A Nineteenth-Century view of sexuality" Feminist Studies, Vol.1, No.1, 1972

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The effects of masturbation were vividly portrayed in literature and journals: flabby muscles, weak back, sunken eyes and fishy, clammy hands. Not only was masturbation sinful, it affected the entire moral character of the individual so that he/she could not even "look anybody straight in the eye."[45] The shock value was intentional.

> Realizing that they could not keep their children under constant surveillance, parents sought (and probably succeeded in most cases) to make them self-repressing by prohibiting masturbation because of its imagined dangers and by preaching chastity and the sublimation of sexual energy into education, sports and work...Sex was still for grown ups...and masturbation degraded youth, distracted young people from their education and debased the noble aspirations...[46]

> Masturbation was the most thoroughly appropriate sin for a society preoccupied with the autonomous accumulation of male energies (and monomania perhaps the most appropriate and extreme form of its "lunacy ")[47]

On the other hand, a more mature approach sought to counter restrictive attitudes.

> Masturbation is not immoral per se, but is natural to an extent. Children must be instructed to develop a rational ethical intelligence. [48]

> Sex should not be hunted for, but it should not be avoided when it occurs. [49]

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45. Winfield S.Hall, From Youth to Manhood (NY: Association Press, 1918)
46. R.P.Neuman, "Masturbation, Madness and Modern Concepts of Childhood&Adolescence," Journal of Social History, Vol. No. (Spring, 1975)pp.20-21
47. G.J. Barker-Benfield, "The Spermatic Economy" p.
48. Dr. Ira Wile, "Sex Education," National Conference of Social Workers, Proceedings, v.39 (1912)
49. Lucy Sprague Mitchell, "School Children and Sex Idealism" Survey, Vol.32 No.12 (June, 1914)

See also: Emanuel Sternheim, "The Sex Problem in Education," Educational Review, v.50, (1915) pp.250-278

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The relationship between the social purity movement and child rearing was of prime importance.

> Moral educationists assessing their reform role in the 1870's concluded that they had departed radically from the church's ordinary call for regeneration by substituting a more dynamic view of child rearing. This dynamism, foreshadowing applied evolutionary theory in the child study movement, rejected evangelical ideas of child salvation. For moral educationists, the evangelical interest in bringing the child to Christ was sufficient for preserving social order in modern urban society.[50]

Protecting the innocent child thus protected society as a whole. This depended, however, on guiding those strong and potentially "evil" instincts which were associated with sex. And, reformers warned, "...if the parents are unable to do it...educators have got to take hold..."[51] They emphasized parental cooperation with teachers wherever possible and the use of the school to teach these ideals. Reformers thus confronted sexual mores and behavior not only as an individual problem, but as a reflection of the entire social order. What one did in private became a public and social concern. It is clear, however, that more than individual sexual practices were at issue; sexuality was a metaphor for deeper anxieties about social change itself, as evident in the following letter from "E.C.S., Swissvale, Pa."

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50. David Pivar, The Purity Crusade; Sexual Morality and Social Control, 1868-1900 (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1973) p.79
See also Joseph Kett, Rites of Passage, p.193

51. E.M.Sternheim, "The Sex Problem in Education" p.276
See also American Federation for Sex Hygiene in Survey, v.28 (Apr-Sept. 1912)

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> the excessive demand for prostitution which comes largely from young boys...caused by the nature of our present social organism which abnormally emphasizes the sex relation and puts it before every other influence a boy meets. Women's dress, current literature, musical comedies and problem plays, smutty stories...all combine to throw a fascinating glamor around sex indulgence.[52]

Although a tension has always existed between restricting and liberating attitudes towards sexual behavior, the new role of children at the turn of the century gave this problem a new dimension. Children were placed in primary roles as assimilators and mediators between their parents and society; they were expected to transmit sexual mores and values to adults as well as learn those lessons themselves. On the street, however, they learned different values. Young girls who were involved in street trades were vulnerable and boys in this work, or in other ways, had easy access to sexual or enticing experiences. The increased attention to child sexuality suggested that children themselves be held partially responsible, at least in so far as their sexual instincts and behavior were concerned. These concepts of childhood were then related to fears that lack of self-restraint would lead to social breakdown.

Thus, it is not a "new" morality that we are dealing with, but a quite traditional morality applied to children

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52. Survey, v.30 (1913) p.228
On the same page as the quotation is a suggestion from Hastings Hart, a leader in the child welfare movement, that defective delinquents be sterilized to prevent them from reproducing.

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as well as adults, This coincided with new forms of protection and control, largely through institutions intended to circumvent family authority and influence.

The emphasis on sex education also reflected the Progressive belief that education could resolve all social problems.[53] What they may have communicated instead was a sense of personal insecurity and self-rejection, at least with regard to one's own sexuality. This was further reinforced by theories that "delinquent" or "insane" behavior could be altered by castration or clitoridectomy.[54] It also encouraged people to look at failures as personal inadequacies and weakness rather than as a result of social or economic factors, and emphasized indirectly the possessive and aquisitive qualities characteristic of American society. By controlling and repressing sexual behavior reformers hoped to shore up the rapidly eroding foundations of what had been construed as appropriate moral values.

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53. For an analysis of the sex education movement, see: Bryan Strong, "Ideas of the Early Sex Education Movement in America, 1890-1920" History of Education Quarterly, (Summer, 1972); see also, John Burnham, "The Progressive Era Revolution in American Attitudes Towards Sex," JAH, v.LIX (1973)

54. G.J. Barker-Benfield, The Horrors of the Half-Known Life (NY: Harper and Row, 1976)

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The concept of a separate and distinct culture of childhood (with its own unique determinants) itself is relatively recent. One of the first examinations of this concept was undertaken by Talcott Parsons, who saw it as a

> set of patterns and behavior phenomena which involve a highly complex combination of age grading and sex role elements.[55]

Referring to a contemporary situation which was more developed and complex than that of the earlier period, Parsons saw the function of a youth culture as part of an attempt to ease the transition from childhood to adulthood. Like most sociologists who wrote about youth culture, Parsons contrasted it with the adult world and saw in it the refusal to accept adult responsibilities as well as adult values. Linked closely with institutional developments in education and the life style of college youths, he observed that "youth culture is not only, as is true of the curricular aspect of education, a matter of age status as such, but also shows strong signs of being a product of tensions in the relationships of younger people and adults."[56]

S.N.Eisenstadt followed this same analysis, elaborating the concept in other societies and time periods.[57] Both regarded youth culture as a sign and product of societal dysfunction. James Coleman's study of youth cultures in

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55. Talcott Parsons, Essays in Sociological Theory(Glencoe: Free Press, 1949) p.91
56. Ibid., p.93
57. S.N.Eisenstadt, From Generation to Generation (Glencoe: Free Press, 1956)

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American high schools demonstrated a rejection of institutional rituals of adolescence associated with efforts to impose dependency.[58]

Kenneth Keniston offers an extensive elaboration of the concept of youth culture as a revolt against societal/parental values. "The adult world then as seen from within the youth culture inspires neither enthusiasm nor deep commitment...Youth culture provides a distinctive and separate world...Yet this cult of the present has a hidden rationale, the search for identity."

> The relation of youth culture and alienation is therefore paradoxical. Youth is defined in America as a stage of systematic disengagement from conventional adulthood; the values of the youth culture involve a lack of any deep commitment to adult society, parents, and the adult world. But at the same time the socially supported alienation of the youth culture acts to absolve most young men and women of any need for personally repudiating conventional adulthood; their membership in the youth culture does it for them.[59]

Like Kenniston, Paula Fass examines the emergence of a youth culture among college students; her focus is the 1920's.

> ...the structure and mores of peer life on the campus helped to create the first modern American youth culture, a culture that was fed by the larger culture but that was also distinct and separate...Between the realities of youth behavior and youth societies, and the anxieties and excitements of a rapidly changing world, the young had come to represent modernity, the impulse toward adjustment...there existed during the twenties a vital interest among youths in what others were doing, thinking and wearing, a breaking down of parochial patterns, and an identification with and sensitivity to youth as a special group...and verges on "youth consciousness."[60]

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58. James Coleman, The Adolescent Society (Glencoe: Free Press, 1961)
59. Kenneth Keniston, The Uncommitted (NY: Dell, 1965) pp. 398-404
60. Paula Fass, The Damned and the Beautiful (NY: Oxford, 1977) pp. 122, 128, 206

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Erik Erikson viewed adolescence as a "moratorium," a psychosocial stage between childhood and adulthood and between childhood and adulthood, and between the morality learned by the child and the ethics to be developed by the adult." "Adolescence is the age of the final establishment of a dominant positive ego-identity."

> Consider our adolescent boy. In his early childhood he was faced with a training which tended to make him machinelike and clocklike. Thus standardized, he found chances, in his later childhood, to develop autonomy, initiative, and industry, with the implied promise that decency in human relations, skill in technical details, and knowledge of facts would permit him freedom of choice in his pursuits, that the identity of free choice would balance his self-coercion. As an adolescent and man, however, he finds himself confronted with superior machines, complicated, incomprehensible, and impersonally dictatorial in their power to standardize his pursuits and tastes. These machines do their powerful best to convert him into a consumer idiot, a fun egoist, and an efficiency slave - and this by offering what he seems to demand.[61]

For Erikson, Keniston and others, the postponement of adult responsibilities characterizes a culture of youth in which they can develop a sense of identity and experience a succession of roles which they assume but do not adopt primarily or exclusively. It is a time when they can begin to develop a philosophy of life.

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61. Erik Erikson, Childhood and Society (NY:Norton, 1963) pp. 263, 306, 323.
See also the excellent collection edited by Erikson, Youth: Change and Challenge (NY: Basic Books, 1963)

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Portrayals of children in comics and advertising cards

The new attitude toward children which became apparent in the late 19th and early 20th centuries can be seen in the development of comic strips which began to appear in the same period. The significance of these cartoons is in the attitude they reflect towards children and the relationships between children and adults. In these cartoons children are presented in two ways: either they are getting into trouble, and/or they are capable of insight and able to interact with adults with some measure of independence. In some cases the activities of these children are portrayed as subtle attacks on adult society. The"Katzenjammer Kids" for example, who are usually getting into trouble, also expose the vulnerability of the Captain and his wife. On the one hand we are shown children of immigrants who seem to have nothing better to do than annoy adults and get into trouble. No constructive or positive role is inferred from their behavior. Yet, on the other hand, the children do not resemble the docile, self-effacing children of the past. They are bold, rather like street children, and ingenious, though often with the sole aim of avoiding tasks and responsibilities. Nor are they imitative. Though they may reflect aspects of adult culture and behavior, their activities are interpreted differently, as if acted out in a different social context. As such, these cartoons represent classical

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symptoms of cultural conflict in an immigrant family. The children are mischievous and a bit arrogant, more adept than their parents, and stand as new definitions of childhood.

At the same time the "Katzenjammer Kids" was presented to the American public, another child cartoon character became popular, the "Yellow Kid." The central figure was a child of the streets, baldheaded and wearing a yellow night-shirt. An early cartoon entitled "The Great Dog Show in M'Googan Avenue," portrayed a collection of street children in the process of putting on a dog show. Written in dialect, the signs and captions in the cartoon revealed the speech of semi-literate children of the time. A few years later, the author of the "Yellow Kid" produced "Buster Brown" who represented a more well-to-do child. This character and the earlier slum child were portrayed as bright and mischievous children. In this sense they represent an attempt to balance two perspectives of children: they were full of mischief, in need of discipline, lacked proper control and were a potential threat to adults; they needed to be cared for, understood, and allowed free expression, play and protection. This suggests a world of childhood which now assumed its own norms and values separate from those of adults.[62]

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62. The problem in analyzing cartoons also focuses around their audience. They can be appreciated by illiterate people who can surmise from the pictures what's going on. Certainly it would take some sophistication to read the twisted English that appears in captions, signs, etc. On the other

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hand, this form of language might be useful for those who needed to sound out words. What did they mean to immigrants who read them? And did children as well as adults read them? Did they identify these speech patterns with their own? Were these captions written for non-immigrants as a way of poking fun at immigrants (a sort of negative example)?

Comics first appeared in this country in 1892, long after their introduction in Europe. Europe had two comic papers in 1890, and German cartoonists, notably Wilhelm Busch had been delighting their audiences since the 1860's. Busch had been producing a series of cartoons using two small boys, whom he called "Hans and Fritz." While on a European tour, William Randolph Hearst saw these cartoons and hired another famous cartoonist, Rudolph Dirks to come to this country and produce one of the first American comic strips based on Busch's characters. Dirks created the "Katzenjammer Kids" in 1897 for Hearst's New York Journal, but left the paper shortly afterwards to fight in the Spanish American War. He returned to the paper, but left again in 1912 and after a prolonged European visit began to draw for the New York World. The cartoon was subsequently taken over by H.H.Knerr under the same title, while a similar one was continued by Dirks under the title "Captain and the Kids."

At the same time, in 1896, R.F.Outcault produced a comic strip for the New York World called the "Yellow Kid." Outcault moved to the New York Herald in 1897, and to the American in 1902, where he produced his "Buster Brown (and his dog Tige)."

In 1899 Hearst hired Frederick Burr Opper to replace Dirks. Opper produced several famous cartoons, including "Alphonse and Gaston" (two over polite Frenchmen), "Bunny," "And her name was Maud" (about a mule with a well-placed kick), and "Happy Hooligan" (about a good-natured schlemiel).

In addition, W.F.Marriner and J.K.Bryan drew cartoons for the Sunday World, and in 1892 James Swinnerton drew the "Little Bears and Tigers" for the San Francisco Examiner. In the period just before the first World War, George McManus originated "Bringing Up Father" in 1913. This was the story of an ordinary workingman ("Jinx") who was forced to wear a top-hat and spats by his pretentious nouveau riche wife. Bud Fisher also produced his famous "Mutt and Jeff" cartoons at this time and Charles Schultz created the cartoon character "Foxy Grandpa."

See: George Perry and Alan Aldridge, The Penguin Book of Comics (Harmondsworth, Eng.,:Penguin Books, 1967)

William Murrell, History of American Graphic Humor. 2 vols., (NY:Whitney Museum of American Art,1933)

Jerry Robinson, The Comics, An Illustrated History of Comic Strip Art (NY: Putnams, 1974)

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Changing attitudes towards children can also be seen in the ways they were conceptualized in advertising cards.[63] These cards, cutouts, posters and stickers were attached to or included in various tobacco, household and food products.[64] On thread cards, for example, a stylized picture of a child ("urchin") was portrayed looking towards a cottage. The scene is neat and clean; the boy carries a small bag and wears a long, robe-like coat. In some products there were cut-outs of dolls which could be assembled by children. Gradually these portrayals of children became more realistic and showed less idealized, or doll-type figures. Cards show boys smoking, girls playing with dolls, a boy giving a cat a bath (with great difficulty), boys playing ball and other games (swings & teetertotters demonstrate the use of playground equipment), boys fishing, flying kites, holding a cat by the tail and generally getting into mischief. Another card in this series shows a policeman pulling a boy from the river by his ear, presumably about to arrest him for swimming. Other cards show girls engaged in various household chores. These

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63. This material is based on my research in the Jefferson Burdick Collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The collection of American Advertising Cards is mainly between 1880 and 1895, although a fair amount has also been collected up to 1905. I am indebted to Prof. William McLaughlin for suggesting this source.

64. For example, stove polishes, Nestle Mother Goose Series, Hershey's Coc oa , Kickapoo Medicines, Diamond Dyes, Electric Luster Starch, Coats Thread, various brands of oats, coffee bread, etc. See v.69 of Burdick Collection

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cards represent some activities of children - both positive and negative, realistic and idealistic, and often stereotyped according to sex-role expectations.[65]

One set of cards described what may have been a typical interaction between street children and adults at the time:

CHAFF
Fruitstand pedler (sic) (to the Boys):
"Now then what do you want?
What are you gaping at?"
Street Boy:"Nothin."
Fruitstand Pedler: "Then take it and be off!"
Street boy: "All right, wrap it up for us in a piece of paper."

IMPERTINENT
Stout Gent (Naturally suspicious of a street boy):
"Ge' out o' my way you young rascal."
Street Boy: "Vich Vay round, guv'ner?"

Another card shows two bootblacks vying for a customer, each pulling a shoe in the opposite direction. Another card portrays working children: a white boy working with a chisel on a stone (or monument) as a stone mason, a black boy stropping a razor (in a barber shop) and a third boy cooking, and another as a carpenter, or apprentice.[66]

These picture cards demonstrate the ways in which children were perceived by adults, but also, since these cards were probably meant for children to collect, they must have appealed to children as well. To be sure, most of

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65. See volumes 68, 304 and 15 of the Burdick Collection

66. See volumes 70 and 315 of the Burdick Collection

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the cards portray idyllic scenes more appropriate to collecting and trading. It is, of course, impossible to know what cards were favored, or what children thought about them. If the cards were simply advertising gimmicks for a product, why were they introduced in this way and at this time? Perhaps the answer lies in the additional inducement of a collectable item for children as a way of appealing to parents to purchase a product. The fact that the cards appear in this period strengthens the argument for the emergence of a new conception of childhood, one with its distinct nature and expectations. Moreover, these cards portray children themselves, rather than idealized heroes, or historical figures as had been the case in previous times. The cards may also have served a purpose other than collecting or selling a product to parents. It may have been the intention of manufacturers that through the cards children would be prepared or influenced as consumers who would later be predisposed to buy a product which they had known as children.[67]

In a similar way, the sale of certain products was linked to the popularization of sports. Team loyalty, like brand loyalty, was linked to consumerism and Americanization.

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67. It is not coincidental that special fashions for children became an important part of the clothing industry at this time and appeals to and for children were prominent in advertisements. See also: Stuart Ewen, Captains of Consciousness(NY:McGraw-Hill,1976), esp.Ch.4,"Youth as an Industrial Ideal."

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> Baseball succeeded as an organized spectator sport but it did also what neither racing nor boxing could do in turning the city lot into a playground and the small boy into an enthusiastic player. The cigarette pictures of leading players that small boys of the eighties collected by scores indicate at once their interests and their naughty habits. Like cricket in England, baseball became a game for everyone. 68

Less obvious was the correspondence between the packaging of a product and the appeal to children as consumers of the future, a notion that seemed to be included in the meaning of becoming an American. But it was not only the transformation of the child into a consumer that occurred. Childhood itself became a commodity, a quantity to be produced according to common standards and uniform shapes, rather than a period of creativity and self-awareness. Marx's notion that workers become cheaper commodities the more they produce[69] can be applied to emerging concepts of childhood. The process of socialization in institutions which reflected and sought to inculcate values and goals associated with Americanization objectified children just as the factory system under capitalism objectified workers.

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68. Frederick Paxson, "The Rise of Sport," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, v.4 (Sept.1917) , in George Sage, ed., Sport and American Society (Addison-Wesley,1970)

69. See: Karl Marx, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844, "Estranged Labor."

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Conclusion

These new conceptions of childhood were the result of a combination of socio-economic forces: a decline in child mortality, larger numbers of children in the population (especially among immigrant groups), withdrawal of children (especially those who were younger) from work, the development of schools, settlements and new child-oriented institutions as major sources of standards and values to replace those of family, traditional culture and occupation. Longer periods of compulsory schooling meant that childhood could be prolonged and children placed in new roles as mediators and transmitters of new cultural values and norms associated with Americanization. The evolution of a new cultural definition of childhood implied as well as reflected changes in the function of children as the context of their lives changed.

Reformers sought to resolve problems of social and personal discontent by encouraging new forms of protection and patterns of nurture which mirrored their need to provide a sense of security and order. In the process they turned primarily to children as "little citizens" and to institutions that would prepare them for new roles. The creation of a new concept of childhood as part of a process of assimilation involved a more insulated, idealized and dependent notion of childhood, one in which children

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were shielded from realities and responsibilities. These notions of childhood appeared to enhance the position of children, sometimes at the cost of parental authority, and included increased privileges, rights and opportunities and the creation of new distinctions - although balanced by new restrictions and prohibitions. The task of providing this context for childhood rested with institutions and public agencies as substitutes for traditional notions of community and as mitigators of family and social change.

Cut loose from the culture of their parents and separated from the values and expectations that existed in the home, childhood acquired its own sources of identity and consciousness which became the basis for new social relationships. The creation of a sense of self not rooted in cultural continuity and shared responsibilities became not only an individual problem but a societal one as well. Ultimately, youth, like old age, became part of a program of planned obsolescence.

The new conceptions of childhood - particularly the importance placed on meeting every need of one's children - became a fundamental part of the transformation of the family. It would appear that this process of social and familial change, filled as it is with ambivalence, characterizes a modern dilemma.

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In the recent past, for example, and in working-class families today, parents sacrificed in order to prepare their children to be economically and socially better off than the parents were, and often hated them for fulfilling this goal and leaving the parents behind. Now middle-class parents sacrifice in order to prepare their children to be emotionally better off - more loving, expressive, creative, cooperative, honest - and once again, resent being outdistanced. In both cases the parents feel left out of the triumphs they made possible; and the children feel ashamed of the parents who wanted them to be superior. The parents want their fantasies of vicarious success fulfilled but never seem to recognize that both kinds of success involve a change to a new milieu from which the parents are automatically excluded. The earlier group of parents wanted their children to become rich and respectable and still remain somehow part of the working-class milieu. The later group want their children to be more cultured, less money-grubbing, more spontaneous and creative, yet still somehow willing to remain on the same treadmill with the parents.
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68. Philip Slater, The Pursuit of Loneliness (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970) p.77
As Kenneth Keniston observed: "Perhaps we sacrifice so readily for children because by living on in them we hope we can spare them, our new selves, the adulthood we ourselves must live." The Uncommitted, p.410

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II. THE STRUGGLE TO END CHILD LABOR

Prior to industrialization the basic unit of production and consumption was the family. It was close-knit with intimate ties to kin and community. Few social agencies or institutions mediated between parents and children or between children and the world. There were no great discontinuities of culture within families and traditional authority structures prevailed. Children were expected to work, unless they came from affluent families or were severely handicapped. Work was an integral part of the Protestant ethic. Child labor, either as apprenticeship outside of the home or learning skills and a trade within the home was considered proper training for good moral character, for social and self-respectability. Discipline of children was often exercised by adults who supervised them in their training and who had direct contact with parents or relatives informally or by contract. The primacy of work was as much a practical as a moral ingredient of life.

In Puritan New England, parents (or the government in special cases) accepted the responsibility to provide care and sustenance for children, and to prepare them for a useful and gainful occupation. Children were to be carefully

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> instructed in some lawful calling, labor or imployment, either in husbandry or some other trade profitable for themselves, and the Commonwealth if they will not or cannot train them up in learning to fit them for higher imployments.[1]

Education, considered as essential as training for an occupation, was not neglected. However, education did not replace work, but supplemented it. Such education was limited and did not go much beyond what was essential for the performance of religious or secular activities. The Puritans in Massachusetts, for example, in the mid-17th century, provided Bible instruction for the entire community. At the same time, in Virginia, the education of apprentices was left to the master, following English custom. There was an attempt to provide some balance between work and education - even if that education was minimal and restricted according to class and sex. Education for most children occurred in a family structure, or in the process of learning a trade, and until the Industrial Revolution, formal education was still generally regarded as a class privilege.

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1. Massachusetts Laws of 1648 in George Brindley, ed., The Laws of Connecticut (Hartford, 1858; Reprint of 1673 edition), p.13 quoted in Edmund Morgan, The Puritan Family, p.66

Similar laws were passed in Pennsylvania and Virginia. See: Edith Abbott, "A Study of the Early History of Child Labor in America," American Journal of Sociology, v.14 (1908)

David Rothman, Discovery of the Asylum (Boston: Little, Brown and co., 1971) notes: "If parents neglected their duty, the community had the right and obligation to intervene..." p.14

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The introduction of the spinning industry in this country, and particularly the establishment of the first successful American factory by Samuel Slater in 1791, inaugurated a new stage of development. As the factory system grew, rural and immigrant families moved into New England mill towns where social and economic life revolved around the factory. Dubbed the "father of American manufacturing," Slater employed mainly children in his textile factory. Many of the children were recruited from almshouses and overseers of the poor. Under constant adult supervision, the children were paid from 12¢ to 25¢ a day, which was about one-quarter to one-half of adult wages. In Rhode Island, the only state with a large labor force in textile mills, and Massachusetts, whole families were used instead of adult labor exclusively. [2]

Throughout this early period, the prevailing notions of child labor associated it with patriotism and virtue, a convenience not overlooked by the founders of the textile industry and other businessmen. Alexander Hamilton, a strong advocate of government support for infant industries,

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2. See: Norman Ware, The Industrial Worker, 1840-1860 (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1964), p.75-76
See also: William Miller, A New History of the United States (NY:Dell Pub. Co.,1968), p.171; Walter Trattner, Crusade for the Children (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970) has an excellent introductory chapter summarizing this period; Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, Schooling in Capitalist America (NY: Basic Books, 1976) p.156

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thought that children would be more profitably used in manufacturing establishments than in agriculture, or anywhere else.[3] As an economist he was not far wrong and his attitudes were consistent with public opinion at the time.

The scarcity of labor provided children with opportunities to work, but as the industrial system developed and factories employed larger numbers of children, opposition to the exclusive use of children as workers began to emerge. By the War of 1812, there were numerous spinning mills, most of which employed a large percentage of children and unmarried women or adolescent girls. Children thus formed a reserve army of labor, and were in direct competition with working adults.

Opposition to child labor was expressed in terms of traditional notions of social responsibility for the education of children. Education, which had rested in the Colonial period on the family, or master of an apprentice, was transferred to the new capitalist entrepreneurs. In 1813, Connecticut required proprietors of manufacturing establishments to educate the children working for them. A similar law was passed in New Jersey in 1816, but was repealed three years later. These represent the first attempts to raise some of the difficult moral questions surrounding child labor, to distinguish child from adult

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3. Jacob Cooke, ed., The Reports of Alexander Hamilton (NY: Harper and Row, 1964)

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labor, and to define the obligations of the state to intercede in economic relations with a social mandate to protect children. In these early laws, moreover, a crucial linking occurred among the concern about child labor, educational reform and compulsory schooling. In addition, it became increasingly clear that "education was both the brake to declining social status and key to positions of leadership and influence in society."[4]

Legal restrictions on child labor fell into three categories: (1) required attendance at school, (2) limitation of hours at work, (3) minimum age requirements for working. Other categories of restrictions were added depending upon specific conditions, with particular reference to the operation of machinery. Such legislation reflected the increasing ambivalence and concern over the role of children as workers as industrialization and particularly factory production accelerated.

> The impact of industrialization - the division and specialization of labor in manufacturing processes - fell most heavily on child labor. By the early 1830's (if not before) children who ten or twenty years previous would have been apprenticed to a journeyman carpenter, printer or mechanic now found themselves hired out indiscriminately to a factory operator or mill owner. In essence, child labor was the initial form of assembly-line machinery.[5]

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4. Barry Gewen, "The Intellectual Foundations of the Child Labor Reform Movement" (unpublished PhD. dissertation, Harvard University, 1972), p.34

5. Stanley Schultz, The Culture Factory (NY: Oxford University Press, 1973), p.295

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The 1830's was a time of intense social ferment (including a major economic depression from 1837 to 1843) when a brilliant and diverse array of reform movements from abolitionism and educational reform to health foods and religious revivals sparkled across the American panorama. It is not surprising therefore to find a growing opposition to child labor per se at this time. Reformers and newly emerging labor organizations focused on the depressing effects of child labor on adult wages as well as demands for educational opportunities for their children. Massachusetts passed the first child labor law in 1836, indicating a growing public concern. Though more of an educational law, it was directed mainly towards working children and required that all children under 15 years of age attend school for at least three months during the year. By 1842 Massachusetts and Connecticut had passed laws which restricted the employment of children under 12 years of age to 10 hours a day in certain manufacturing establishments, mainly textile mills. Child labor laws appeared on the books of all New England states by the 1840's; seven states set minimum age requirements and twelve states fixed maximum hours for child labor. By the Civil War, nearly every northern state had laws restricting child labor.[6] These efforts to regulate child labor, however, were

6. This development was, in part, influenced by the massive influx of immigrants during the 1840's and 1850's.

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largely unsuccessful in practice until a sufficient number of adult workers existed to compensate for the loss of children from the workforce, until institutions were established to care for children who were not employed, and until sufficient public pressure was mobilized to demand such changes.[7]

Following the Civil War efforts on behalf of children were renewed. In 1874 the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children was established and the first Compulsory Education Law passed. These events reflected a growing recognition among reformers of child abuse in factories and represented an attempt to provide at least a minimum standard of social responsibility for children. Although not directly related to child labor, these

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7. In England the struggle over shorter hours for women and children was somewhat secondary, at least initially. "...at one bargaining stage the adult workers were willing to extend children's hours from 9 to 10 provided they could have a 10-hour day themselves. It need not be supposed the workers were deliberately concealing their motives. An early resolution of theirs minced no words: it was to equalize and extend labor by bringing into employment the many adult males who, though willing to work, were obliged to spend their time in idleness, while females and children were compelled to labor 10 to 16 hours a day. The last part of the statement was taken up by persons outside of the working class and added to the list of brute facts about child labor..." Sebastian deGrazia, Of Time, Work and Leisure, (NY: Doubleday & Co.,1964), p.183

In England, the Factory Act of 1833 prohibited full-time employment of children (9-13 years of age), but allowed "young persons" (13-18 years old) to work full-time.

The Elementary Education Act of 1870 provided an impetus for English reformers to organize working-class children since there were now legal restrictions from an educational side to child labor.

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developments were part of a growing movement which sought to focus public attention on children and their new position in society.[8] The compulsory education law, however, did little to change patterns of school attendance.[9] The lack of enforcement, the inability of schools to accomodate all children, and the resistance of businessmen and parents who depended on child labor mitigated any practical application of the new law. Important precedents, these developments suggest the nature of change taking place in childhood. Where education previously had been seen as a means of mobility, it became a mechanism for removing children from the labor force and a vehicle for assimilation. As Florence Kelley, a noted reformer, observed:

> ...the only way to deal effectively with the child labor problem is to keep all the children in school; to turn all the working children into school children.[10]

The enumeration and identification of children in the United States Census reflects the growing concern for children in the workforce. The Census did not cite children

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8. It is perhaps more than coincidental that these efforts on behalf of children occurred at the same time as the men's clothing industry (which led the state in annual output and in which children were used extensively) began to expand. See: Jesse Pope, The Clothing Industry in New York (Columbia: University of Missouri. University of Missouri Studies, Social Science Series, v.1 , 1905)

9. Another view argues that "compulsory education laws exploded school enrollments. The number of 5-18 year olds enrolled in school rose from 6½ million in 1870 to 15½ million by 1880." Henry Perkinson, The Imperfect Panacea (NY:Random House, 1968), p.70

10. Florence Kelley, "The Working Child," National Child Labor Committee, Proceedings (1896)

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(10-15 years old) separately as wage-earners until 1870. In that year it reported (albeit inaccurately) only 739,164 children (about 13.16% of the total child population) as employed. Why the Census did not enumerate children under 10 years of age is not known. The cut-off age for "children" was 15, indicating a definition of the upper limits of childhood, and a new periodization of childhood itself. According to the Census for the following decade (1880), 1,118, 356 children (about 16.82 % of the child population) were employed. In New York State, which had become an industrial center, 24,618 children (10-15 years old), 5,111 children (15-16 years old) and 4,911 children (under 10) worked in manufacturing, mining and mechanical industries. This represented only about 3% of all working children who were enumerated. Although the figures are clearly inaccurate, they do reflect a serious attempt to determine the extent and nature of children's labor. For example, the Census discovered that two-thirds of the employees in some manufacturing establishments surveyed in New York State, and five-sixths of the workers in cotton and woolen mills of Maine, Massachusetts and New Hampshire were women and children.[11]

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11. See: Ida Van Etten, The Condition of Women Workers (Washington: Globe Printing Co.,1890). In 1880 the Bureau of Statistics of Labor and Industry (established in 1878) showed 10,000 children employed (17.3% of employees) in 734 establishments. The Census for 1880 showed 12,152 children (under 16) employed (9.6% of all employees). The former source included returns from larger factories only, while the latter included both large and small establishments. The Factory and Tenement House Inspectors Report in Chicago cited 4,600 children under 15 working in factories and workshops in 1881; 6,900 such children in 1882.

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Such figures enabled reformers to present the problem of child labor from a national, rather than local perspective.

Moreover, as children became more prominent in the workforce, increasing attention was focused on the factories in which children operated, where they frequently came into contact with dangerous machinery, or worked under hazardous conditions resulting in poisoning, maiming of limbs, and various occupational diseases. Some estimated that over half of all reported accidents sustained by working children in New York State were caused by operating machinery.[12] Children (under 16) in Pennsylvania mines suffered 300 times as many accidents as men. In 1907 a factory inspection showed that children suffered 400% more accidents than men; in Michigan the figure was even higher, 450%.[13] A doctor in the South reported that he had amputated more than 100 fingers of children whose hands had been caught in machinery.[14] A crusade in support of a textile workers strike around Philadelphia in 1903 led by Mother Mary Jones, a militant labor organizer (especially for the UMW) was dramatically

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12. see Florence Kelley and Alzina Stevens,"Wage Earning Children" in Hull House Maps and Papers (Chicago & NY: Crowell, (1895)
For statistics on physical and mental deterioration of children see Factory Inspector's Report , Chicago, 1894

13. See: Owen Lovejoy, "Some Unsettled Questions About Child Labor",in American Unitarian Association, Social Science Series, Bulletin #5

14. See: B.O.Flower, :The Cry of the Children" Arena v. 28 (1902) , p.310 and Elinor Stoy, "Child Slavery," Arena, v.36 (December, 1906) p.584

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emphasized by exhibiting maimed children to bystanders along the route of the pilgrimage to President Roosevelt's Long Island home. [15] This was but the tip of an iceberg that began to emerge at the turn of the century.

Despite the efforts of reformers, however, little changed throughout this period in working conditions or attitudes towards child labor as a legitimate category of work. Prior to and throughout the 1880's it was generally agreed that the employment of children was not evil; only their employment below a certain age and in hazardous conditions was questioned.

> Labor, within certain limits, is good for the child giving it a wholesome moral discipline and training it for the business by which it is to earn its livelihood...[16]

One contemporary author reflected this acceptance of child labor by classifying children who worked into three groups: those who did business on their own, mainly newsboys and bootblacks, whom he referred to as little "capitalists"; telegraph boys and messengers who received a "sort of commission or percentage on the business which they do," whom he regarded as "agents"; and others, like office boys and cash boys who were paid a fixed wage to perform a particular kind of service, whom he referred to

15. Mary Field Parton, ed., Autobiography of Mother Jones (NY: Arno, 1969; reprint of 1925 edition) Chapter 10, "March of the Children." (16% of these textile workers were children under the age of 16.)

16. Eliza Andrews, "Education and the Employment of Children," Popular Science Monthly, v.32 (June, 1888)

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as "clerks."[17] As a category of work he made little distinction between adult and child labor. This characterizations did not include children who worked in factories or mills, an important omission in that it would not have fit his argument for child labor.

The critical economic importance of child labor appeared in the stiff resistance of manufacturers to restrictive legislation. In 1882, Elbridge Gerry, President of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and Dr. Abraham Jacobi, President of the New York State Medical Association drew up a bill to restrict child labor. It required children in factory work to have a doctor's certificate that he/she was healthy, that no child under 14 years of age be employed for more than 10 hours per day, that no child should be employed in mining, glassworks, rag sorting, or work with dangerous chemicals or drugs, nor be employed in the manufacture of cigars or tobacco products in their residences, nor use dangerous machinery. The bill was defeated when manufacturers lobbied in Albany, threatening to leave the state if the bill was passed. They also argued that passage would create hardships for poor families who depended on the work of their children for survival.[18]

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17. W.A.Linn, "Telegraph Boys," St. Nicholas, vol.6 (Dec.,1879)

18. Mary Stevenson Callcott, Child Labor Legislation in New York (NY:Macmillan, 1931)

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Gerry and Jacobi also proposed a bill which prohibited Houses of Refuge and State Reformatories from hiring out children in their care. The measure was vetoed by the legislature because the state argued it needed the money obtained from this form of indenture.[19]

Although organized labor had opposed child labor[20] (mainly because of competition, but also as a way of ensuring upward mobility for their children), it was more concerned about contract labor in prisons, wage demands, arbitration boards, creation of a federal bureau of labor (achieved in 1883), solidifying its own position among workers and with employers, and improving working conditions rather than supporting social legislation with regard to children. Thus, relatively little attention was paid to child labor in union writings, though the Knights of Labor and the American Federation of Labor (the major union federations) took a firm stand against the employment of children. In 1881 the Federation of Organized Trades' and Labor Unions included provisions for compulsory education and restrictions on child labor in its platform. The Knights of Labor also opposed child labor in its conventions of 1882 and 1884.[21]

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19. Jeremey Felt, Hostages of Fortune. (Syracuse University Press, 1965) p.8

20. In 1876 the radical WorkingMen's Party proposed that children under 14 be prohibited from working in industry. The Prohibitionist Party included a similar proposal in its national platform in 1872 - the first political party to do so.

21. Jeremey Felt, Hostages of Fortune, p.10

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The New York State Cigar Law of 1883 attempted to prohibit cigar-making in tenements. This was particularly important since many children were employed in this as a home industry and in factories. Samuel Gompers, as a former cigar-maker and head of the cigar-makers union, knew a good deal about the difficult conditions in which these products were manufactured. He estimated, moreover, that about half of the cigars produced in the city were made by tenement house workers, many of whom were children.[22] As evidence accumulated that methods and conditions under which cigars were manufactured in tenements facilitated the spread of communicable diseases, a concerted effort was launched to eliminate this work in tenements and center it in factories where it could be supervised. This shift was important to the organization of the union which had found it difficult to unionize tenement house workers.

The passage of New York's first factory act in 1886 indicated new attitudes towards child labor. The New York law prohibited the employment of children under 13 years of age in manufacturing establishments. Children under 16 years of age were required to present certificates of age, and no minor (under 18), or female under 21 was allowed to work more than 60 hours per week. With the introduction of

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22. John Spargo, The Bitter Cry of the Children (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1968; reprint of 1906 edition), p.193 Spargo noted that children were paid one-quarter of adult wages for the same work.

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this factory legislation some child workers were discharged. But, as in earlier efforts, the lack of adequate inspection and enforcement meant that there were more abusers of the law than adherents and these laws were ineffective. In the mid-1880's many factories still employed children under 14 years of age and sometimes as young as 4 years. To maintain their control over the children some factories, in Massachusetts for example, provided their own part-time schools to meet compulsory education requirements for children. It was not uncommon for these children to work 11 or 12 hours a day, 6 days a week during the busy seasons. The children worked in textile, jute and hemp mills, candy, cigar, paper box and pencil factories, in bakeries, making artificial flowers and feathers, in factories that made buttons, ink and other items. In some factories, the use of child labor was so integrated in the production process that machines were regulated to the physical height of children. Changing from child to adult labor therefore involved a change in the actual methods of production.

In 1889, three years after the New York law was passed, many of these factory laws were extended, due to the increased pressure from reform and labor organizations.[23]

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23. Ambiguity on the child labor issue was probably the result of fears that it would disrupt the apprenticeship system or prevent the labor of children in families where their income was needed. It was not uncommon for parents to falsify the ages of their children so that they could obtain working permits.

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Children under 14 years of age were prohibited from working in factories, and all children under 16 had to meet minimal educational requirements. All night work and work on dangerous machinery were prohibited for children, and all children under 16 had to have health certificates. In that same year, Michigan passed the first law restricting children under 14 from working more than 54 hours per week.

The impetus for these changes came not only from the accumulation of evidence compiled by state labor bureaus and conscientious factory inspectors, health officers and others, but also from the increasing numbers of children at work,[24] in the streets, or both. In 1890, about 1,130,000 children (5-14 years of age) lived in New York City, 832,500 of whom attended school (75%) and 297,500 of whom did not. About two-thirds of those who did not attend school were employed. The remaining children were not employed, or more likely were employed by their parents, relatives or friends in some form of home/tenement industry.[25] Although there is considerable doubt about these figures the reports themselves indicate a growing public concern which was reflected in the continuing restrictions imposed

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24. The New York Bureau of Labor Statistics provided an important source of information on child labor, describing the nature of working conditions and the extent to which children were employed.

25. Official statistics concerning working children before 1900 are grossly misleading, Even Commissioner of Labor, Carroll Wright admitted that they were "exceedingly unreliable." See also: Helen Campbell, Darkness and Daylight (Hartford: Worthington and Co, 1891)

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on child labor.

According to these Census Reports, the number of children employed rose throughout the last half of the 19th century, due to the expansion of industry and commerce. These figures peaked in the early 1900's and then declined sharply. This was due to legislative restrictions (and their enforcement) and compulsory attendance laws, pressure from public and private reform groups, as well as the increased availability of adult labor. These dramatic changes in the child labor force can be seen in the following chart:

	Numbers of children		%child 10-15		%of all workers	
Year	All occupations	Non-agricult.occ.	All occ.	Non-Agric	All occ	Non Agric
1870	739,164	238,779	13.2	4.3	5.9	3.7
1880	1,118,356	396,504	16.8	6.0	6.4	3.7
1890	1,503,771	591, 568	18.1	7.1	6.4	4.2
1900	1,750,178	686,213	18.2	7.1	6.0	3.7
1910	1,990,225	557,797	18.4	5.2	5.2	2.2
1920	1,060,858	413,549	8.5	3.3	2.5	1.3

These statistics from the Census Reports are highly suspect. The Report admits

> There is a great uncertainty as to the accuracy of a mass of information of the character taken by enumerators and special agents, who either do not appreciate the importance of investigation or find it impractical to devote the time to the inquiry necessary to secure good results.[26]

These figures counted only 120,885 children under 16 years of age in 1890 and 803,686 women 16 years of age and over,

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26. United States Bureau of Census, Statistics of Manufacturers, 1900 v.7, p.cxxv

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out of a total workforce of 4,251,613. In 1900 the Census counted only 168,583 children and 1,029,296 women, out of a total of 5,308,406. This meant that out of a total of 9,613,252 children 10 to 15 years of age inclusive in 1900 only 1.8% were wage earners. This is highly doubtful.

Taking into account the nature of the statistics, there appears to be a proportional decline in children among wage earners after 1900 although the actual number of children in the labor force increased until after 1910. The influx of women and adult immigrants would account for the lower proportion of children and indicate their relative decline as workers. Moreover, the span of ten years may be too wide to indicate actual trends that would appear in annual figures and might account for the differences at least until after 1900.

The year 1890 appears to be a peak point in the percent of children among workers in non-agricultural occupations. In the decades prior to 1890 the number of working children remained constant and in the following years it decreased. This decrease was not reflected in the percent of children in non-agricultural occupations until the following decade. Around 1900 the number of children in non-agricultural occupations increased though their relative position remained roughly the same. Though gains were being made in restricting child labor in non-agricultural areas, the number of children employed in all occupations increased.

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The most significant drop in child labor, according to the Census, was reported for younger children:[27]

Year	Number of children 10-13 years old Non-agric. occup.
1900	185,358 (about 27% of all children in this sector)
1910	95,841 (about 17% " " " " " ")
1920	49,105 (about 11.5%" " " " " ")

Moreover, from 1910 to 1920 there was a 72% drop in the number of children employed in mining and manufacturing. This decrease is significant when we consider the fact that in Scranton, Pennsylvania (where mining was probably a major occupation) 35% of Polish family income in 1911 was earned by children.[28]

According to the U.S.Census of 1900, 1,750,178 children (about 1 out of every 6) were working (60% on farms, 40% in industry) - and half of those in the latter category were immigrants. These figures may be far lower than the numbers of children actually working, particularly in urban areas where it was difficult to make such surveys. Nevertheless these figures indicate that while the population of the United States had increased by 50% from 1880 to 1900, the number of children (10 to 15 years old)

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27. Volume 8 of the 13th Census (1910), p.253 indicates that only 2.4% of wage earners were children under 16. Although there are figures for numbers of children in each occupation, they are obviously of little use. It lists, for example, only 336 children in the manufacture of artificial flowers; 40,221 in cotton goods, 9,942 in woolens, 11,111 hosiery, etc.

28. John Bodnar, "Immigration and Modernization: The Case of Slavic Peasants in Industrial America," Journal of Social History, v.10, no.1 Fall, 1976

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engaged in manufacturing and mechanical pursuits increased 113%; children engaged in trade and transportation increased 216%; and the number of girls working in trade and transport increased 627%.[29] This apparent dramatic leap in the number of children working in certain non-agricultural occupations occurred along with efforts to eliminate or reduce child labor.

These figures may not reflect an absolute increase, but a relative one. That is, children may have simply shifted from one sector of the workforce to another. To a large extent this indicates a shift to a more "modern" sector of the economy. The trend was regionalized, however. Although some states prohibited children under 13 years of age from working in textile mills, tens of thousands below that age (most of whom were not immigrants) still worked in southern manufacturing and mining establishments. Not until the turn of the century did this trend change. Between 1910 and 1920, child labor (10-15 years old) declined in mining (by 60%), in manufacturing (by 32%), in trade and transportion (by 20%), and in domestic and personal services (by 52%). To what extent these jobs were filled by adults or machines and new methods of production cannot be accurately determined. The number of children employed in the clerical field and in public services continued to rise. But these were generally children over

29. Owen Lovejoy, Child Labor (NY: American Baptist Pub. Society, 1912)

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the age of 10, representing a very small proportion of the workforce.[30]

Poised on the brink of rapid economic and technological development, industrialization during this period initially opened job structures to anyone regardless of age (except for certain occupations which were traditionally done by one age or sex). Technological innovations and an increasing division of labor intensified work routines, narrowing required skills and in some cases utilizing unskilled child labor more effectively.[31] As one contemporary observed:

> The increased use of so-called labor saving machinery the massing of men together in huge factories and the consequent subdivision of labor, has, by lessening the need of skill on the part of the workman, largely led to the employment of women who, in their turn are being rapidly supplanted by the still worse paid children.[32]

Of course, as industrialization advanced, more highly technical and skilled work was not within the capability of children. Yet, as Braverman recently argued, some work was simplified and routinized to the point where children could have easily done it. This change in the process of

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30. Census takers were instructed not to include "domestic errands or family chores" after school as an occupation. Children over 10 who earned a wage and contributed to family income "or appreciably assisting in mechanical or agricultural industry" were counted. See: John Cummings, "Occupations in the 12th Census," Journal of Political Economy v.13, (Dec., 1904-Sept., 1905)

31. "The acceleration of demand for cheap boy laborers was particularly intense during the early stages of industrialization, those marked by the concentration of workers into factories and the subdivision of tasks." Joseph Kett, Rites of Passage, p.146

32. Ida Van Etten, Condition of Women Workers, p.4

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work itself - reducing it to the level of a child's skill - was essential in denying autonomy to workers, exercising control over the workforce and creating an instrument of capital from human labor.[33] The effect of technological innovation on the use of child labor was observed by Florence Kelley, the first female factory inspector in Illinois:

> ...the sash-door-and-blind factory is enabling the stupidist little boy to turn out more carpenter work, of certain kinds, than the best graduate of the best trade school could do twenty years ago. The new steel frame construction is transferring to the girder-molder and the structural iron worker the task which fell to the mason from the days of the pyramids to the close of the Civil War. And finally, one of the most persistent and urgent duties of factory inspectors is finding and removing the little boys who get into the bakeries under the legal age of work and there with the help of the perfected equipment of the American Biscuit Trust, do that work of breadmaking which once fell to the housewife, but now escapes day by day from the adult baker to the little boy at the machine.
>
> ...The only skill required is that of the narrowest specialist; and this specialist can be replaced by a boy or a machine more easily than he can learn all the knacks to which the various parts of his trade have been reduced.
>
> ... Whether the raw recruit wraps caramels or carries boards from the buzz saw to the board pile, or pastes labels on tin cans, or performs any one of the stupefyingly simple manipulations which fall to the lot of the children, his occupation teaches him little else than instability; and he comes to manhood a worthless sight with all the energy and hope gone out of him and no skill acquired in any direction.[34]

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33. Harry Braverman, Labor and Monopoly Capital (NY: Monthly Review Press, 1974)

34. Florence Kelley, "The Working Boy," American Journal of Sociology, v.2 (1896)

See also: Helen Campbell, "Child Labor and some of its results," Chautauquan, v.10 (October, 1889)

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At the turn of the century a number of organizations, such as the National Consumers' League, founded in 1899, sought to enlighten public opinion about the condition and abuses of child labor, and influence the passage of legislation and the creation of agencies to protect children. Efforts to abolish child labor, particularly in the notorious textile mills in the south which employed thousands of young children, led to the organization of the first Child Labor Committee in Alabama in 1901. It was followed by a similar organization in New York in the following year, led by the well-known reformers Lillian Wald and Florence Kelley. In 1904 the National Child Labor Committee was established with branches in nearly every state and a list of supporters that included some of the most prominent and respected men and women of the time.[35] The NCLC carried out investigations of its own, engaged in a wide and effective strategy of public education and specific programs and was a major influence in the adoption of laws regulating child labor, especially in the area of manufacturing. There was however strong resistance among businessmen to these efforts

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36. See: Jeremey Felt, Hostages of Fortune, passim
In 1903 the New York Assembly passed the Finch-Hills Acts which restricted child labor in factories and mercantile establishments. This was the first street trades law in the country. In the same year the Assembly also strengthened the compulsory education law.

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to end child labor. In 1906, Southern cotton manufacturers and coal operators

> denied that they encouraged child labor and insisted that it was a result of shortages of labor in the South and the laziness of the parents of working children. All but the unionists agreed that child labor conditions in the United States were not as bad as they had been painted.[37]

Such attempts to shift responsibilities to the inadequacies of parents and/or vague or broad economic forces were characteristic of some reformers as well.

On the eve of the first World War, there was widespread acceptance of the principle that child labor should be eliminated and that children should be in school rather than at work. Seven states had child labor laws, nine had fixed the 14 year old age limit as a minimum for child labor, and ten more states had set the age at 15. Nineteen states established an 8-hour day for children under 16 years of age; 26 states made night work of children under 16 years of age illegal; seven states forbade the employment of boys under 21 years of age in night messenger service, and ten states made such employment illegal below the age of 18. Eleven states required some proof of age, or level of education in order to obtain employment. Many states appointed inspectors to enforce these laws, though there were not enough to meet the demand. In general, states tried to regulate, rather than eliminate children from the

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37. James Weinstein, The Corporate Ideal in the Liberal State (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), pp.27-28

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workforce, particularly through the use of compulsory education laws. This effort was related to changes in technology and the workforce itself (more adult workers were available) as well as institutional developments (such as schools, and settlements). Attempts to unify and strengthen the enforcement of child labor laws culminated in the Federal Child Labor Law (the Keating-Owen Bill) of 1916.[38] This law prohibited the shipment of goods produced without child labor standards and was administered by the newly established Children's Bureau. Although it was declared unconstitutional in 1918, this attempt to restrict child labor was evidence of the scope of a national commitment to the cause of child welfare. In 1924 a new child labor amendment finally passed Congress, though it failed to be ratified by the states. No effective federal legislation, however, was adopted and declared constitutional until 1941.

Without this broader context in which to understand the history of child labor reform, one can easily fall into explanations which fail to account for a dynamic process. One account of the child labor movement concludes:

> The answer seems to be one that is totally in keeping with the faceless and anonymous character of the period (bureaucrats, functionaries and administrators)... quietly performing their functions, sowing the seeds for important social reform.[39]

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38. Previously the Palmer-Owen Bill had been proposed in 1914.

39. Barry Gewen, op.cit., p.285

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To be sure, without dedicated and conscientious public officials and social reformers there might not have been the results that were finally achieved. But the answers lie within the emergence of new economic and social forces and the institutions that arose as a result. Industrialization, the concentration of manufacturing in factories, the need to create a disciplined workforce, the assimilation of vast numbers of immigrants are more fundamental factors in the creation of a new conceptualization of children as "little citizens" in school, rather than workers.[40]

The protection of children as an ideal and the abolition of child labor as a reality were essential ingredients in a vision of the future in which children would reap the benefits sown by their forebears. The success or failure of this venture, for reformers, depended on the ability of society to conserve its resources, allocate them properly and expend them wisely, with moderation and efficiency. In this, the utilization and training of children played a major part. Reformers constantly referred to this theme, urging the government to "preserve" and "protect" their uncertain citizens of the future.

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40. Jeremey Felt, Hostages of Fortune argues that economic and social forces over which reformers had little control best account for the success of the campaign to end child labor.

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To support their arguments against child labor reformers relied on four main assumptions: first, most delinquency was the result of"premature" work and/or independence (an indirect reference to the need for more discipline and control), and destroyed the physical, emotional and moral health of children[41]; second, child labor undermined fundamental social institutions , in particular the family, and ultimately threatened national survival; third, immigrant and working class parents encouraged or demanded that children work with little regard for the harmful effects;fourth, child labor represented a minimal contribution to family income and was not only exploitative but also (because it directly competed with adult labor) undercut adult wages.

To prove the validity of these assumptions and explain the sharp rise in juvenile delinquency figures a number of studies were carried out in specific occupations of children. The evidence which was accumulated indicated that working children, particularly those in street trades, were arrested more frequently and were more unhealthy. This was not an unusual conclusion since many children who needed to work were able to find work as newsboys. Their higher arrest record had less to do with character or behavior than visibility to and biases of authorities.

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41. "Boys...are often swelled into premature importance and insolence by the too early acquired independence of wage-earning." Edwin Markham, "The Hoe Man in the Making," Cosmopolitan Magazine, v.41 (1906) p.572

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Edward Clopper brought together an impressive set of figures for New York City on the relationship between delinquency and child labor. In the "parental" (truant) schools he found that 35% (80 out of 230) were newsboys, and 60% were street traders. At the Catholic Protectory, out of 590 boys (many of whom were Italian), 469 (80%) were in street trades and 295 (50%) had been newsboys for over three months. At the New York Juvenile Asylum, 31% of the inmates were newsboys, 60% were street traders; approximately the same figures were reported for the House of Refuge. Clopper concluded that the conditions of work (long hours, proximity to criminals, for example) led children down the"road to delinquency."[42]

A wider survey, which appeared two years later, compared delinquency figures in seven major cities. Of 4,839 delinquents (16 years old or under), 2,767 (57%) had been employed, 2,072 had never been employed. Working children were responsible for 5,471 (62.2%) of the offenses. Newspaper boys, bootblacks, errand and delivery boys, peddlers and those working in amusement resorts accounted for two-thirds of the boys (478 out of 664) interviewed. Of children under 12 years old, 22.4% worked; of those 12 and 13 years old, 42.4% worked; of those

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42. Edward Clopper, Child Labor in City Streets (NY:Macmillan, 1912), Chapters 5,6,7

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14 to 16 years old, 80.8% worked.

Although 20% of working delinquent boys came from what were described as "bad homes," nearly twice as many came from "good homes." Among non-working boys, only a slightly higher number came from "bad homes" than from "good homes." The number who came from "fair homes" remained the same in both categories.

Among working delinquent girls however, 37.8% came from "bad homes" and 31.4% came from "good homes"; among non-working girls, 48.8% came from "bad homes" while 22.1% came from "good homes."

These figures indicate that the influence of what was described as a "bad home" was far more influential on non-working boys and girls than it was for children who worked. Although working delinquent boys had the highest percentage of "good homes," they were also arrested more often in all probability than non-working boys.[43]

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43. See Anthony Platt, The Child Savers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969) for an examination of the common attitude among reformers that the poor were delinquent by the very nature of their economic exploitation. This conclusion was a corollary to the belief that delinquency was caused by inherited, genetic or general environmental problems. There was no attempt to link economic class with arrests. Child saving, in fact, was an attempt to preserve traditional values and expressed an anxiety about children of the poor and new immigrants by labelling certain kinds of behavior as delinquent.

According to one observer, one-tenth of all arrests and one-half of all arrests for gambling were made on the Lower East side. H.F.Freeman, "University Settlement," Lend A Hand, v.5. (1890)

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Locality	working children 10-15 years old: total	delinquent: number	delinquent: %		non-working children 10-14 years old: total	delinquent: number	delinquent: %
Indianapolis	1,123	75	6.67		6,324	199	3.15
Baltimore	5,909	170	2.87		19,093	126	.66
Boston	2,386	375	15.71		19,640	286	1.46
Newark	3,042	114	3.74		9,030	81	.89
Philadelphia	15,170	252	1.66	Boys	43,215	237	.55
Pittsburgh	3,718	244	6.56		12,222	188	1.54
Manhattan (1913)	1,628	614	37.68			1014	62.32
Indianapolis	566	8	1.41		6,629	21	.31
Baltimore	4338	22	.51		19,539	3	.02
Boston	1540	21	1.36		19,391	16	.08
Newark	2079	6	.28	Girls	9,302	4	.04
Philadelphia	11,235	38	.34		43,791	18	.04
Pittsburgh	1413	35	2.47		12,515	18	.14
Manhattan (1913)	164	68	41.47			96	58.53
Delinquent Home Condition							
Institution.home		14	.6			26	1.5
No home		55	2.5			24	1.4
Bad home		464	20.7	Boys		551	31.7
Fair home		812	36.3			535	36.4
Good home		895	39.9			505	29.0
total		1840			total	1641	
Institution.home		10	2.9			4	2.0
No home		15	4.4			2	1.0
Bad home		129	37.8	Girls		99	48.8
Fair home		80	23.5			53	26.1
Good home		107	31.4			45	22.1
total		341			total	203	

Fred Hall, "Child Labor and Delinquency" Child Labor Bulletin, v.3, no.3 (1914)

United States Bureau of Labor, Report on the Condition of Women and Child Wage Earners in the United States, Senate Document 645 (Washington: General Printing Office, 1913) Volume 8 "Juvenile Delinquency and its relation to Employment."

The information in the above table is based on Juvenile Court records for those cities. There is no indication of what was meant by the designations "good," "fair," "bad."

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These figures seemed to indicate a correlation between "premature" child labor and delinquency. The notion of "premature" work was a corollary to advances in medical research which documented the effects of occupational strain among young children whose muscle and bone, as well as emotional and general physical condition were most susceptible to damage. This emphasis on the "premature" burden, particularly fatigue from long hours and its effect on the nervous system was a crucial factor in convincing people that child labor was especially destructive.[44] Yet, there was little attempt to go beyond these conclusions and apply them to adult workers and their working conditions. The theme of "conserving" childhood and protecting children from the effects of modern industry did not seem to apply to those who became adults.

New conceptions of childhood included the notion that the state had an obligation to protect its "future citizens." This belief was linked to the extension of compulsory schooling. Thus, children who were workers became those who were preparing for work through schooling. In this way three important links were established with the movement to abolish child labor: first, the moral obligation of the state and individual parents, employers and those who dealt with childrens' services; second the national patriotic campaign to prepare a loyal citizenry and an industrial

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44. Elinor Stoy, "Child Labor," Arena, v.36 (Dec.,1906) pp.584-589

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workforce; and third, a blend of the two into a missionary-style vision which suggested that this would be a test of the democratic experiment and a benchmark of enlightened civilization. By identifying "progress" and modernity with the end of child labor, reformers had taken a large step toward the reconstruction of childhood and the world which children would confront.[45]

The issue of child labor per se, important as it was in itself, was thus presented in terms of a much wider concern - the future of America as a nation and as a culture. For reformers, the struggle to end child labor was part of a crusade to redeem America from the threat of internal disruption represented by immigrants, radicals and working people generally. In this sense, aside from the emotional response and propogandistic effect of their appeals as well as their practical concerns, their efforts to reform acquired religious and moralistic overtones.[46] The deeper struggle, one which lay at the root of modern capitalism, was over the extent to which the labor market would be allowed to function freely, whether there should be any limitations on the right of anyone to work, and the nature and function of the reserve army of labor.

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45. Raymond Callahan, Education and the Cult of Efficiency (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962) has shown how reformers were influenced by achievements in industrialization and social welfare in Germany.

46. A.J.McKelway of the NCLC saw the struggle between the factory/mill and the school over the uses of children as that of the "archangel and the devil" over the body of Moses.

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In view of the real need of poor families for the additional income brought in by children, the movement to abolish child labor ran into stiff opposition from parents. This issue was avoided by placing children in a unique position and by construing the campaign to "win the child" (as some referred to it) as a weapon to be used in the struggle by civilization against barbarism. In this sense, reformers dismissed the economic question and/or diverted attention to issues of delinquency, illiteracy and the spread of disease. To many, these conditions were not only a national embarrassment and source of concern, but also a sign of the possible degeneration and failure of American democracy. As one reformer wrote:

> The curse of this crime against the child lies not merely in the fact that it is sowing dragon's teeth to blight the civilization of tomorrow, but it is a crime against the little innocents that are thus doomed to slavery. 47

The reformers' focus on child labor allowed them to talk about abuses and tensions within society and served as a practical mechanism to shape social consciousness. If, as reformers postulated, child labor so crippled these future citizens that they were unable to sustain the social order, then it followed that the very foundations of the family and the Republic were in jeopardy.

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47. B.O.Flower, "The Cry of the Children," Arena , v.28 (1902) p.309

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> ...Beyond the individual interest there is a vast social interest at stake, the interest of American civilization, of human civilization, of all those generations that are to succeed us...The higher the type of living...the longer the period of time required for its maturing...The child must develop physically and to do so it must play; the child must develop mentally and to do so it must develop morally, and to do so it must be kept within the guarded precincts of the home.[48]

> Child labor begins its destructive tendency by disintegrating the family and ends with the destruction of the state.[49]

The movement to abolish child labor as well as the transformation of childhood itself required the legitimation of prolonged childhood socialized in institutions like schools. Whether expressed in terms of a concern for "citizenship" or the individual child, the emphasis on this theme reflected a deep and pervasive anxiety over the future of the country. Felix Adler, chairman of the NCLC, believed that the task of creating citizens was nothing less than a matter of sheer survival. "The nation," he wrote, "must defend its existence by means of an adequate citizenship."[50] In the same vein, Jacob Riis wrote:

> The immediate duty which the community has to perform for its own protection is to school the children first of all into good Americans, and next into useful citizens.[51]

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48. Felix Adler, "Child Labor, Menace to Civilization," Child Labor Bulletin, v.3, no.1 (1914)

49. A.J.McKelway, "Leadership of the Child," Annals v.32 (1908)

50. Felix Adler, "Child Labor..." Child Labor Bulletin

51. Jacob Riis, Children of the Poor(1892) in Francesco Cordasco, ed., Jacob Riis Revisited (NY: Doubleday, 1968) p.131

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An acute sense of danger thus seemed to prevail in attitudes of many reformers.

> Not only is the home threatened, but child labor strikes deeply at the nation itself.
> 52

> It is the privilege of civilization to save itself if it can, and it is the duty of those who stand on the watchtowers of civilization to be vigilant.
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It may be argued that reformers sought to recruit broad support for their programs and that their statements were not meant to be taken literally as a reflection of social values or reality. Indeed, the fact that they exaggerated indicates their sense that it was difficult to convince others.

Although protective notions concerning children are not unique to this period, the manner in which these ideas were raised suggests a new configuration of childhood. Relating the notion of citizenship to child labor constituted an attempt to ensure social stability, and an attempt to redefine the meaning of childhood and expectations of children. Not only did children need a certain amount of time for play and education, but, argued reformers, if they were to become whole human beings, such opportunities were

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52. Joseph Adelson, letter in Emersonian, v. 1 (June, 1911) p.3

53. George Dawson, "A Study of Youthful Degeneracy," Pedagogical Seminary, v.4 (1896-7), p.226
Dawson argued that this demanded eliminating "criminal," and "parasitical" youths.

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essential aspects of becoming an American. As Jane Addams wrote, the child had a right to

> a normal period of growth and his full chance to acquire such education as the state is able to provide; we may in time add to that that we are imperilling our civilization because at the moment of its most marked materialism we wantonly sacrifice to it that eternal spirit of youth...[54]

Some Progressive reformers sought to link these issues with broader questions of political economy.

> They have laws in New Jersey that would partially protect the children were they enforced; but since the government has passed so largely under the control of the trusts and monopolies, and the dominant political parties in the various states have become virtual tributaries of the barons of greed, these laws are too frequently...dead letters. [55]

The new concern for children's rights not only legitimated state intervention and child welfare programs, but also supported attempts to remove children from influences which might retard the process of assimilation, to "guard the child from undue contamination from a corrupted milieu."[56]

Some reformers confronted the issue of child labor by attacking it from a utilitarian perspective. Homer Folks,

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54. Jane Addams, The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets (NY:Macmillan, 1909)

55. B.O.Flower, "The Cry of the Children" p.306

56. J.R.Street, "A Study in Moral Education," Pedagogical Seminary, v.5 (1897-8) p.21

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for instance, argued that

> the one great business of childhood is to become fitted for life, and the moment we lose sight of that aim and permit child labor to become revenue-producing rather than instruction-providing, that moment it falls far short of its highest good.[57]

Generally, more critical questions concerning the nature of work were not discussed, but masked by phrases like "fitted for life," or "useful labor."

> The average home deliberately robs, consciously or unconsciously, its children of the opportunity for useful labor. The industrial system works its children but it does not always give children a chance at useful labor...[58]

Such analyses did not confront the problem raised by the emergence of an industrial society: the need for cheap labor and the important role of children in the workforce. It is true that in later stages of industrialization children participated less in the economic life of the country and postponed assuming obligations and responsibilities. But the problem, how to utilize human labor and especially the labor of children, remained. Most reformers focused on schooling as the most appropriate answer. But immigrant (as well as non-immigrant working class) parents were not as enthusiastic about their children attending school when their contribution to family income was a vital necessity. As Stephen Thernstrom points out, for many

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57. Homer Folks, "The Charity Side of Child Labor," Survey v.10 (1903)

58. Arthur Dean, "Child Labor or Work for Children," Craftsman, v.25 (1914)

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working class families occupational mobility often was achieved at the expense of children's education.[59] In contrast, reformers identified Americanization and occupational mobility with the elimination of child labor and the substitution of longer periods of schooling. They contrasted the debilitating effects of factory work, however, with the equally destructive environment of the street.

> The factory child was constantly under restraint and was kept continually at his task. The boy of the street was his own master - the master of his time, his labor, and his leisure - the master of his method, whether it is honest or dishonest, industrious or shiftless. The factory child worked often to a point of extreme exhaustion, while the street boy became exhausted not so much as a result of his labors as of the excesses that attended his irregular life.[60]

Although the environment and the work itself of children was somewhat ruinous to the health of working children, some writers recognized that "street training" provided valuable experience in the competitive world of business. However, reformers also believed that such street experiences contributed to lack of self-discipline, irregular work habits and a kind of independence which were antithetical to the demands of the new industrial society.[61]

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59. Stephen Thernstrom, Poverty and Progress (NY: Atheneum, 1972) pp. 157, 161

60. Myron Adams, "Municipal Regulation of Street Trades," National Conference of Social Workers, Proceedings, v.31 (1904)

61. Everett Goodhue, "Boston Newsboys," Survey, v.8 (Jan-June, 1902)
See also: Herbert Gutman, Work, Culture and Society (NY: Vintage, 1977)

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Conclusion

The evolution of child labor laws and compulsory education laws are inextricable and reflect a growing concern for the ability of the state to intervene in what had been considered the private right of individuals to sell their labor, and parental authority in the family. But the gradual elimination of most children from the work-force could not have been accomplished without institutions that could absorb them. This development was linked to a new definition of childhood, one which implied prolonged periods of dependency and economic marginality. The notion that American childhood meant that children were to be in school rather than at work, and the identification of this concept with progress and modernity helped establish its success. The creation of a broad middle class, the infusion of middle class values throughout the culture as part of the process of assimilation, and the notion that children were "little citizens" altered the nature of childhood and particularly affected immigrant and working class children and their families.

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III. CHILD LABOR: ITS NATURE, EXTENT AND TRANSFORMATION

Introduction

Work was a crucial aspect of the lives of working-class children. Whether working as independent (or semi-independent) street-traders (selling papers, peddling, bootblacking and delivering packages and messages), factory and store workers, or as part of a family production unit, working-class children made considerable economic contribution to their families.

The precise nature and extent of child labor is difficult to determine and varies from one occupation to another. Although child labor was considered by contemporary observers to be widespread the period between 1890 and 1915 shows evidence of a declining demand for child labor. Thus, their utilization in the economy, or their preparation for future roles - indeed, their usefulness or uselessness as workers - along with changes in the role and function of the family, provided new and different experiences for children which in turn affected their self images and ultimately the nature of childhood itself.

An understanding of the types of work and working conditions, and the transition to new forms of socialization and economic position of children gives some measure

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of their role in the broader social transformations. New models of childhood served as vehicles for assimilation and legitimized the assumptions that children had inherent rights to education and to freedom to explore. The new roles and expectations of children delineated not only what children should do, but who they were. The change from wage-work and/or apprenticeship to an unproductive status created a disruption of career patterns and a crisis in the modes of transition from child to adult.

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Children in Street Trades: Newsboys

Newsboys have always been romantic figures in American life. The persistence of that image is evident in "old newsboys" clubs that exist today. But the image of the newsboy was not constant. It changed with the times and it is instructive to observe such image-changes as they occurred in transformations from the modest "entrepreneur" to the pre-delinquent or helpless victim. This inconsistent image suggests a symbolic view of child workers. Although relatively few newsboys are represented as part of all child laborers, the participation of newsboys in structured work processes is of interest.[1]

It is difficult to determine the precise period at which children began to hawk newspapers in this country. It is unlikely that children were used extensively in this occupation until the printing boom of the 1830's, when the number of cheap newspapers jumped dramatically and a more extensive distribution system was required.[2] Calculating

1. In fact there were far less newsboys than the attention paid them would suggest and one wonders why reformers focused on them. Perhaps it was because these children were more ubiquitous or seemed to represent symbolically and actually a threat to society. "Newsboys" as a category also seemed to include children who were employed as "hucksters," peddlers of fruit, matches, flowers, selling ice water and lemonade on trains and soliciting for hotels, sweeping stores and streets and waiting on tables in restaurants. Thus, selling papers was only one of the many ways in which street children could earn a living.

2. The number of daily papers in this country is as follows:

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in "newsboy generations" (as one contemporary designated them) - most probably 10 to 15 years - an older newspaper vendor in the 1850's remembered a time of two previous generations when children were not selling newspapers as they were in the period just preceeding the Civil War.[3] From this account it would appear that children and adults shared this occupation. This gradually changed as more poor and often homeless children were forced to earn their livelihood on the streets. These children were looked upon with a mixture of modest admiration, at least in their ability to survive, pity, and sometimes foreboding. Typically, they were described as "cunning," "shrewd," "impudent, dull, sharp...honest, good natured, intelligent..."; their ability to make it on their own was a tribute to their ingenuity and persistence. They ate in "coffee and cake cellars" and slept on the steps of the newspaper offices in winter, or in the park during the summer. When a "steamer" arrived in port

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2. (continued) 254 in 1850, 387 in 1860, 574 in 1870, 971 in 1880, 1,610 in 1890, 2,226 in 1900, 2452 in 1904, 2,600 in 1909.
U.S.Bureau of Census, Historical Statistics of the U.S. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1960)

3. "When I began business in the newstrade," said Alick, "the times were good...but now there are so many in that way of living that we old men are often short, and find the times press on us. The newsboys have a good many hard specimens among them now...There are more daily papers now, but two generations ago (I count by newsboy generations) there were more weeklies in Ann Street."
This quote is from a diary in the possession of the Children's Aid Society. The author and date are unknown.

For an excellent study of newsboys see: David Whisnant, "Selling the Gospel News, or: The Strange Career of Jimmy Brown The Newsboy," Journal of Social History, v.5 (1971-72)

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they (and the older traders as well) gathered whatever money they could and bought newspapers from Europe which they then sold throughout the city. They could make from 4 shillings to $3 during these times - apparently enough to keep them going until they could find another job. In addition to peddling papers, they also sold matches and other small articles, carried baggage (called "baggage smashing") shined shoes, picked rags, bones and garbage and did whatever odd jobs they could find.[4] When not working they often matched or pitched pennies, or gambled in other ways. For amusement they attended a theatre where they could not only be entertained, but also make extra money by selling peanuts, hard-boiled eggs and other food during intermissions.

An early characterization of newsboys was provided by Elizabeth Oakes Smith in 1854.[5] She saw the newsboy as one who "...saw much, and knew how to keep a 'stiff upper lip.' He heard much and 'mum' was the word. The Newsboy is no gossip, no intermeddler..."; he respected the police, but would not betray his comrades. Basically law-abiding, his first loyalty was to himself, a virtue which Smith respected. She pictured newsboys as practical and down-to-

4. This meant that as an exclusive occupational category, "newsboy" may be inaccurate. Horatio Alger Jr.'s stories indicate that children did various jobs interchangeably. Alger's Paul the Peddler describes one street boy who was the sole support of his mother and siblings by selling small packages of sweets.

5. Elizabeth Oakes Smith, The Newsboy (NY:J.C.Derby; Boston: Phillips, Sampson and Co., 1854) Chapter 3

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earth, uninterested in the "fine dresses" but rather concerned with what was comfortable and warm. In this idealization, the newsboy appeared as a sort of anti-hero who defied convention, yet lived by a strict code of morality. The newsboy's"highest ambition after the support of mother and sister is to have money in the bank." It was unlikely that there was much surplus money left over, however, and such an observation tended more to legitimize the work, than to reflect an accurate picture. Smith's sentimental and admiring image was not far from that of "Ragged Dick," the newsboy portrayed 13 years later by Horatio Alger, Jr. In essence, Smith sought to create a metaphor for her own value system, as in the following example:

> Sam was one of the few who had reached this enviable position. He had supported an invalid mother for years and only the Supreme God of love knew the sufferings he endured that he might do this - the hungry days he had passed that she might eat - the toil and cold that had searched every fibre of his frame to lodge in each its peculiar pang, that the poor distressed, dying mother might not want.[6]

Here were all the virtues essential to success: industry, thrift, self-sacrifice, practicality, honesty and self-reliance. But this romantic image portrayed by Smith belied much deeper social problems: economic exploitation, family disintegration, injustice.

A similar attitude was expressed by Charles Loring Brace, a founder of the Children's Aid Society. He wrote

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6. Ibid., p. 25

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that newsboys had a sense of humor and were "always ready to make fun of their own sufferings." Despite the corrupting influences of the work and environment, Brace observed that newsboys had a code of honor. "He will not get drunk; he pays his debts to other boys and thinks it is dishonorable to sell papers on their beat." Yet, he felt that this "happy race of little heathens and barbarians" also had "principles which were no better than a savage." He saw them as "street-rats who gnawed at the foundations of society," and who were to the world around them "as Indians to civilized Western settlers."[7]

Such ambivalent views of newsboys reflect the emotional background which aided in the transformation of this form of child labor and its relationship to society as a whole. Brace, like others who had contact with these children, retained some idealistic notions about them, but was already beginning to question this kind of work. The apprehension which was raised by strikes and other manifestations of opposition to the social and economic order were related with greater regularity and emphasis to the children of the working poor, those very elements of the population who threatened to undermine society from within. Indeed, reformers may have feared the direct influence of radical movements on children.

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7. Charles Loring Brace, The Dangerous Classes of New York (NY: Wynkoop and Hallenbeck, 1872)

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This problematic attitude toward newsboys continued through the 1870's and 1880's, and is evident in the work of Horatio Alger, Jr., and others who saw in them the basis for successful men of business - or at least idealized them as such.[8]

Turning to an examination of the work of newsboys at the turn of the century, we find that the United States Census for 1900 listed only 6,000 newsboys in the entire country; there were probably that many in New York City alone. The inaccuracy of this figure is due to the fact that it was based on the number of licenses which were issued to newsboys. It would appear that there was a greater effort to regulate newsboys than other categories of work, perhaps because of their independence and elusiveness. It is not known whether the licenses issued to bootblacks and peddlers were through an adult who supervised them, or were given to the individual child as a worker. Obviously only a small number of those children who worked were accounted for by these procedures. In 1909, Cincinnati issued 1,951 licenses to sell papers. This represented about 15% of the number of boys between the ages of 10 and 13 in the city.[9] In 1910, Boston issued 2,664 licenses to newsboys, peddlers and bootblacks who were between 11 and

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8. Such boys lived at home in more traditional or "respectable" settings, or had come from such environments - an important factor in explaining their moral behavior and their ultimate success. See Alger's Ragged Dick (1867), Fame and Fortune (1872), Rough and Ready (1869)

9. Edward Clopper, Child Labor in City Streets (424 were 10 years old; 466 were 11; 539 were 12; 522 were 13)

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13 years of age (2525 licenses were issued to newsboys, 114 to bootblacks and 25 to peddlers - indicating a preference for selling newspapers, or a greater enforcement in this area).[10] About 75% of the boys who received licenses were in school; the remainder had left school to sell papers for a livelihood. At the same time (1910) a survey of Chicago public schools revealed that 12% of the 1st grade and 65% of 5th graders engaged in some form of street work (probably newspaper selling, shoeshining and peddling) ranging from 20 to 50 hours a week. This does not include work done by children in the home. Such figures demonstrate that most children, even those in school, worked at least part-time and did so at an early age. In New York City, the Street Trades Bill of 1903 restricted boys under 10 and girls under 16 from selling newspapers without a license. This law, however, was difficult to enforce, at least in part because schools were unable to enroll thousands of children, and because the income from child labor was often essential to family survival. The schools were already operating on half-days to accomodate those they had already accepted. Given this situation, the police were often not eager to arrest children whom they found working on the street. Moreover, the 1903 law which required newsboys to carry a badge sold by the city was of dubious value. In fewer than 30% of 100

10. In Missouri little attention was paid to newsboys because of the opposition of newspaper lobbyists. See: Kansas City Department of Charities, Reports and Missouri Childrens' Code.

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cases investigated did newsboys live at the address listed on their application. Concern over this law was voiced by many parents and organizations. The magazine Jewish Charity, for example, argued that if children were not allowed to work, an additional burden would be placed on their parents and "those who have to deal with delinquent children." A suggestion was made that if such legislation was enforced there should be enough notice given to find alternatives.[11] This indicates the opposition of immigrant and working-class parents to reformers and demonstrates the importance of child labor to family income.

The attempt to regulate newsboys by requiring them to have badges was tried in a number of cities with little success, largely because badges could be passed between boys. Mrs. Elmer Bissell, a member of the Mayor's Commission on Child Labor (in New York City) noted that in Rochester, New York policemen could sell badges for 25¢, but, as in New York City, many newsboys did not have a badge and didn't bother to buy one. In an attempt to document and expose the abuses of newspaper boys, reformers travelled the streets, noting children whom they thought should be in school and reporting them to the police and school authorities. The schools threatened to take away the badges of truant boys if they continued to miss school, but this did not seem to be effective. The fact that badges were issued by schools

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11. Jewish Charity, v.1, no.1 (October, 1903)

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involved the school directly in attempts to regulate child labor and indicates the close relationship between the abolition of child labor and compulsory schooling.[12]

In one typical instance, two 10-year old boys, Nathan Goldstein and Edward McCarthy, who lived in Brooklyn, were found selling papers near Borough Hall in Manhattan at 11am (i.e. during school hours). After repeated warnings, Goldstein was arrested and arraigned in Children's Court and charged with selling papers contrary to the law. His father, Louis, was also brought into court and warned that the boy might be sent to an institution if he refused to comply with the law.[13] Such interventions by courts may have been necessary to support the weakened authority of parents who felt that they could no longer control their children. Parental weakness or indifference was also used by reformers to justify such interventions.

Although the average newsboy was about 12 years old, most began working when they were 6 or 7 years old. A study prepared for the Association of Neighborhood Workers (fused with

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12. These references were found in letters of August and May, 1908 in the Municipal Archives of New York City.

In 1913, the minimum age for selling papers was 10; in 1914 the age was raised to 16. From January to April, 1908 1458 badges were issued by the Superintendent of Schools in New York City.

13. From a letter of May, 1908 found in Municipal Archives.

Selling papers may have been a ruse used by boys to avoid school for it seems unlikely that parents would approve of truancy unless it was necessary to help support the family.

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the Child Labor Committee) found that of 100 newsboys, two-thirds were 12 years old or under, one-third were under 10 years of age, and 8 boys were 6-8 years old.[14] The younger boys did not work as long hours as the older boys, and the older boys had the best corners and thus made more money. Gradually the somewhat random selling, particularly in front of theatres, in saloons, and around business establishment was regularized. In part this was due to changes in the distribution process itself, and also by the increasing enforcement of licensing laws and compulsory schooling, all of which restricted most newsboys to work before or after school.

There were five kinds of newsboys during this period: those who sold on corners independently, those who sold for corner boys on salary, those who sold for corner boys on commission, those who sold for themselves for whatever they could earn, and those who had specific delivery routes.

If a boy sold on a corner, he purchased the right to sell exclusively on that site. In Chicago, a system of routes was established by delivery wagons which employed delivery boys on a commission basis. In general the work of selling papers was subcontracted and systematized by circulation managers who were employed by newspaper companies.

Papers were distributed in various ways. There was a distributing room where boys would wait for the latest

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14. "Child Labor Reform in New York," Survey v.10 (1903) pp.52-55

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edition, They would return from selling between 12 and 3 am to "check in" their remaining copies and go home, or sleep in the distributing room on iron tables or on the floor, covering themselves with papers or burlap in the winter and wait for the morning edition. This was a typical or customary characteristic of boys who had no definite corner.

Those boys who had special corners could return one copy to the company for every ten they purchased; independent sellers could not return any unsold copies, except for "hustlers" (very good sellers) who were allowed to return all unsold copies. In Boston, beginners were called "strikers" and were employed on a commission basis. They were allowed to keep 1¢ for every 4¢ they collected.[15] If a boy worked for an older boy or an adult who owned a corner stand he had to pay a kickback for the right to sell papers there.

Sometimes boys were informally assigned to a specific corner by an older boy, called a "boss" who"owned"the rights to sell there

> and bought the papers at 2 for every 3; that is, for every 2 1¢ papers he paid for, he received 1 free. That was his profit. My boy was hired for the hours between 4:30 to 7:30 on all school days at a wage of 60¢ a week. Here then was the capitalist at the beginning of things.[16]

The boys could also speculate on papers by buying leftovers at 1¢ for 4 and selling them at full price.[18]

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15. Edward Clopper, Child Labor on City Streets

16. Jacob Riis, "The New York Newsboy," Century, v.85 (Nov. 1912-April, 1913), p.252

17. W. Johnson, "Boys Lodging Houses in New York," Lend A Hand, v.8 (1892)

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Those they could not sell could be returned to the office at 1¢ for every two. This kind of entrepren eurial activity led some observers at the time to refer to newsboys as "little merchants" or "small capitalists" who, with proper guidance, might become useful citizens and workers.[18]

Another aspect of the way newsboys worked (which was probably typical of other large cities) was described by William Hard in a somewhat sarcastic way. In his view the newsboy was a sort of businessman who

> occupies in Chicago a legal position superior to that of the president of a railway company. The president of a railway company is only an employee. He receives a weekly, a monthly, or at least a yearly salary. The newsboy does not receive a salary. He is not an employee. He is a merchant. He buys his papers and then resells them. He occupies the same legal position as Marshall Field & Co. Therefore he does not fall within the scope of the child-labor law. Therefore no rascally paternalistic factory inspector may vex him in his pursuit of an independent commercial career.[19]

William Hard made a careful and detailed observation of the mechanism of newspaper selling. He found that the "corner-man" had exclusive rights to an intersection which could be sold for as little as $5 or as much as $1500, depending on the location. This proprietary right was based on the policy of newspaper companies to recognize only one agent per corner. In Chicago, newsboys dealt with a corner-man who bought the Chicago Daily News, for example, at 60¢ per 100 copies, and then handed them out to newsboys who sold them for a

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18. Ibid., In another example: "Here was a boy, a true entrepreneur, a possessor of capital in his pocket; an owner of capital goods under his arm." Emersonian, v. 3 (June, 1915) p.14

19. William Hard, "De Kid Wot Works at Night," Everybody's Magazine, v.18 (January, 1908)

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commission of from 5¢ to 20¢ per hundred copies. If the corner man had newspapers left over when he was ready to leave, he might bargain with some of the boys for the sale of the remaining copies at a discount price. The boys were then on their own and kept whatever money they made.

Hard noted that Italian newsboys seemed to be more prevalent than Jewish, Irish, or Negro boys.[20] He attributed this to the stereotype that Italians were good fighters and bargainers, and that they were willing to work when others would not. Although Irish boys were also good fighters and sellers, they would abandon their corners (according to Hard) when they had made as much money as they needed, or at odd times, like Sunday morning. Hard noted that Irish newsboys did not like to work on Sunday which may have been due to their required attendance in church.[21]

> The Ewing Street Italian colony furnishes a large contingent to the army of bootblacks and newsboys; lads who leave home at 2:30 am to secure the first edition as it appears, and filling the intervals with blacking boots and tossing pennies until in the winter half of the year, they gather in the Folk Street Night School to doze in the warmth or torture the teacher with gamin tricks acquired by day. For them, school is a"lark" or a peaceful retreat from parental beatings and shrieking juniors at home during the bitter nights of the Chicago winter.[22]

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20. A study made at the time by Hull House found that out of 1000 newsboys, 211 were Italian, 208 were "Americans," 180 were Germans, and 113 were Irish. Frances Kelley and Alzina Stevens, "Wage Earning Children," in Hull House Maps and Papers (1895)

21. The role of the church was more significant among the Irish than Italians in part because the clergy was predominantly Irish, but also for specifically ethno-social reasons. Also, predominantly Irish teachers could exert influence on Irish children and their parents.

22. Kelley and Stevens, "Wage Earning Children" op.cit.

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Among Italians (according to Hard) the case of one newsboy, "Jelly" (nee Cella), was typical. His father dug sewers and gas-mains during the warm months; his mother made buttonholes in coats and sewed vests and pants in the winter months. Jelly had begun selling papers at the age of ten for his uncle who owned a corner on Chicago's West Side. The boy worked from 5 am until 8 am, and then was supposed to go to school. However, he was not a good student and was truant much of the time.[23] When he was 15 years old, due to warfare between rival sellers, he was transferred to another corner in the Loop which was owned by his uncle. He worked in the morning hours on the West Side, but went to the down-town corner in the afternoons and evenings. The reason for this may have been to allow the boy to stay in the same neighborhood as the school at which he was enrolled, or perhaps because he might be more easily arrested for truancy while working in the business district. In the Loop he sold papers on a commission basis until 6:30 pm (i.e. after normal working hours), and afterwards was allowed to sell independently. During the periods between work, he went to nickel theatres, penny arcades, or "alley restaurants."[24] On Saturday night, the big night for newspaper sales, he dressed up his small sister in ragged clothes and bought a bundle of carnations for her to sell in front of the Opera

23. Each time he was returned to school by the truant officer the officer received a bonus of $1.

24. Sunday papers which came out on the previous night could be sold until 3 or 4 am and apparently a newsboy could make

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House while he sold papers nearby. Out of her net profit of about 35¢ Jelly took 30¢. Hard concluded: Jelly was being rapidly Americanized."

Hard, like other reformers, was confronted with the practical implications of the crusade to end, or at least regulate newspaper selling by children: did these children contribute significantly to family incomes? Hard referred to a study made by a probation officer in Chicago, Julius Wengierski. In his work with the newly established Juvenile Court, Wengierski had access to the homes and family backgrounds of fifty street children who had been arrested. According to his report, in only two cases the child's earnings were absolutely necessary. The rest sold papers because they wanted to buy shoes, clothes, musical instruments, etc. Many of the children wanted to have money to go to the movies or "theatorium."[25]

Reformers carried out studies intended to show a high correlation between delinquency and work as newsboys. Indeed, most if not all newsboys probably engaged in some "delinquent"

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24. (continued) as much money selling between 11 pm Saturday and 11 am Sunday as he could during the rest of the week. In part this was because he was selling independently. For attitudes of Italian parents towards child labor see Humbert Nelli, The Italians in Chicago (NY: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 67-70 and Virginia Yans McLaughlin, Family and Community (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977)

25. Moreover, the sample is probably unrepresentative; either the evidence is unusual or twisted, or the childrens' responses were not truthful.

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activity, for the environment itself was conducive to such behavior. Gambling and fighting were normal parts of a newsboy's life. Newsboys were forced to fight in delivery stations and on corners when other newsboys tried to encroach. Supply drivers and delivery men were known to sexually abuse the boys who worked under them. Circulation assistants and distribution bosses would take advantage of them. The boys might be attacked by other newsboys, or gangs, and have their money and papers stolen. In order to sell their papers the boys went to hotels and whore houses. They might also be engaged in illicit tasks. To earn tips they had to know where to direct visitors and others seeking whore houses, gambling and vice dens. As a result, they were looked upon as "embryo professional criminals."[26] When Scott Nearing, who investigated the condition of newsboys in Philadelphia as Secretary of the Pennsylvania Child Labor Committee, tried to photograph some of the boys, they refused because they were afraid of being arrested if their pictures were printed.

Reformers also argued that the health of newsboys was poor. At the JohnWorthy School in Chicago and the Rochester Industrial School, both reform schools, over one-third of the newsboys had a venereal disease.[27] Of the 200 newsboys in New York City who had been in business over 18 months, nearly three-fourths had some disease, over 36% had chronic indiges-

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26. Scott Nearing, "Newsboys at Night in Philadelphia," Survey, v.17 (October-March, 1906-1907)

27. Myron Adams, "Municipal Regulation of Street Trades," National Conference of Social Workers, Proceedings, v.31 (1904)

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tion, 24% had stunted growth, and 24% had throat trouble.[28] These studies assumed that the higher rate of disease was due to the nature of their work, especially the long hours at night, as well as the proximity to prostitutes and homosexual attacks. A comparison of Jewish and non-Jewish newsboys showed that the former had 14% more cardiac disease, a higher incidence of other diseases, complaints of nervousness and flat feet.[29]

A later study by Maurice Hexter of Cincinnati newsboys revealed that only 4% of the newsboys came from families in which the income of the family, exclusive of that supplied by the newsboy, was insufficient to provide that family with a minimum normal standard of living. Moreover, the study confirmed earlier assumptions that the occupation itself was a source of delinquency. A third of the boys brought into the Court of Domestic Relations (which handled juveniles), and a third of the boys at a juvenile reformatory, "Opportunity Farm," were newsboys. There were twice as many truants among newsboys as non-newsboys. Of the newsboys who attended school, 54% were retarded in school progress (compared with 40% generally); 83% (1,174) of the boys interviewed had both parents living; almost 14% had a deceased father. The same pattern existed generally for Milwaukee, St. Louis and Chicago. Only one child in seven

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28. "The Child in the City," Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit (1911), p.454
29. Myron Adams, "Municipal Regulation..." op.cit.,

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was the child of a widow. Thus, the average newsboy lived at home with his parents (unlike an earlier period when the pattern was less stable). The average weekly income of the boys was $1-$2, hardly enough to represent a substantial contribution to family income, although enough perhaps to make some difference in what families could buy.[30] The motive for work was both to earn enough money to help the family, as well as to provide for individual needs. In an earlier study of the same city, nearly identical statistics appeared for those who lived with both parents (82%) and those who had lost a father (14%). However, in the earlier study about 20% of the newsboys earned a significant proportion of the family income.[31] A similar study in New York City at about the same time showed that in 453 families surveyed, 116 (25.6%) actually needed the earnings of their newsboy sons. According to William Hard, of 1000 Chicago newsboys investigated, 80% lived with both parents, 10% had lost their father, 7.5% had lost their mother, and only 2.6% were orphans.[32]

In Cincinnati, Jews were disproportionally represented with 29.5% of newsboys being Jewish, while the Jewish proportion of the population was only 6%; 24.4% of the newsboys

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30. Maurice Hexter, "The Newsboys of Cincinnati," Helen Trounstine Foundation, Cincinnati, Studies v.1, no.4 (1919) Edward Clopper (Child Labor in City Streets) has almost identical figures for newsboys in Cincinnati in the previous decade.

31, Florence Kelley, "Some Ethical Gains Through Legislation," Survey, v.26 (1911); and Clopper's almost identical figures.

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were Catholic and 46.1% were Protestant. Of the 1,900 newsboys surveyed in Cincinnati, 86.9% were native born, 20% were black; in Baltimore, 80% were native born;[33] and in Boston, 70% were native born. Black newsboys were represented in equal proportion to their numbers in the population (about 8%).[34] From this it would appear that selling newspapers was either not something that foreign-born children did to any large extent, nor that many of the native-born children had foreign-born parents. Rather than allow children to sell papers, an alternative was to find work for children in homes and businesses where they were supervised. In some cases, after-school activities were used, such as Hebrew schools for Jewish children and language schools for specific ethnic or nationality groups.

Thus, two distinct patterns existed: the newsboy might be an "American" living with both parents, or he might be a "tramp in the making," rootless, irresponsible and on the verge of crime. Ernest Poole, a muckraking novelist, found some of these boys sleeping in doorways, under bridges, or wherever else they were able to find shelter. When they wanted to travel, or escape, they simply climbed underneath a freight train, lodged themselves on one of

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32. William Hard, op.cit.,

33. Edward Clopper, "Children on the Streets of Cincinnati," Annals of the American Academy, v.32 (1908)

34. From the figures on Jewish newsboys it is obvious that many children of immigrants are included in this figure for native born.

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the supports near the axle, and "rode the rods" to wherever they wished. If they wanted to go overseas, they could find a job as cabin boy, or stow away.[35]

In one of his rendezvous, Poole met five ragged boys from Philadelphia in a lodging house and learned how they had managed to survive. When they arrived in the city they were given credit at a newspaper wagon and had sold enough papers to stay two days. For 35¢ between them they got a place to sleep and a 2¢ bowl of coffee in the morning.

> In the streets near Newspaper Row I found over 100 sleeping. Other hundreds sleep in stables, condemned buildings, back rooms of low saloons, and the halls of tenements...Their meals are mostly at lunch counters and in certain cheap restaurants where dice can be used on the sly...[36]

By the eve of the first World War, however, this style of life was rapidly changing. Jacob Riis could still write of the "wanderlust" of the newsboys, but a definite shift had occurred. Previously the newsboys had been between 5 and 14 years old; now they averaged 17 or 18 - with most of the younger children completely eliminated from this work. Riis inquired at lodging houses to find that most of the boys there were from other cities.

> There are not a half a dozen newsboys in the house today, and its name might as well be changed. Less than one third belong in New York.[37]

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35. Ernest Poole, "Newsboy Wanderers are Tramps in the Making," New York Post, Jan.26, 1903, and Survey, v.10.(1903)

36. Ernest Poole, "Child Labor Reform in New York," Survey (1903) pp.55-56

37. Jacob Riis,"The New York Newsboy," Century v.85(Nov.1912 - April, 1913) pp.248-249

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He further found that the newsboys of an earlier time who thronged in alleys at the steps of the newspaper offices, who slept by steam pipes, or on manhole covers for a "hot-pipe nap" waiting for the new editions to come out no longer existed, at least not in the way they had.

> In his place has come the commercial little chap who lives at home and sells papers after school hours, sometimes on his own account, but oftener to eke out the family earnings with what may be the difference between comparative comfort and abject poverty...He has become a cog in the industrial wheel, small but indispensible. Like all businessmen in our day, he is being concentrated, capitalized. From an atom he has become an asset, quite without his assistance. 38

This transformation took place not because of a change in ethnic make-up of newsboys, but rather as a result of a flood of sensational "yellow journalism" as well as changes in the production and marketing of newspapers. Instead of one afternoon edition, a half dozen were printed. As a result it was impossible for newsboys to pick up their papers downtown when each edition came out, for that would have taken too long. Instead, delivery wagons and automobiles carried the editions uptown, and threw them off at corners to waiting newsdealers and newsboys. In addition, cities were expanding and populations becoming more mobile and literate, thus necessitating the extension of a more complex distribution system to larger numbers of people over a wider area.

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38. Ibid., This attitude contradicts others who maintained that work as a newspaper boy represented an insignificant contribution to family income.

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Similar conditions existed in Boston, where two types of newsboys existed: those who sold on the streets and those who had specific routes and regular customers. The latter were employed by a small newsdealer, or occasionally by a boy who went from house to house. Generally, the latter group was recognized as a "better" class of boys. Street boys were generally under 14 years of age and in school. Only smaller boys sold on the street because profits were so low there and because the older boys could obtain more "respectable" work in stores and factories which had some promise of advancement. Jewish and Irish boys were the two most prominent nationalities among Boston newsboys; the former lived in the North End and the latter in the South End and the suburbs. Wages for this work were apparently quite high, with a maximum of from $6 to $8 per week.

> All newsboys make fifty percent on their sales; that is, they buy two-cent papers for one cent and then one cent papers for half a cent. With this margain of profit the average boy will clear from thirty to fifty cents a day.[39]

In Buffalo a similar pattern existed. Out of a total of 700 newsboys, 328 were interviewed. About one-third were Italian (largely among the younger boys; 83% (273) were under 14 years of age and 25% (84) were under 10. A good deal of adult work was seasonal, and often enough could be earned during peak work periods to sustain the family

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39. Everett Goodhue, "Boston Newsboys, How they live and work," Survey, v.8,(Jan.-June, 1902)

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during the longer periods of unemployment. During such times, the small income from selling papers or shining shoes (about 22¢ per day in 1903) was an important consideration.[40]

A variety of attempts were made to enlist newsboys in their own regulation. In some cases, juvenile authorities established special procedures for children. The Juvenile Court in Boston, for example, established a "Newsboys' Court" largely to handle children arrested for violating the licensing regulations. In 1909 alone, 300 newsboys were brought before this court. The newsboys also set up their own "court" to enforce compliance with the law. This more informal process was supported by the Boston School Committee, probably as part of their attempt to deal with the problem of truancy.[41] In November, 1912 a Milwaukee Newsboys' Republic was established under the auspices of the State Industrial Commission. The specific purpose of the Republic was to involve the boys in the enforcement of a new Street Trades law which was more restrictive. The Republic had a constitution, officers and other forms of self-government, including a Newsboys' Court.[42] The

40. NCLC, "What of the Newsboy of the second cities" Survey, v.10.(April, 1903);see also Virginia McLaughlin's excellent and detailed study of child labor as it was related to family structure in Buffalo among Italians.

41. Edward Clopper, Child Labor on City Streets

42. "Milwaukee's Newsboys' Republic," Outlook v.CV (1913)

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establishment of such "Republics" was probably modeled on the experiment of William George. George had first established a Fresh Air Colony in 1892 in Freeville, New York. In 1895 he transformed this into the famous George Junior Republic where boys (most of whom were "delinquents") were taught the principles of "democracy in action" based on the model of a New England town meeting. George was one of the few reformers who sought to create forms of self-regulation and peer group pressure to enforce discipline and order rather than external adult supervision. Guided by his belief that individual effort could achieve success, he followed an anti-institutional approach to juvenile reform which allowed for failure as well as success.[43]

The formation of quasi-labor organizations among children was known during the 1870's at least among bootblacks. At that time bootblacks were generally older than newsboys (from 10 to 16 years old), but often boys engaged in both occupations at different times of the day. The bootblacks carried a "kit" of box and brushes and were often employed by criminals for use in burglaries.

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43. see Jack Holl, Juvenile Reform in the Progressive Era (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971)

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> The bootblacks are said to form a regular confraternity, with fixed laws. They are said to have a "captain" who is the chief of the order, and to pay an initiation fee of from two dollars downwards. This money is said to find its way to the pockets of the captain, whose duty it is to "punch the head" of any member violating the rules of the society. The society fixes the price of blacking a pair of boots or shoes at ten cents, and severely punishes those who work for a less sum. They are at liberty, however, to receive any sum that may be given them in excess of this price. They surround their calling with a great deal of mystery and those who profess to be members of the society flatly refuse to communicate anything concerning its place of meeting or its transactions.[44]

In 1901 about 200 older newsboys in Boston formed a federation in an effort to restrict competition by eliminating boys under 14 years of age from selling papers. Demands were also directed at the companies.

> The union also hopes to oblige the big dailies to take back all unsold papers at the rate of one for one. This will take away all the risk on the part of the newsboy.[45]

A few years later, in Cleveland, the Educational Alliance sponsored a "Newsboys' and Bootblacks' Union" - most of whose members were Jewish.[46]

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44. James McCabe, Jr., Lights and Shadows of New York Life (NY: National Publishing Co., 1872) p.740 According to Horatio Alger, Jr., The Young Outlaw; Adrift in the Streets (1874), Sam, a street boy, rented a shoe-shine box and brushes from another boy to whom he paid half of his profits. Sam was fired when he held back some of the money he earned.

45. Goodhue, op.cit., "Boston's Newsboys," Survey, v.8

46. Issac Spectorosky, "Work With Men and Boys," Jewish Charity, v.4 (February, 1905)

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These examples of forms of labor organizations among newsboys and bootblacks reflect the influence of a widespread movement of workers to wrest absolute control over their lives by their employers. The support given to these unions of child laborers by institutions at the turn of the century was a measure of the extent to which these principles had become accepted in society and indicated the assertive position of children. Although some children had banded together, it would have been unthinkable in previous generations to allow (or recognize the legitimacy of) children to assume such responsibilities of self government. Such efforts to promote self-regulation indicated new mechanisms intended to initiate self-control and incorporate the ideology of participatory democracy. They also demonstrated the attempt to provide structures which intended or appeared to allow for greater freedom, but which, in essence, continued to promote traditional forms of obedience, authority, and "citizenship." In this way resistance within the system could be tolerated and overcome.

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Children in Street Trades: Child Labor and the Padrone System in the United States

Ethnic groups in general were particularly vulnerable to unscrupulous businessmen who were able to take advantage of the ignorance and timidity of newcomers. Perhaps no more tragic example of exploitation of immigrant children, often by their own countrymen, is found than that seen in the padrone system. The padrone system emerged first with the Italian immigration prior to the Civil War and during the 1870's it grew rapidly so that by the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, when immigration from Italy and Greece was heavy, the system was well established.[47] The term itself, of Italian origin, denoted a form of respect for the head of a family, the boss of a group of people, or employer. In this country, the padrone functioned as an intermediary between immigrants and employers; later some became direct employers when they owned a business. The padrones controlled the entire life of their immigrant clients, setting hours of work, wages, conditions and meting out punishment when necessary. When there were disputes, the padrone was the sole arbiter, his authority absolute, and his decisions final. Their command of the language and

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47. The sources for this section on the padrone system are:
United States Industrial Commission on Immigration and Education, Reports, v.15 (1901)
United States Congress, Senate, Abstracts of the Report of the Immigration Commission, Sen.Doc.#747, 61st Cong., 3rd Session, 1911 pp.391-406

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customs of this country gave the padrones an immediate advantage, and one which they did not fail to use. They exercised control by threatening to deport or imprison their less educated countrymen if they tried to break their contract or resist in any way. They also were able to control the street peddlers who worked for them by supplying them with goods.[48]

The padrone system was first confronted by reformers before the Civil War. As Charles Loring Brace tried to enroll Italian street children in his Italian Industrial School (located at 156 Leonard St., in New York City) in 1855, he was puzzled by their reluctance. He soon discovered that these children were kept in virtually slave-like conditions by a padrone who collected their earnings and to

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48. The padrone system was in fact encouraged by the need for labor. Special legislation was enacted in 1864 to encourage immigration and permitted businessmen to import laborers under contract. As a result, agents were sent overseas to recruit workers who, when they arrived in this country, were in virtual bondage to the padrones for the duration of the contract (usually 1 to 3 years, and sometimes longer). The padrone functioned mainly as a rep resentative or agent of the workers, providing transportation and accomodations until they arrived at their designated jobs. The costs of transportation, board and commissions were deducted from the worker's earnings. The padrone also took a commission for sending money back to relatives in the country of origin and for return passage after the contract was fulfilled.
Parents of the children were sometimes required to give mortgages on their property to insure that their sons would serve a sufficient length of time in the business.
For a summary of this period and the Senate Report see: Theodore Saloutos, The Greeks in the United States (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964)

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whom the children owed absolute allegiance, Brace found children working with organ grinders, shining shoes, selling flowers, sweeping sidewalks and carrying "ponderous harps for old ruffians"; all of the children were subject to use as beggers. These children had been indentured by their parents in Italy to a"bureau" in Paris, which sent them on to America with a padrone. The parents were paid $6 per year for 8 years unless the child died or ran away.[49]

> Few Italians owned their own organs, but those who did were able to exploit the others, and parents who rented their organs were forced to take advantage of their children, who earned 37.5¢ to 75¢ a day tramping the streets of New York, Boston and Philadelphia. The comparative fortunes made by the pioneer organ grinders gave rise to the padroni who made a business of importing Italian boys for these tours as wandering minstrels.[50]

In addition to Brace's articles exposing the "padroni traffic" Horatio Alger wrote Phil the Fiddler (1872)to help call attention to Brace's endeavors. The efforts of Brace and other reformers to expose and combat the effects of the padrone system were recognized by the Italian Parliament which, in 1873, approved an annual subsidy of $800 for 30 years to the Children's Aid Society to assist the work of the "industrial" schools. By 1906 there were 8 industrial

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49. Charles Loring Brace, The Dangerous Classes of New York (1872), p.194

50. Robert Ernst, Immigrant Life in New York City, 1825-1863 (Port Washington: Friedman, 1949)
See also: "Italian Slave Children," New York Herald, Sept.16, 1873; "The Italian-American Life Style," New York Times, July 7, 1872, November 18, 1875, and October 26, 1879

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schools for Italians which enrolled 475 children in that year alone. From its inception in 1856 to 1906, these schools taught 23,236 Italian children, half of whom were girls. The large percentage of female students may indicate that fewer Italian boys attended these schools.[51] In addition to the Children's Aid Society, the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children also launched a campaign against the use of these street children. They attacked flower selling as a cover for prostitution, and by 1879 most flower girls were eliminated from New York City as a result of new and more stringent laws against child beggars, vagrants and flower sellers.[52]

As immigration laws became stricter with regard to the importation of children by padrones, procedures were established to avoid detection. Under agreements between the padrone and the father of a child, the youth was delivered to the padrone after landing, or the boy was instructed to identify himself as a relative of the padrone when examined by the immigration inspectors.[53] Some boys were simply instructed to report to a saloon keeper and wait to be assigned to a padrone from there.

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51. Charles L.Brace, "Child Saving," text of paper delivered at the International Congress of Public and Private Charities, Milan, Italy, May 23-27, 1906 (copy in possession of CAS).

52. Joseph Hawes, Children in Urban Society (NY: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971)

53. In 1907 a law was passed which attempted to eliminate padrones. Instead, padrones arranged for a relative or friend to accompany the child for a fee or as a favor.

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Among Greek immigrants the system became more highly developed, particularly with respect to males from 12 to 17 years of age. (The age of 17 seems relatively old for the category of "child" and in this occupation.) These boys were employed in three main categories: flower selling, candy/fruit/vegetable selling and shoeshining.

Relatively fewer children were employed by Greek padrones in the business of selling flowers than in other categories. Those who did work in this occupation, however, worked out of stores and usually took old flowers that could not be sold to other parts of the city. Generally these boys were reported to have decent living conditions and wages (from $50 to $100 per year).[54] They were also employed as delivery boys when they were not selling flowers.

Boys employed in peddling fruits, candy and vegetables were treated very differently, perhaps because their employers were less prosperous and did not own stores. Selling was done from pushcarts or wagons travelling along the street. Those who worked on wagons went from one tenement to another with a sample basket and took orders while the padrone stayed with the wagon. Often more than one boy worked on a wagon. The workday began with a breakfast of black coffee and bread before daybreak, especially when the padrone had to buy supplies at the markets. From then until

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54. Although these wages were not as high as newsboys' these children were given food and shelter as compensation.

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late afternoon,or early evening, the boys worked without a meal. At their residence the boys were expected to cook and clean. The meals usually consisted of a meat stew with potatoes and beans 3 or 4 times a week and bread, cheese and olives on other nights. The boys lived under wretched conditions, usually in basements or small unventilated rooms, sometimes in the same structure where horses and wagons were kept. Sometimes there were beds, but the were no linens. Boys slept wrapped in rough woolen blankets imported from Greece (perhaps to give the boys a sense of home) which were seldom washed and thus retained the odors of too much use. The fruit and vegetables which were not sold during the day were also stored in these rooms. When there were no beds, the boys slept on the floor, and during winter their clothing was inadequate. As a result many of these children were sick.

In large families where a padrone and his relatives might own several wagons, a large number of boys would be brought together. This might also apply to cases in which several padrone/vendors would provide a common living space for boys. If the family owned and operated a street enterprise, the children were usually found working there. Italian children would help in tending fruit vending wagons, or sell baskets (usually a Sicilian occupation) - but in these cases the child was not allowed to handle money.[55]

55. Edward Clopper, "Children on the Streets of Cincinnati," Annals of the American Academy, v.32 (1908)

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Children (mainly Greek and Italian) who worked in shoeshine parlors were usually under the control of a padrone. There were, however, a large number of bootblacks who lived in lodging houses and worked independently. They also worked as peddlers and messengers, depending on the demand. The effect of immigration on this occupation was evident from a contemporary perspective. The president of the American Water Color Society, J.G.Brown, who used street children for his models, compared these children in 1890 with those of the 1870"s:

> Where now almost every corner on the great thoroughfares has its bootblack's chair and its Italian bootblack, we formerly saw the little picturesque box and the still more picturesque boy, bright, inquisitive and often impertinent, but always a genuine American boy.[56]

Brown drew attention to the increasing scarcity of independent bootblacks and observed the changing social organization of society and its impact on this particular occupation. In addition to the ethnic transformation, he found that two other kinds of children had entirely disappeared (for reasons that remained unexplained): street sweepers (who were paid to keep the sidewalks in front of stores clean), and street musicians (usually Italian).[57]

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56. William Hull, "Children of the Other Half," Arena, v.17 (Dec.- June, 1896-97) p.1043.

57. The absence of such children may have been due to the efforts of the NYSPCC and other child-protective agencies. See Annual Reports of the NYSPCC for details of its activity.

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This observation was corroborated by a detailed study of four major centers of immigration in 1890. It found that in New York City 473 out of 474 foreign bootblacks enumerated were Italian; only 10 bootblacks were native born.[58]

By the end of the 19th century, the opportunities for independent bootblacks, working outside of an organization, were limited. Indeed, the work of shoeshining, which had once been a special occupation of children - particularly because of the ease with which they could enter that kind of work, as well as its place in the social hierarchy, began to change as adult Italians and Greeks established shoeshine parlors and appeared to monopolize the polishing business.

Working for a padrone in the shoeshining business was more regularized and defined than some other occupations. The boys, usually from 12 to 17 years of age, slept in crowded hovels, 2,3,or 4 to a bed, if there was one, rolled up in dirty blankets. The shoeshining shops opened at dawn and therefore the boys had to get up much earlier to get to work because they often lived far away. Sometimes the boys were allowed to sleep in the shop itself, but this raised problems of their supervision. The boys worked until 9:30 or 10:00 at night, with longer hours on weekends. Since a number of boys might be employed in the same shoe shine shop. or employed by the same padrone in different shops they shared the work of cleaning and cooking. In this semi-

58. Carroll Wright, The Slums of Baltimore, Chicago, New York and Philadelphia, 7th Special Report of the U.S.Commissioner of Labor (Washington, 1894),p.188

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communal arrangement, one of the boys was designated as cook for breakfast, another at noon. Part of the meal was taken to the store to be eaten at lunchtime. The rest remained for supper, which was eaten in the rear of the store. The padrone distributed the food in turns, and if there were customers the boys had to attend to them first. These meals usually consisted of bread, cheese and olives. A final meal was prepared when the boys returned to the places where they slept. After dinner they were required to clean the shop and wash their polishing rags.[59]

The padrone or an adult relative of his watched the boys constantly, restricting their conversations with patrons, censoring their mail, and in general isolating the boys as much as possible. As a result, the boys usually did not learn English, nor did they become familiar with any part of the city other than the place they slept, the shop in which they worked, and the streets they passed on their way to work. By keeping boys ignorant of American customs and language, the padrone was able to maintain his control. As some boys grew older, however, they acquired other contacts and gradually were able to move away. Many, however, who had been working for years in a shoeshine shop had no desire or ability to do anything else, and remained. Even when they were able to leave, it became increasingly difficult to work

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59. In another example, one padrone employed 25 boys and housed them in a large house with an old Greek man in charge as cook. See: Grace Abbott, "A Study of the Greeks in Chicago," American Journal of Sociology, v.15 (1909)

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outside of the padrone system. One Italian bootblack recounted his attempts to find work in Newark and Brooklyn:

> When the Newark boss told us that there was no more work Francesco and I talked about what we would do and we went back to Brooklyn to a saloon near Hamilton Ferry where we got a job cleaning it out and slept in a room upstairs. There was a bootblack named Michael on the corner and when I had time I helped him and learned the business. 60

What seems evident from this account is the tight control maintained by adults over the industry, even when they were not padrones.

The Greek Consul-General, Dr. Nicolaos Salopoulos, a medical doctor, helped to organize other doctors as well as community leaders in Chicago and attempted to expose the wretched living conditions of these boys. Chicago was of particular importance in the padrone system because of its distance from ports of entry (and immigration inspectors), and because of the existence of substantial Greek and Italian communities which provided the necessary informal network for this system to operate. Thus, despite the efforts of reformers and governmental agencies, the padrone system persisted, though some of the gross abuses were eliminated. The development of the shoeshine business in Chicago and its relationship to Greek Immigration is of particular interest.

Prior to the mid-1890's when large numbers of Greeks

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60. Ann Cook (ed.) City Life, 1865-1900 (New York: Praeger, 1973) p.257

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began to arrive in this country, Italians and blacks controlled most shoeshine businesses.[61] These consisted of small booths and stands (with chairs) located around hotels and saloons. The Greeks expanded this business by making the surroundings more lavish, providing an atmo - sphere of respectability and class. The early organizers and developers of this business among the Greek community owned large numbers of shops; one of them owned over 100. At the time of this expansion the demand for Greek boys increased dramatically. Prior to this many Greek children were employed in New England cotton mills. At first most of the boys came from the Province of Arcadia in the district of Tripoli because many of the padrones came from that area and had contacts there. Some of these boys had already done this kind of work in their native land. But as the demand increased for this kind of child labor, boys were brought from other areas of Greece and Turkey. (The system also existed among Austrians, Bulgarians, Macedonians and other countries in that area.)[62]

The relatively small sums of money paid by padrones to parents was more than compensated for by the boys. According to calculations by investigators, the boys produced an

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61. Edward Clopper, Child Labor on City Streets

62. From 1891 to 1900, 15,979 Greeks entered the U.S. (out of a total European immigration of over 3½ million); from 1901 to 1910, 167,519 Greeks arrived (out of a total of 8,213,409) (about 95% of the Greeks arriving from 1899-1910 were males.)

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annual income of several hundred dollars (some made up to $500) The average wage of a shoeshine boy was from $80 to $250 a year with an average from $120 to $180 a year. The boy, in addition, was required to place all tips in a box, the key of which was held by the padrone. Thus in addition to the actual income of the boy the padrone received at least that amount in tips earned by the boy.[63]

This form of business was easy to start since only a small amount of capital was required and relatives and friends in their native country could maintain a steady supply of cheap labor. In 1903, several of the more ambitious padrones tried to organize a trust of the shoe-shining business in this country. These efforts to insure service and control the industry were frustrated by the Immigration Department which managed to deport some of the boys and their padrones. The cooperation between parents of children and padrones made the enforcement of laws difficult. Not until alternatives and substitutes for this form of child labor became available and pressure from civic groups, unions and government agencies increased, and parents themselves established a secure economic footing did the padrone system diminish. The issue reinforced stereotypical notions about the complicity of immigrants in exploiting their children.and justifying state intervention.[64]

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63. Abstract of Report of the Immigration Commission ,op.cit.
64. Grace Abbott, "A Study of the Greeks in Chicago" cites cases of 2 padrones in Boston and 14 in Chicago who were found guilty of gross physical abuse of children in their care.

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Children in Street Trades: Messenger/Telegraph Boys

Another example of the shift in attitudes towards child labor and the nature of this work is evident in the case of messengers who worked for telegraph companies. A study of these boys in New York City in 1879[65] revealed that there were two kinds of workers, depending on the kind of company for which they worked. One mainly dealt with inter-city messages while the other worked only within the city. The largest number of boys who worked in the city were employed by the Western Union Company. During the spring and autumn when business was at its peak, the main office employed 100 boys. During February however the number fell to 80. There were 19 branch offices in the city which added roughly 70 boys to the list.

Boys were paid by the messages they delivered (2½¢ per message) and by the messages forwarded in reply (3¢). The average daily number of messages delivered from the main office was about 3,000 per day, or between 30 and 37.5 messages per boy.[66] This meant that boys could make from $1 to $2 per day, not including tips, which was comparable to some adult wages in this period.

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65. W.A.Linn, "Telegraph Boys," St. Nicholas, v.6(Dec.1879) pp.151-159

66. This meant an average of 3 trips per hour during a 12-hour shift. The number increases if waiting/slack time is included.

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The boys were closely supervised during working hours. A supervisor/dispatcher kept a log of the delivery time each boy took to determine his work efficiency. When boys reported for work they received a "delivery sheet." This consisted of a schedule in which each boy entered the number of messages he delivered, the time he left and returned to the office, and the name and address of the receiver. Each messenger had a number which was attached to his delivery sheet. After returning from a delivery the boy would fill out the required information and place the sheet in a rack behind the others who were waiting before him. When a message came to be delivered, the dispatcher would call out the number of the delivery boy whose number was next.

Each boy was given a uniform - for Western Union, dark blue with red trimmings, caps and a raincoat. (This is a common uniform, even today, for personal service employees, such as bell hops and porters.) Work was from 7 am until 6:30 pm and as a rule boys did not deliver at night. If there were messages to be delivered after regular hours, they would be given to "ambitious boys" who needed the extra money. Boys wore their uniforms at work and were required to pay for them through weekly deductions from their salary. A large room was provided at the telegraph office where the boys could leave their uniforms at the end of the day and once a week a tailor was hired to do mending.

Some companies provided more than message services.

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The American District Telegraph Company provided such services as calling for a doctor, delivering packages, collecting bills, and delivering documents and stocks. About 4,500 telegraph keys owned by this company were used in New York at this time, and over 1½ million messages were delivered from September 30, 1876 to September 30, 1877.

Every boy employed by the American District Telegraph Company was sent to a company training school. The school resembled an old fashioned rural school with wooden benches. Every boy had to be able to read and write. They were taught the locations of the streets and how to operate telegraph instruments. As in the George Jr. Republic, there was a minature bank where the boys were taught to use checks, and a facsimile of a broker's office where they were taught to deliver stock and handle other simple transactions which were required of them. They had to be familiar with the "tariff-book" which listed the rates charged from one place in the city to another. They were also taught etiquette and manners, and inspected daily for neatness.

Unlike the Western Union boys who were paid by the message, the District boys were paid by the week (about $4) and were given $1 per week wages while they attended the company's school. If a boy was promoted to "sergeant" and put in charge of an office, giving out messages, uniforms, and generally supervising the routine, he received $5 per week. The District Company employed 550 boys among 23

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offices in the city. The boys worked 10-hour shifts. Because their work was more varied and responsible, in that they might be asked to carry out almost any personal service, the District boys were considered a step above messengers.

Throughout this period it was not unusual to find rather positive statements about such work. One author concluded

> The work is healthy...The pay is larger...and they are under a sort of discipline which makes them methodical and tends to correct many bad habits.[67]

This is an example of earlier conceptions of child labor not evident in later reformers who decried child labor as unhealthy and leading to delinquency. Though paternalistic, this benign view of messenger work stressed the demeanor and status of the work and the boys involved. The companies treated the boys well and were concerned for their welfare - and their public image. The supervisors, perhaps because some of them had once been messenger boys themselves, were understanding and not abusive.[68] Boys who worked at night were praised as "ambitious" - in contrast to critics of a later period who considered this form of work a "crime against childhood." No mention is made in this account of contact with prostitutes, drugs, or any illegal activity, a recurrent theme later on. The boys were consistently pictured as clean, neat, and well-mannered and engaged in

67. Ibid.
68. The number of boys promoted into this job is unclear. It is also unclear if the age of the boys employed changed over time, or if the nature and status of the work changed.

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wholesome, useful work.

By the turn of the century, however, an altogether different attitude toward this type of work had developed. Ernest Poole, for example, had learned about the boys from first-hand experience with them. He related vivid descriptions of young boys who ran errands for prostitutes in New York City's Chinatown, where they learned to prepare opium and were introduced into a life of crime. It was because of this proximity to illegal and criminal activity that reformers focused on messengers as a source of delinquency. They cited statistics which showed a high correlation between work as a messenger and arrests, but this was part of a general tendency to categorize all street work as conducive to criminal activity.[69]

Particular attention was focused on night messenger boys. Generally they worked from 5 pm to 1 am and earned about $1 for the shift, not including "velvet" (tips). Boys who worked at night were paid a fixed wage rather than a commission (like newsboys). The fact that a wage scale was established indicates the integral part these boys played in the system of deliveries and that the job structure was fairly stable. This form of work combined both the wage and commission systems; although the boy was an employee, he could also make money on the side through his own ingenuity

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69. Ernest Poole, "Waifs of thr Street," McClures Magazine v.21 (1903)

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and effort. When not working, the boys read nickle and dime novels, gambled with dice and cards, or slept. After work (at 1 or 2 am) they might go to a restaurant and "hang out" until dawn.[70] Apparently they were not in school and worked with the permission of their families if they had any or they were self-sufficient loners.

According to the 14th U.S.Census (1910), 16,767 children between the ages of 10 and 15 were employed as messengers, office boys, store workers and clerks in New York State under the general category of "trade." Florence Kelley approximated the number of messenger boys in New York City alone at 2,000 at any one time (nearly triple the number of messengers in 1879) although 6,000 were estimated to be on the payrolls.[71] The wide variation in numbers suggests an haphazard employment structure in which boys could work regular shifts or not as they pleased or as the volume demanded. In contrast, in an earlier period the structure in which boys worked was tighter. Boys worked more regularly and full time; later more children were needed because they couldn't work full-time (perhaps due to school regulations). In photographs the boys still appear in uniforms though it is not clear if this is a consistent pattern throughout the industry.

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70. William Hard, "De Kid Wot Works at Night" op.cit

71. Florence Kelley, "Child Labor Laws," National Conference of Social Workers, Proceedings, v.31 (1904)
According to Selwyn Troen, "The Discovery of the Adolescent," in Lawrence Stone, ed., Schooling and Society (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1976) the number of boys employed by Western Union in Chicago between 1900 and 1906 declined by two-thirds.

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Under increasing pressure from reformers and public opinion, states passed laws which regulated this form of child labor. In New York, the Murray Night Messenger Law (1910) barred minors under 21 from working between 10 am and 5 am. In Illinois all night messengers had to be at least 16 years old. Such laws recognized chronological distinctions and implied a determination of maturity and responsibility at minimum age levels. These distinctions coincided with educational restrictions covering a variety of public activities. These laws and distinctions represented the social determinants of the expansion and termination of childhood.

Generally messengers were white, American-born (though in Cincinnati a large number had German parents). From this it would appear that as an occupation, being a messenger was more prestigious than others which were more ethnically heterogeneous.[72]

This work could become more structured and include more social aspects. For example a "Junior Order of Messenger Boys" was founded by James Standishstreet in 1913. It was patterned after a fraternal organization, with specific rituals, initiation rites and infused with a Christian theology.[73]

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72. Edward Clopper, "Children on the Streets of Cincinnati" op.cit.

73. James Standishstreet, Junior Order of Messenger Boys, privately published at 522 Buckeye Street, Toledo, Ohio (1913)

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Messenger service was one of the more enduring forms of child labor and because it was so necessary to the functioning of telegraph companies, the reformers' attacks focused on younger children (rather than older ones) employed in this work. Like selling newspapers, shining shoes, and other similar occupations, messenger service was still considered "childrens' work." It was not until technological innovations had been developed to fill the communication needs of a growing industrial structure - particularly with the introduction of the telephone as a standard form of mass communication- that the work of messenger boys could be eliminated.[74]

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74. Telegraph companies opposed child labor laws because they employed more children than any other single employer.
See: Florence Kelley, "The Working Child" in National Conference on Charities and Corrections, Proceedings (1896)

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Summary and Conclusion

Despite various efforts by reformers and government agencies it was difficult to regulate - let alone eliminate - child labor, for despite the marginality of street trades to the economic mainstream, there were important factors supporting this form of work. Businessmen who employed children did so for economic reasons (i.e.lower wages) and saw no need to change a system that seemed to function adequately. They preferred the delivery system of goods and services (by children) to which they were accustomed. There was a ready and constant supply of children who were willing and able to perform these jobs. No skill or capital was required and one could, given the high turnover, move in and out of the job market or occupation as needed. It was impossible to substitute machines for individual personal services. Moreover, the use of children to perform these jobs was apparently so deeply accepted as "childrens' work" that adults generally did not engage in them, even during times of severe economic hardship.

There are at least two possible explanations for the momentum to eliminate child labor from street trades. First, assuming a shift in the ethnic composition of street traders from American to foreign-born children, reformers became more active as part of an effort to Americanize immigrants. When American children were involved, street

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trading was attacked vigorously. One reformer wrote: "...the child of foreign parents secured such a monopoly of street trades."[75]

Second, assuming that there was no shift in the relative ethnic composition of street work (or a small one), the perspective of reformers who wrote about these children changed. They began to characterize the occupation as immigrant-dominated not so much as an accurate reflection, but as a pejorative attitude toward the work and those who engaged in it. Portraying street trades as dominated by immigrant children may have been a way of denigrating it.

The correlation between economic and technological developments and the numbers of children at work in these occupations is striking. As the numbers of newspapers increased, reaching a peak just before the first World War, larger numbers of children were needed to sell them. Conversely, as the telephone replaced the telegraph, fewer boys were needed to carry messages. In general, the mechanization of industrial processes, the greater availability of adult labor and the need to control the labor force more tightly (with increasing differentiation within it) were crucial factors in the restriction of child labor. There were exceptions in the textile and glass industries,

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75. Myron Adams, "Children in American Street Trades," Annals of the American Academy, v.25 (May, 1905)

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for instance, but as these industries mechanized their production techniques they substituted adults or machines for children. Generally, therefore, in the period which preceded the first World War children could be and were gradually replaced or eliminated from most industries without too much disruption to production. The nature of street trades, however, made this transformation more problematical.

With respect to newsboys, the development of different patterns of urban and suburban living (after World War I in particular) meant that regular residential delivery routes could be established which children could service after school and in their neighborhoods. This shifted the work of newsboys from one of rather haphazard selling in commercial districts on street corners to a more systematic neighborhood/community based distribution. This shift was also influenced by the development of permanent newspaper stands operated by adults.

Generally, newspaper selling and other forms of street work were independent occupations, unconnected with a family or other structured setting. A newsboy, for example, worked for his own profit (although he might contribute to family income), rather than as a member of a family production unit, or in a business establishment. Because he was not part of a family, his earnings were solely for his own use. Even in cases where a newsboy turned most of his earnings over to his family, he still retained a rather large amount of autonomy over what he did

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and where he went. Unlike children who worked in tenements, for example, and never directly saw their contribution in terms of wages, the newsboy was the direct recipient of his earnings. As such, he played an independent role in the exchange of goods and services.

Gradually a shift appeared from itinerant children, often without families or permanent residences who worked in street trades to children in families who worked part-time after school. According to the figures for Newsboys' Lodging Houses, fewer children were given room and board as time went on. This may have indicated that fewer children needed these accomodations or that different agencies and institutions were able to provide the necessary services, or that in the process of restructuring society and the family to conform to industrial demands, such forms of autonomy were simply no longer available. Whatever the reasons, the gradual elimination of children from street trades was part of a broad process of assimilation and redefinition of childhood in which the expectations of children were more carefully circumscribed in non-productive and institution-bound roles. What is also reflected in the utilization and gradual elimination of children from the work force is the changing socialization of children in their family structure and in the schools which now assumed a major role in child-rearing and in child development.

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Homework of Children

Although children involved in street trades of one sort or another were not as numerous as children who worked at home, the former were more identifiable and lacked the close supervision that existed in tenement/family workshops. The very nature of work in a home rather than a public place makes it difficult to describe or assess with accuracy. In many instances this work was done without legal sanction, such as a license, and parents were reluctant to admit the extent to which their children were employed. It is necessary therefore to draw data from a variety of sources, and in a number of cities (with the assumption that there was a general correspondence within the job definition).It is instructive to examine aspects of children's work in home industries broadly - and in the clothing industry specifically, as an example of unregulated work in the home.

Despite the reorganization of industry to accomodate the factory system during the 19th century, some of the processes which involved production in the home were retained. Though more and more articles were produced in factories, homeworkers in tenements were often engaged in either assembling finished products, or producing part of that product. These homeworkers did not necessarily live in proximity to the factory or shop, depending on the city and the industry.

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A study of Massachusetts in 1914 revealed that in Boston, for example, there was a gradual dispersal of workers away from industrial areas so that on the eve of the first World War less than a quarter of these workers lived in the city itself. Most workers lived in smaller towns and suburbs of from 6,000 to 20,000 inhabitants. About 20% of these workers were children under 14 years of age and nearly all of them worked as tag-stringers in the paper goods industry. Usually, the children began this task before breakfast and continued for several hours before school. After school they continued their work until bedtime. About 68% of male home workers in Massachusetts were under 16 years of age (7.8% were over 60) whereas the age range for females was more widely spread. About one-third were between 30 and 45 years old and only 19% were under 16 (about the same percentage as women over 55).[76] Thus, for young male home-workers, the setting was predominantly female - probably a typical condition throughout the industry. To an extent homework and schooling represented female dominated environments. About 59% of all homeworkers were native born (50% were native born of native born fathers). Italians predominated in the manufacture of wearing apparel; Irish were a majority of paper goods workers and French Canadians and Canadians were distributed fairly evenly

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76. Children under 16 years of age represented 20% of all jewelery workers, 58% of all paper goods workers, 30% of those in celluloid goods, and 3.5% of those in sporting goods. Industrial Home Work in Massachusetts, Labor Bulletin #101 (1914) For comparison with Buffalo (NY) Italians see Virginia Yans McLaughlin, Family and Community (1977)

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throughout; Americans outnumbered other groups in the manufacture of slippers and garters. Only a few Jews were listed in these occupations. About one-quarter of the workers owned their own homes, and half paid less than $150 per year in rent, which was considered expensive. Overcrowding did not seem to be an issue here, though when it did arise as a problem later on, it was usually in the Italian community.

The monotonous nature of home work tended to induce apathy, fatigue, tension, eyestrain and backache, as well as nervousness and irritability. However, for males there was some compensation in that there was a possibility that as they got older they would be able to do other ("men's") work, perhaps in other fields. For women in this class (except if they went to high school or college) there were fewer alternatives and the most likely path - whether or not they got married - was a continuation of the same , or similar work.

Generally conditions were similar in New York in these industries. As we have noted previously, a large number of children worked in these areas of production. An examination of school records of children revealed that 100,000 were working in New York City, of which a large proportion were Jews.[77] As Jeremey Felt notes: "Before 1900, Jews dominated the homework trade and as late as 1911 comprised 33% (in

77. Helen Campbell, Darkness and Daylight
Dept. of Interior, Census Office, Report on Population of the United States at the 11th Census

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New York City)...but were gradually being replaced by Italians."[78] In 1913 a New York State Factory Investigating Commission reported that "homework" as an industrial occupation for children was being replaced by "homework" as an addition to school work.[79] Although larger numbers of children were in school they could be (and were) withdrawn as needed, depending on the family income, parental unemployment and seasonal work. Thus, their appearance in school records does not eliminate their importance or place in the work force.

A number of studies were carried out in specific areas of New York City, and in particular the Italian community. One of these studies noted that of 371 homeworkers, nearly half were children under 16 years of age, and more than one-third were under 14 years of age. In one family living on Thompson Street (an Italian neighborhood), a mother and her 4 children made artificial flowers, a predominantly Italian industry.[80] The oldest girl was 11, followed by a sister of 9, a brother of 7 and a sister of 5. The three oldest had been periodically in and out of school, but the oldest was deformed and was often kept at home. Together

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78. Jeremey Felt, Hostages of Fortune, p.141; Felt also notes that between 1911 and 1932 Italians comprised from 45-55% of homeworkers in New York City. By 1932, Jews represented only 16% of these workers.

79. New York State Factory Investigating Commission, Report (1913)
This does not mean that more children were in fact in school; the report may have been inaccurate.

80. It is reasonable to assume from the location and type of work that this was an Italian family.

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the five people in this household work unit made 6 dozen artificial daisies (3-4 pieces per daisy) (39 daisies per wreath) for which they were paid 60¢ a day. The father was a ragman who reported earning about $6.00 per week, which was a relatively decent income for that time. The report also noted that most homeworkers were Italians and Russian Jews; very few were "Americans."[81]

The artificial flower industry employed large numbers of children, particularly young girls. According to Census data, 14% of those employed in New York City in this industry were under 16 years of age and 63% were between 16 and 25 years of age. (In comparison; 5% of those employed by dressmakers were under 16;41% were 16 to 25; 10% of millinery workers were under 16; 57% were 16 to 25; and 17% of those employed in making paper boxes were under 16; 59% were 16 to 25).[82] The wages were low, in part because home manufacture was highly competitive. One employer said that Americans and Germans had originally done this work, but when Italians and Jews came in they destroyed it.[83] During the slack season (which could last 6 to 8 months) some factories combined flower and feather manufacture to avoid laying off workers. Most of the workers lived in the area

81. Mary Van Kleeck, "Child Labor in Home Industries," National Child Labor Committee Phamplet, #134

82. Mary Van Kleeck, Artificial Flower Makers (NY: Survey Associates, 1913) p.24 ; see also New York Labor Bulletin, March, 1907

83. Ibid., p.23 .One family of 5 produced 12 gross in 12 hours, for which they made $1.20 (see p.95)

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near the flower factories since they were required to pick up and deliver flowers. There were some attempts made to unionize flower workers. A Flower Makers' Union, was formed mostly of Jewish women (the minutes of its meetings were kept in Yiddish), but found it difficult to organize because of the nature of the industry and economic pressures on the workers.[84]

Another study investigated the tag-stringing aspect of the paper goods industry.

> The children knot in strings. Mother wires a heavier sort with pincers. In the evening father and the two lodgers will help. The family will work till 11,12 or even 1 am. Tomorrow the boys will get up to finish the stint, for the 23,000 must be returned at 9 am. One Saturday the family took out 50,000. By Sunday morning all but 2,000 were finished. Working thus, 5 children, 4 grown people, the family makes about $30 per month, $1.25 per day - or shall we say night?[85]

In another area of homework families crocheted shirts. They were paid 12¢ per dozen for the simpler work, and 50¢ per dozen for more elaborate work. The children could do about two of the simpler pieces each day, working after school. The younger children who had not learned to do this worked stringing beads and buttons. It took about an hour to string 10 gross of wooden button molds for which they were paid about 2¢ per hour.[86]

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84. Ibid., p.36

85. Mary Hopkins, "Turning Childrens Homes into Factories" Good Housekeeping v.56 (1913)

86. Ibid.

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A study of children in Philadelphia found that many school children were part of homework production in stringing and wiring tags. On an average school day, a family might complete 32,000 tags. They were paid from 6¢ to 12¢ per 1000 tags. They might also put dress snaps and safety pins on cards, a dozen per card, for which they were paid from 8¢ to 12¢ for every 300 cards. In addition to the tedious work there could also be physical injuries as well.

> After pressing snaps, particularly the black ones, for an hour, the child's finger swells. The children on account of this use a clothespin, although the factory has forbidden the use of clothespins because of injury to the snap.[87]

Other forms of this work included putting hooks and eyes on rods (100 per rod) for which they received 30¢ for every 100 rods; custom tailoring (serging, finishing neck bands, cuffs, etc.); embroidering and beading; and sewing rags for rag carpets.

Another study discovered women and children working in basements folding paper bags. They produced 100,000 to 150,000 bags per week and were paid 4¢ to 7¢ per 1000 bags.

Other occupations of children that were found included picking nuts out of shells, making brushes, making dolls clothes, crocheting buttons, lace and slippers, passementerie, hand and machine-made embroidery, beads, neckware, and handkerchiefs. Small girls were often used to pull basting threads and perform other simple tasks; older children,

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87. Janet McKay, Report of a study of out of school work among pupils of Philadelphia Public Schools. No.101 Public Education and Child Labor Association of Pennsylvania, 1923.

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usually boys, were given the task of carrying material and completed goods to and from the factory, or jobber. Apparently the age at which children were employed in these tasks depended on the precociousness of the child. Dr. Anna Daniels, "outdoor physician" at the New York Infirmary, described the work of a 1½ year old child whom she treated. The mother made passementerie trimmings and the child rolled tiny balls of paste to which her mother attached beads.[88] In another example, a Russian-Jewish family, consisting of a widow and her six children lived in a basement apartment. The family was employed in making paper bags and the living space was covered with paper bags and paste. They were paid 4¢ per 1000 bags (though the price had fallen from 7¢), for a total family income of $6 per week (at 150,000 bags per week). They were unable to make ends meet, however, and the family took in a 13-year old truant who assisted them.[89] The children did not attend school, and lived this way until discovered by an investigator. At the time, the case was not presented as one in which child labor was essential for a family's survival (though it was admitted that when the children were forced to quit working, the family was given a monthly "pension" of $32). Rather, the mother was rebuked for not following the principles of Froebel. The

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88. Elinor Stoy, "Child Labor" Arena, v.36 (December, 1906) p.584

89. It is not known how the truant came to them. We might surmise that he was a friend of one of the children, and/or may have been homeless.

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children were examined by a public health nurse and registered in school (in special classes for backward children) with the hope that they would not "lapse into their old ways."[90] From this example, one can comprehend the crucial role that children often played in their own survival and that of their family.

The relationship between the utilization of children in the workforce and specific economic developments can be clearly seen in the development of the clothing industry. The Civil War stimulated the development of standardized sizes (not only in clothing, but also in railroad tracks, consumer products, and military equipment, for example). This was intensified by the invention of the cutting knife in 1876 (which allowed large batches of material to be cut simultaneously from standard patterns). Division of labor within the industry continued to segment tasks,and men dominated the more skilled areas of the production process. By the 1880's most cutters were Irish men, while German men controlled other skilled processes (an ethnic division which prevailed until the massive influx of Eastern European Jews and Southern Italians). The result was that men continued to assume the more skilled jobs in production; more and more children (and women) were used in semi-skilled positions; and a new system of production developed with a contract

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90. "A House of Paper Bags," no author, Survey v.14 (April,1905)

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system, which shifted large amounts of production to sweatshops and tenement house work. The division of labor was elaborated, with women as finishers, fellers and basters. In part this was also convenient for employers who resisted unionization, for it segmented the production process into a myriad of family tenement workers, many of whom had little contact with each other. The contract system was important (if not a requirement) to observant Jews for it allowed them to stop working on Friday and Saturday when most factories stayed open. In addition, since little capital was required (a sewing machine, for example) it was easy to go into the business. . If one had a family most of its members could be enlisted in the production process. This was especially true during times of unemployment when home production supplemented that of factories.[91]

By 1905 the men's ready-made clothing industry ranked seventh in gross value of product in New York State. It ranked twelfth in net value of its product, seventh in the number of wage earners employed and eighth in the amount it expended for wages. It was second only to cotton mills in the number of women it employed, ninth in the number of children it employed and first in the number of homeworkers. By the beginning of the 20th century, New York City alone produced nearly 40% of all the men's clothing made in this

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91. see: Jesse Pope, The Clothing Industry in New York (Columbia: University of Missouri, University of Missouri Studies in Social Science Series, v.1, 1905)

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country.[92]

It is extremely difficult to assess the number of children working in this field largely because they worked in their homes and were thus hidden from inspectors, unless they or their parents admitted it.[93] Thus the conclusion of a Congressional Report that "children are a relatively unimportant part of the labor force everywhere" (3.6% of those under 16 years of age),[94] is highly suspect. Equally questionable is the conclusion that

> ...of the entire force of females, 5.8% are under 16 years of age...male children constitute only 0.3% in New York...The problem of child labor in the industry is thus largely a problem of female labor.[95]

The report did note that it could not obtain accurate figures on the distribution of homework by ethnic origin.[96] But it did observe that in general the work force was predominantly of foreign origin and for the most part of

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92. According to the Census for 1900, there were 9,690 people employed in factories in the clothing industry (5,168 women over 16, 593 children under 16, and 3,929 men).

93. An 1890 poll of over half the Jews living in New York's Lower East Side conducted by the Baron de Hirsch Fund revealed that 22,393 children were employed in the following industries: 13,437 (60%) in the needle trades, 1,540 (6.9%) as shopworkers or in other industries, and 2,440 (10%) as peddlers. These figures antedate the massive immigration that occurred in the following decades.
see: Aaron Antonovsky, The Early Jewish Labor Movement in the U.S. (NY: YIVO, 1961)
Irving Howe, World of Our Fathers (NY:Harcourt,Brace, 1976)

94. U.S.Senate, Report on the Condition of Women and Child Wage Earners in the U.S., Senate Doc.# 645, 61st Cong., 2d sess. (Washington: Gov.Printing Office, 1910), "Men's Ready Made Clothing", pp.35-37

95. Ibid., p.218

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foreign birth. The static quality of the work and the role of the worker was summed up in this way: "...no matter for how long a woman remained a home finisher, neither her efficiency nor earning power seemed to improve."[96]

Although it is difficult to know precisely what took place in the home production of various items, it is apparent that the care of children and the production of articles took place simultaneously - and was the responsibility of an older woman or an older girl. Women who worked as "home finishers" for instance were observed to be caring for small children (their own and/or others). It thus became practical to teach children to work in order to keep them occupied, as well as utilize their labor. In addition, where more than a single family was involved, one woman would care for children of working parents. How this was arranged is not known. It does, however, represent a form of socialization not available in schools or families. Given the abundance of children and the necessity (at times) for both parents to work, caring for small children might be a problem, since it removed one adult from the labor force. In only about one-third of the families that did home work did neither parent care for the children when they were working, compared with 83% of families in which women did not work as home finishers. In families where no one cared for children (or

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96. Ibid., p.226

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at least no adult):

> These children were not left absolutely without attention, for they were cared for upon occasions; but no one paid any particular attention to them and they were very largely left to their own resources. In many cases where someone was supposed to take care of children, they were left more or less to themselves.[97]

Dr. Anna Daniel described what she found to be a typical case of home manufacture of clothing - a mother/daughter(s) production unit. The mother made button holes and did fine work to complete babies' lawn dresses for the newly expanding and flourishing children's clothing industry. Her 12 year old daughter operated a sewing machine, stitching the seams and tucking. Another 8 year old daughter cut embroidery, basted and sewed buttons. "The mother estimates that the two girls earn one-half of the total income."[98] The older girl had been working since she was 6 years old and the younger girl since she was 4. Younger children between 4 and 6 years of age sewed buttons, long seams and did coarse sewing and pulled basting threads. When they came into the dispensary for medicine, these mothers stated that they could not afford to allow their children to stop working even when they were sick because

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97. Ibid., pp.383-384, 356-357
About two-thirds of all families had children under 14 years of age. In Italian and Jewish families (which represented most of the workers in this industry) about one-third of the children were under 14 years of age.
See also: Bureau of Labor Statistics of Illinois, Seventh Biennial Report (1893), pp.357-399 for conditions in Illinois sweatshops.

98. Anna Daniel, "Conditions of the labor of women and children," Journal of Social Sciences, v.28-30 (1891-1892)

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of their contribution to family income. Though Dr. Daniel found many tenement apartments to contain one or more persons with small pox, TB, or other contagious disease the necessity of child labor and cramped living conditions hampered her attempts to treat these families. She observed:

> As soon as a little child can be of the least possible help it must add to the family toil. A child 3 years old can straighten out tobacco leaves or stick the rims which form the stamens of artifical flowers through the petals. He can put covers on paper boxes at four years. He can do some of the pasting of paper boxes, although as a rule this requires a child of 6 to 8 years. But from 4 to 6 years he can sew on buttons and pull basting threads. A girl from 8 to 12 can finish trousers as well as her mother. After she is 12, if of good size, she can earn more money in a factory. The boys do practically the same work as the girls, except that they leave the homework earlier and enter street work, as peddlers, bootblacks, and newsboys. I have seen but two children under 3 years of age working in tenements, one boy 2½ years old who assisted the mother and 4 other children under 12 years in making artifical flowers. The other, an extraordinary case of a child of 1½ years, who assisted at a kind of passementerie.[99]

Dr. Daniel calculated that a child of from 3 to 10 or 12 years of age added from 50¢ to $1.50 per week to the family income, working from 2 hours at a time (for the youngest) to 10 or 12 hours (for children 10 years and older). Such monotonous and straining work caused eye-strain and other physical damage but most of all deprived the child of educational development. Children who worked after school and on week-ends suffered in their school work - so none

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99. Anna Daniel, "The Wreck of the Home," Survey, v.14 (Apr.1905)

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were exempt from the effects of this work.

The pay of these workers was minimal, from 1½¢ to 10¢ an hour, depending on the age and skill. Among the over 500 families that she interviewed, all were required to engage in this kind of piece work simply to survive. The average weekly income from working husbands was only $3.81, over one-third of the average monthly rent of $8.99. The remainder was needed to support a family of 4½ persons. Of 515 families, only 31% were solely dependent on the wages of the male breadwinner; 63% were entirely or in part supported by the work of women. In 30% of the families, women worked in factories, at home taking in laundry, or took in lodgers and boarders. Most of the families (85%) were forced to work because the husband's wages were insufficient, or he was unemployed. In addition to their husbands income, women earned an average of $1.04 per week, with additional income coming from the work of children and boarders. From all sources, the average total was $5.69 per week. Although children in street trades could often earn more than those working at home, parents were reluctant to allow their children to engage in that kind of work and were willing to sacrifice the difference in income to keep them at home.[100]

Precisely who was engaged in finishing homework was unclear. A Congressional study (in 1911) found that in one

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100. Ibid.

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square block on the Lower East Side (bounded by Chrystie, East Houston, Forsythe and Stanton Streets) where the families were either Jewish or Italian, despite the fact that there was little economic differentiation between them, none of the Jewish families did home finishing. How widespread this condition was is not known, and it may be unique to this particular area. It does, however, indicate that a shift from Jewish to Italian workers was taking place in the home manufacture of clothing.[101]

An earlier study found that among 210 families on the Lower East Side who worked in tenements, 195 were Italian, 9 were Russian Jews, 2 were Irish and 4 were native born. Among 852 women who had licenses, 515 were Italian, 166 were German, 136 were native born of foreign parents, and 11 were native born of native parents. The work they did included: bed quilts, braided ornaments, babies socks, garters, leather postcards, kimonos, buttons, hand embroidery, passementerie, gloves, pencils, childrens flannel dresses, undergarments, gingham aprons, coats and overcoats, trousers, furs, muffs, boas, picking and shelling nuts, white goods (shirts and underwear), coat collars, artificial flowers, millinery and men's ties.[102]

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101. Report on the Condition of Women and Child Wage Earners, "Men's Ready Made Clothing" op. cit. p.276

102. Mary Van Kleeck, "Child Labor in New York City Tenements," Charities, v.19 (January, 1908)

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Dr. Anna Daniel observed the working conditions of laundresses and their families who worked in their tenement apartments. She was particularly concerned about this kind of work because of its contribution to the spread of contagious diseases. In fact, she was able to trace these kinds of diseases from families in which children were ill back to the families of the laundresses. She cited the example of a laundress who washed clothes for a child who had scarlet fever. As a result, her two children contracted the disease and spread it to other families in the building.[103]

Laundry work in tenement houses made life difficult. Because it was necessary to keep a fire going, the rooms were unbearably hot in summer, and because it was necessary to keep windows open to dry the clothes, the rooms were often cold in winter. The rooms were filled with steam, large tubs, and hanging clothes. Clothes were also hung on roofs, which meant carrying them up stairs. The wages for this work were 30¢ to $1 per dozen pieces.

Among the laundresses interviewed, Dr. Daniel found that one third supported the family, one third assisted husbands and children, and a third assisted children only. It was, therefore, more than casual work. Dr. Daniel also noted that in many cases husbands were unable or unwilling to work, thus forcing their wives to take in laundry. Most of the women who did this work, according to Dr. Daniel,

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103. Anna Daniel, "Conditions of the labor of women and children," Journal of Social Sciences, v.28-30 (1891-1892).

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were either German or Irish. Although this kind of home work involved the assistance of children (rinsing and washing clothes, hanging them up to dry, ironing coarser pieces, and picking up and delivering clothes), the families realized that it was more profitable for children to find work outside the home, if other work could be found.

The impact and meaning of such forms of work is difficult to assess. Clearly women were trained to perform certain kinds of work as children in their home. Their "apprenticeship" at a washtub in the kitchen may have been replaced by a washtub in a factory (as will be seen), but the content of the work was the same. Only the social context differed (and was significant). Boys, if they did participate in laundry work at home were not relegated to such forms of "female" work, and were urged to find work elsewhere. Girls, on the other hand, did not have these options, and in that sense were also restricted to less respected (and respectable) roles.

A significant factor in homework generally was that it served to maintain important family relationships.

> ...homework did not challenge Old World family organization. The mother's roles as arbiter of household organization and tasks and as disciplinarian and child-rearer were reinforced by her economic position as manager of the domestic undertaking...Because she still had not become, in the strict sense of the term, a wage earner, she presented no clear threat to her husband's authority and power...the wife did not leave the home, and therefore did not abandon her important roles of childbearing and child-rearing.[104]

104. Virginia Yans McLaughlin, "Patterns of Work and Family Organization," The Family in History (1971) p.119

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Children in Factory Work: Introduction

Children had been used extensively in factory work since its inception in England in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Their intensified use was the result of increasing specialization, "differentiation of economic roles and the break-up of the family community."

> The crime of the factory system was to inherit the worst features of the domestic system in a context which had none of the domestic compensations: 'it systematized child labour, pauper and free and exploited it with persistent brutality...' In the home, the child's conditions will have varied according to the temper of parents or of master; and to some degree his work will have been scaled according to his ability. In the mill, the machinery dictated environment, discipline, speed and regularity of work and working hours, for the delicate and the strong alike. 105

The transformation of workers from domestic to factory production was filled with anxieties and frustrations as they sought to adapt to new processes of production. The transformation of immigrant and working class childhood at the turn of the century was part of this structural process. The introduction of technological innovations, the increasing division of labor, and the use of adult immigrants as a new source of supply for the reserve army of workers generated new roles for children in the workforce, the family and society in general.

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105. E.P.Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (NY: Random House, 1963) p.335, see also pp.331-349

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As work became more mechanized, oriented to a mass market and centered in factories, many aspects of production which had required skills and training were reduced to essentially unskilled labor which could be done as easily by children as adults. As Marx wrote:

> In so far as machinery dispenses with muscular power, it becomes a means of employing laborers of slight muscular strength...The labor of women and children was, therefore, the first thing sought for by capitalists who used machinery. That mighty substitute for labor and labourers was forthwith changed into a means for increasing the number of wage labourers by enrolling, under the direct sway of capital, every member of the workman's family, without distinction of age or sex. Compulsory work for the capitalist usurped the place not only of the children's play, but also of free labour at home within moderate limits for the support of the family...Machinery, by throwing every member of that family on to the labour market spreads the value of the man's labour power over his whole family. It thus depreciates his labour power... machinery, while augmenting the human material that forms the principal object of capital's exploiting power, at the same time raises the degree of exploitation. 106

While children were used more extensively in the initial phases of industrialization, their position was undermined by reformers who sought to create a separate educational and institutional environment (to create "little citizens") and by economic changes, such as the introduction of machines and adult labor. Moreover, "...laborious and ill-paid domestic tasks, sometimes performed by children... were transformed by technical innovation into jealously-defended crafts." 107

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106. Karl Marx, Capital 3 vols. (Chicago: Charles Kerr., 1906) Vol.I, Chapter 15, section 3, pp.431-432
107. E.P.Thompson, Making of the English Working Class op.cit., p.247

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Children in Factory Work: The Paper Box Industry

One of the largest employers of women and children in New York City was the paper box industry. A New York State Commission report in 1912 noted that about 15,000 people were employed by this industry, two-thirds of whom were young girls and women. New York City alone had 6,000 of these workers. In the city, 4% of the female employees in this industry were 14 and 15 years old, whereas 1½% of the male workers were of that age. This may indicate that male children had other occupations available to them and that legal restrictions on children under 16 were more effective. Wage structures varied from factory to factory, but $5 to $6 per week was the prevailing rate for girls and women (41% of all female employees in this industry were at that level). Few boys received lower wages than adult women; no woman received higher wages than adult males. This differential in wages helped to support the division of labor by sex as well as age, and encouraged the notion that male workers were more valuable than female workers.[108] More than 700

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108. Men reached the top of their earning capacity ($15) between 40 and 45 years of age; women ($9) between 35 and 40 years of age. The upward mobility available to men was simply not available to women. Some operatives worked by the piece, which raised their weekly salaries. But of the 2,000 women interviewed half of those over 18 years old earned less than $8 per week, and half earned more. Third Report of the New York State Factory Investigating Commission, "The Paper Box Industry in New York City" Appendix II (1914)

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girls under 18 years of age (44%) earned less than $5 per week. The workday for men was 9-10 hours per day; for women, 8½-9½ hours per day; and for children, 8 hours per day.[109] Older girls made $4-$5 per week; younger girls made $2.50-$3 per week.

A relatively large number of children were employed in this industry - it was one of the most dangerous industries employing children. Because these children worked on cutting and folding machines the rate of serious accidents was high, particularly in the loss of hands and fingers. The employers were said to have admitted that the main reason "small girls" were used was because they didn't complain. Moreover, children were not as susceptible to unionization. Generally, smaller girls assisted older girls, though here, as in other industries, children worked alongside adults. It was also reported that in these factories the doors were locked to keep children (and workers generally) from leaving - and visitors (in particular investigators) out. This was a common practice, as was dramatically revealed in the

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109. The work was highly seasonable and women, because they were least skilled and lowest paid, were more vulnerable than men. About half the women stayed less than 2 years, and only one-sixth stayed one year. Twice as many employees flowed through the plant than were retained. Most of the women were single (90%), with immigrants tending to fill lower paid and lower skilled jobs. 37.5% were foreign-born, 64%of the women lived at home (i.e.were single daughters in a family), 19% lived with relatives and 17% lived with strangers (most likely in a boarding house).
Ibid.

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Triangle Shirtwaist Fire (March 25, 1911) in which 146 young women burned or jumped to their deaths because the exit doors were locked from the outside. Although children were prohibited from working if they were under 14 years of age, many younger girls were employed in these factories.[110] In 1904, 125 employees of the Cohen Paper Box Company - most of whom were young girls - struck. Because of the ages of the girls this was referred to as the "children's strike," or perhaps to encourage sympathy for the strikers.[111] These workers had been earning $3 per 1000 cigarette boxes before their wages were cut by 10% which provoked the strike. The strike demonstrated the militancy of women, particularly those engaged in factory work, but also of housewives and was part of a broad protest against living and working conditions by both men and women of many nationalities.[112]

110. Edwin Markham, "The Girl Behind the Holidays," Cosmopolitan Magazine, December, 1906

111. William Walling, "A Children's Strike on the East Side," Charities, v.13 (1904-1905) (December 24, 1904)

112. It was at the same time that violent rent strikes occurred in Jewish sections of Harlem and Brownsville.

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Children in Factory Work: Glass-blowing Industry

The glass-blowing industry, though not urban-based, was located close to urban centers and employed large numbers of children. The ways in which these children were used highlights the importance of child labor at the time.

From 1890 to 1900, the glass-making industry in the United States increased in size by 52%.[113] The U.S.Census for 1900 lists 73 glass-blowing factories in Pennsylvania, employing 12,961 people, 2,677 of whom (20.5%) were under 16 years of age.[114] In 1905, there were 138 glass-making factories, with a relatively high distribution of children throughout the industry.[115] Gradually adults were substituted for children as immigration rapidly filled gaps in the labor market. In addition, the nature of the work demanded not only endurance, but reliability.

> (The)...increasing size of the establishments and the more complete organization of the industry have made it desirable to have a class of employees who are more regular in their work and more likely to abide by their contracts than the boy...[116]

The boys were employed in a variety of jobs within

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113. Edwin Markham, "The Hoe-Man in the Making," Cosmopolitan Magazine, v.41 (1906) p.571

114. U.S.Census, 1900, vol.IX, Part 3 "Children in the Glass Industry in Pennsylvania" p.968

115. Report on the Condition of Women and Child Wage Earners, "Glass Industry"

116. Ibid, p.165

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the industry. These included: "cracker-off boy" (who tapped the glass from the blower's pipe), "holding-mold boy" (who opened and shut the molds), "sticker-up boy" (who took the unchecked glass and reheated it in the furnace) and "carry-in boy" (who took it into the finishers). In the final stage, another boy put the glass bottle into an annealing oven to temper it.[117]

There were two categories of boys who were employed in the glass industry: apprentices and "blower dogs." Those in the former category were older, usually 17 years old or above, and often the sons or relatives of the blowers,and their position was protected by the union. In the latter category were younger boys, many of whom were sons of recent immigrants, orphans, or delinquents (some of whom were nominally adopted by the glassblowers).[118] These boys were not part of the apprenticeship ladder. Since the earnings of the blowers depended to some extent on the speed of the boys who worked for them, these boys were kept on the run continuously. The manufacturer paid half wages to apprentices (14 to 19 years old), but since the average age of death was only about 41 years, one-third of their working life and one-sixth of their entire earnings were given up to the employer in exchange for "learning" the trade (which

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117. E.Markham, "Hoe-man in the Making," op.cit., Florence Kelley, "A Boy Destroying Trade," Survey, v.11 (1903) John Spargo, The Bitter Cry of Children

118. Florence Kelley, "A Boy Destroying Trade," op.cit

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amounted to approximately $5,000 per apprentice).[119]

Some firms took in orphan boys (or delinquents) of 15 or 16 years and gave them room and board for which the boys were charged $3.50 per week. These boys were employed in the worst part of the process, the furnace rooms of the factory.[120] When these boys were not available, whole families were imported, and fathers with several sons were guaranteed regular work if their sons worked in the factories as well.[121] The work of the boys was so crucial to the industry that one company admitted that it would not be able to stay in business unless they could employ these children.[122]

Although men and boys predominated in this industry, women and girls were used in various capacities, mostly in packaging, but also in sanding and fine work. Nearly half (46.7%) of the workers were foreign born, more than a third (36.8%) were native born of native parents, and 12.6% were native born of foreign parents.[123] No black workers were listed. It was easier for American boys to

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119. Report on the Condition of Women and Children op.cit., "Glass Industry" p.236

120. An arrangement was worked out between orphanages and reformatories to supply children to the glassworkers. See: Florence Kelley, "The Needless Destruction of Boys," Survey, v.14 (1905)

121. Report on the Condition of Women and Children, op.cit., "Glass Industry," p.516

122. Florence Kelley, quoted in a section called "The Week" Outlook, v.57 (1897) pp.152-153

123. Report on the Condition of Women and Children, op.cit.

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advance more quickly than those who were foreign; this may have been because of the tight apprenticeship structure.

The boys worked long hours, either during the day or at night, from 5:30 pm to 2 or 3 am at a very fast pace in rooms where the temperature was usually over 100 degrees and was filled with fine particles of glass. As a result the boys often contracted rheumatism and various respiratory diseases which may have ultimately resulted in TB. After work the boys generally went out with the men to nearby saloons and it was reported that most of the boys smoked. The harshness of working conditions took its toll as "many of the boys die before reaching the age of apprenticeship."[124]

In 1903, a child labor law in New Jersey prohibited the employment of boys under the age of 14 in manufacture, but it did not prohibit their employment at night. In any event, the use of children continued until the industry itself changed, for rather than introduce machines employers found it more profitable to use child labor.

> It is expensive to install these machines and unenterprising employers in New Jersey have preferred to use boys at 43¢ a night or at 63¢ a night, to employ men at a dollar to a dollar and a quarter a night, rather than incur the initial expense of installing machines which enterprising rivals in Ohio are already using with satisfaction.[125]

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124. Florence Kelley, "A Boy Destroying Trade," op.cit. John Spargo, The Bitter Cry of Children op. cit. B.O.Flower, "The Cry of the Children," Arena v.28 (1902) p.306

125 Florence Kelley, "The Needless Destruction of Boys," Survey, v.14 (1905)

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Due to the loss of business to competitors who had mechanized their production, to pressure from reformers and inspectors, and their own need for a consistent system of production, employers gradually changed over to machine production.

> Occasionally, the inspectors themselves contributed to adolescent unemployment. In 1895, one inspector suggested a rearrangement of furnaces at the Illinois Glass Company, in Alton, the largest single employer of children in the state, with the result that large numbers were forced out of work.[126]

> In the manufacture of bottles, apprentice glassblowers managed to survive the first phase of industrialization, which saw the introduction of semiautomatic machinery, but not the second, marked by the use of totally automated machines after 1900.[127]

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126. Selwyn Troen, "The Discovery of the Adolescent" op.cit., p.243

127. Joseph Kett, Rites of Passage, op.cit., p.147

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Children in Factory Work: Laundries

Family and work histories of young women employed in laundries at the end of the first decade of the 20th century give us some indication of what may have been typical work histories among the over 7000 women employed in this industry.[128]

An Irish girl of 18 had begun working in a laundry when she was 15 years old and made $6 per week. She lived in a 4-room tenement with her parents and 4 siblings, of whom she was apparently the oldest. Until the age of 12 she had attended school, at which time she was withdrawn in order to stay at home and care for the small children while her mother worked. Her father was a day laborer. She remained at home taking care of the children and doing household chores until the younger children had grown up sufficiently, or one of the younger children could assume the household responsibilities. Young girls were particularly crucial in situations where both parents had to work.

An Irish-American girl of 20 had attended school until she was 16 years old. Her father had worked in the stockyards but died when she was 16, leaving her, as the eldest of 4 siblings, to assume the responsibilities of bread-

128. Report on the Condition of Women and Child Wage Earners v.12 According to the Census for 1900, most of these 7000 women were young girls.

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winner. She first worked as a domestic, but then found a job in a laundry where she earned $6.50 per week. The family lived in a wooden tenement where they occupied 5 rooms and paid rent of $10 per month. One of her younger brothers sold papers and the combined income of the family was about $55 per month.

A German girl of 22 had attended school until the age of 14 when she was withdrawn at her father's insistence and began doing housework until she found a job in a laundry where she made $8 per week.

A German-American girl of 20 had begun doing housework at about 14 years of age, until 15 when she found a job in a laundry. Her father (who owned his own home) and her sister (probably older) worked in a laundry as well.

A Polish girl of 18 had attended school until she was 16, at which time her father died and she was forced to find employment in a laundry where she earned $5 per week. Another Polish girl of 21 attended school until she was 14, but had to leave and find work in a laundry to supplement the family income.

A young black woman of 27 lost her mother at the age of 6. She was taken in by a white family to do household chores and care for the children. She went from one family to another until she was 12 years old, when she began working in a laundry (probably in the early 1890's).

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Such case histories indicate that the traditional pattern for many women was to do housework (as a form of apprenticeship perhaps) until they were able to find a job doing the same kind of work in a laundry. There is no indication why the pay scales differed, or the precise nature of their duties in the laundries, The girls who were interviewed complained of numerous ailments including constipation, back pains, piles, menstrual pain, rheumatism, colds and a variety of muscle, bone and joint pains. The shift from indirect and informal housework to an industrial process was gradual and on a continuum, and once they were at the laundries, they did not leave except to marry.

These vague and sketchy samples leave a number of questions unanswered: Did parents send out daughters to work at a later age than sons, and if so, why? Was it typical for working-class girls to stay in school until they were 14-16 years old? What was the relationship between family size and the age at which girls began to work in laundries? Is there a correlation between ethnic background and factors which would explain the above?

Commercial laundries which serviced hotels, factories and railroads as well as private homes were one of the largest employers of women and young girls.

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They worked in rooms which were damp and filled with steam from the boiling cauldrons and and lacked ventilation. The women were paid about $1 per day. It is likely that similar conditions existed throughout the industry.

The employees were divided into several "departments": washing, starching and ironing, checking and sorting. Generally men worked in the washroom; women were employed in hand work.

> The washermen, who are frequently American, and the wringermen, who are nearly always Slav have full charge of the washing machines...and of the extractors.[129]

It is not known why these ethnic distinctions prevailed. Did the workers themselves impose or prefer them? Did employers hire and place workers in this way in order to break down communication and solidarity between workers?

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129. Elizabeth Butler, "Pittsburgh's Steam Laundry Workers," Charities and Commons, V. XX (April-October, 1908) pp. 549-552

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Children in Factory Work: Confectionaries

Children, again particularly girls, were used extensively in the confectionary industry. In fact, according to the Census reports at the turn of the century, there were more people employed in this industry nationally than in meatpacking, milling or canning. One reason for the use of children in this industry was because the tasks were repetitive and could be easily done by children. This monotonous work consisted of individually dipping small bits of candy into vats of boiling chocolate. It was not unusual for a girl to dip a hundred pounds a day at a rate of ½¢ per pound. In large factories the work day began at 7:30 am and ended at 7:30 pm, with a half-hour off for lunch. They were paid an average of 5¢-7¢ per hour. There was no restriction on employees eating the candies they made, but after a short time they were unable to eat any of these products because the odor in the plant was nauseating. There were constant accidents caused by hot chocolate which spilled on the skin, creating blisters and scars. In order to harden the caramels,trays were passed from cooking to refrigeration rooms where the temperature change was 70 degrees. As a result, many children developed chronic colds and bronchial conditions. Some candy-making and wrapping was

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sent out to tenement home workers who were paid by the piece. This procedure was profitable to employers since they could save on rent, storage and facilities. Reformers attacked this method, however, on the grounds that diseases could be easily transmitted through uncleanliness or disease in the homes of these workers.[130]

A large number of children in Chicago worked in a caramel factory in the 19th Ward. Depending on the season, from 110 to 200 young girls, 4-12 boys, and 70-100 adults worked in this 6-story factory. They worked from 7 am to 9 pm with 20 minutes for lunch and no supper. This schedule averaged over 82 hours per week, with more during the Christmas season.

> The little girls sit closely packed at long tables, wrapping and packing the caramels. They are paid by the piece, and the number of pennies per thousand paid is just enough to attract the most ignorant and helpless children in the city.[131]

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130. Edwin Markham, "The Grind Behind the Holidays," Cosmopolitan Magazine, December, 1906

Generally the workers were Italian girls and women who packed and sorted nuts (at 6¢ per pound), stuffed dates and other fruits with nuts.

131. Florence Kelley and Alzina Stevens, "Wage Earning Children," op.cit

In 1893 a factory law in Illinois was passed limiting the work of children to 8 hours per day, 6 days per week.

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Children in Factory Work: Cigar-Making, Print-Making, etc.

A relatively large number of children was employed in cigar-making factories which were often referred to as "kindergartens" because of the large number of smaller children employed there. It is not known what these children did, whether they worked alongside parents or adults, or were independently employed. The children were paid from $2 to $2.50 per 1000 cigars, which they rolled out by hand; this was about ⅛ of what adults were paid for the same work. With the decline in demand for cigars and the growth of the cigarette industry, and technological improvements in cigarette-making machines, the number of children employed in this industry declined.[132]

Children also worked in soap-powder factories where they were subject to heavy clouds of alkaline dust, fur factories where they inhaled dust and hair, artificial flowers and print factories where their skin came into contact with poisonous dyes, varnish, wallpaper and rubber goods factories where they inhaled poisonous fumes. Small children who were employed in match factories suffered from phosphorous poisoning (as they packed matches),

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132. see: John Spargo, The Bitter Cry of Children, Chapter 3

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snd those who worked in foundries and stereotyping plants contracted lead poisoning. In the Calico Print industry many Italian boys worked in bleaching and dying, and in drying rooms which were filled with dust and fumes. Young girls worked in folding and packing rooms. Such forms of ethnic and sex differentiation prevailed in most industries.[133]

An investigative reporter from the New York Journal visited the American Printing Company near Fall River, Massachusetts. He found children, sometimes under 14 years old, working naked in large tanks called "lime keers" in the bleach house, packing cloth into the vats.

> The lime keer holds 750 pieces of cloth and it requires one hour and twenty minutes to fill it. During that time the lad must work inside, while his body is being soaked with whatever there is of chemicals which enter into the process of bleaching, of which lime is a prominent factor. The naked bodies of the children who do this work day after day are never dry, and the same chemicals which effect the bleaching process of the gray cloth naturally bleach the skin of the operator, and after coming out of the vats the boys show the effects in the whiteness of their skins, which rivals the cotton cloth.[134]

A study of 100 Jewish girls (14-16 years old) in a New York City elementary school revealed that most of them worked in some form of factory work, generally as unskilled labor. Six stemmed, steamed and sorted feathers, while others

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133. New York Labor Bulletin, June, 1909 pp.262-270

134. B.O.Flower, "The Cry of the Children," op cit., p.308

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packed such items as collars, children's dresses, underwear, ladies' waists, skirts, pencils, bottles and candy. Other girls worked in the following paper product factories: paper boxes @$4.50 per week, paper cigarettes @$3 per week (with the possibility of a maximum wage of $12), pasting samples; a girl worked in a bookbindary and after learning several different processes was raised from $2.50 to $4 per week. One girl worked as a cigar-maker @$6.50 for piece work (probably per 1000); another cut embroidery for coats and had been raised from $2 to $5; another cleaned children's dresses (breaking threads, sewing buttons, etc.) and had worked up to $5 per week doing piece work. Other girls worked in millinery and department stores, as cash girls, packers, markers, cashiers, salesgirls. Generally they held their jobs steadily - in contrast to girls who did not work in stores.[135]

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135. "Some other simple occupation was often combined with the packing, such as examining and folding waists or underwear; or rolling ruching on cards, pinning and packing; or measuring belts, putting on clasps and packing. Other occupations found in connection with the manufacture of white goods and clothing are giving out work (shirt waists) cutting collars and yokes for ladies' waists, pinning on collars and ripping, sewing lace collars, drawing ribbon through corset waists, night gowns and drawers, lace cutting, lining men's neckties, marking numbers on tags and hanging them on coats. These tasks were often supplemented with errands in the factory and "helping the forelady." Some of the other factory occupations were pasting, punching holes, putting caps on wires, taking ruching from machine and rolling straw for hats, work on a candy factory, placing covers on boxes, setting jewels in combs and making cake ornaments." Jessie Adams, The Working Girl from the Elementary School in New York," Charities and Commons, v.4, Feb.22, 1908

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Although it is difficult to compare the relative value of wages between children who worked in factories and those who worked at home, the former seemed to be able to earn more than the latter. A study by New York City's Bureau of Factory Inspection (in the spring of 1908) found 632 children working in factories, more than half (398) of whom were young girls. Generally the boys were paid more than the girls; boys earned an average weekly wage of $4.27, girls made $3.89. The report concluded:

> The present return in connection with the census wage statistics brings out the fact that the wages of boys and girls under 16 years of age vary comparatively little as compared with the wages of adult men and women...an average wage for boys under 16 (is) not quite 10% higher than for girls under 16, while the average wage of men over 16 was 80% higher than that for women over 16.[136]

Lower wages for women may have been established in order to discourage women from seeking employment in factories. For those who were employed in this work it defined their status as an inferior one. Such wage-scale differences thus reflect a social dimension of work: the necessity to differentiate between the work of "men," "women," and "children" became more difficult with the introduction of technology. The lack of correlation between the task and the sex of the worker made it necessary to establish wage-scale hierarchies.

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136. Millinery, Laundry (308), Printing, Paper Goods (76), Metals, Machines and Conveyances (60), Leather, Rubber Goods (55), Textiles (54), Wood Manufacture (25), Food, Liquors, Tobacco (23), Stone (19), Chemicals, Oils, Paints (12). Females predominated in Metals and Wood Manufacture; both were equal in Leather, Rubber Goods and Printing, Paper; males were dominant in the rest.
"The Wages of Children in New York City," New York Labor Bulletin, June, 1908 pp. 202-206

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Child Labor in Department Stores

At the turn of the century department stores were major employers of children between the ages of 12 and 16 in large urban areas.

> The most common position was that of cash boy or cash girl, which involved shuttling back and forth between the sales counter, cashier, and wrapping desk, carrying a basket containing the salesbook, money, and purchase. Sitting in tight-fitting uniforms on benches, these boys and girls were expected to respond immediately to the clerk's call of "Cash! Cash!" Their task was to take the money, merchandise, and sales slip from the clerk to an inspector for wrapping and checking, then rush to the departmental cashier to make change, and finally to return the package and the change to the salesclerk.[137]

It is difficult to determine what kinds of children went to work in a department store, or why they chose (or were chosen for) this type of work. In one large department store in New York City, there were 62 cash boys, 19 of whom had been messengers or newsboys, though only 3 of them had been there more than a few months. Of the 19, seven had been both messengers and newsboys. One had also been a bootblack and peddler, assistant to a junkman, and then assistant to a dentist (indicating upward mobility). At 17 he now worked

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137. Selwyn Troen, "The Discovery of the Adolescent," op.cit., pp.241-242. In the 1870's one-third of the workers at Macy's in New York were cash girls, and in the 1880's one-third of the workers at Marshall Field's in Chicago were cash boys.

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as a cash boy at $2.50 per week. It was characteristic that these boys did not remain in a job for a long time, and therefore stores were reluctant to hire them.[138] It would seem, however, that working in a department store carried some prestige and that it was a measure of success for a boy (especially one who had been in street trades) to find a job there. Since they had had experience handling money, former newsboys and messengers might have had some advantage in these store jobs. However, given the prevailing prejudices against children in street trades, this may have been more problematical. Hoping to ensure a stable workforce, the children were expected to stay with the store "until maturity in years and efficiency in some distinct branch of the business shall have been reached." Nevertheless there was a high turnover.[139]

One way the stores sought to upgrade and regulate the children who worked there was through the establishment of schools in the stores themselves. Franklin Brewer, General Manager of Wanamaker's in Philadelphia, for example, instituted a program of training which became a model for the industry. Younger boys (minimum of 13 years old) were employed as cash boys. Girls (up to 17 years of age) and

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138. Ernest Poole, "Waifs of the Street," McClures, v.21 (1903)

139. Franklin Brewer, "Child Labor in the Department Store," Annals of the American Academy, v.20 (1902)
See also: Joel Spring, Education and the Rise of the Corporate State, op.cit., pp.38-39

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boys between 16 and 18 years old were enrolled in a "cadet corps" - with the rank of "junior employees" - probably assistants to salespeople.[140] Cash boys and those in the cadet corps were organized into "school and military companies" which assembled on the top floor of the store twice a week in the morning before work. There they were taught the rudiments of reading, writing and arithmetic. The children were also organized into a fife-and-drum corps, perhaps to inspire a spirit of patriotism (to the nation as well as their employer) or for recreation. Older girls were taught business correspondence, stenography, typewriting and bookkeeping[141] Each cash boy/girl was required to carry a record card in which his/her "grades" for cleanliness, neatness, promptness and truthfulness were recorded. A blue misconduct mark was entered on the card for deficiencies and, as in schools, the parents of the children were required to sign the card periodically.

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140. Child labor laws at the turn of the century had prohibited children under 14 years of age from working in department stores and limited 14 to 16 year olds to a 10-hour day in manufacturing and mercantile establishments. In Illinois such laws were passed in 1897; in New York, in 1908. See Jeremey Felt, Hostages of Fortune, op.cit. p.135

141. New salespeople (usually young women) were paid $2 per week in addition to a 5% commission. This barely covered expenses. Young women could live in lodging houses for working women under 30 years of age at $2.50 per week, which included board. They lived in dorms of 10-15 women per room with an average of 65 residents per house. The average wages of the women were $3 to $6 per week.
Annie MacLean, "Two Weeks in Department Stores," American Journal of Sociology May, 1899
The demand for more highly skilled workers and the introduction of machines contribued to the displacement of younger workers.

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In addition to these efforts by department stores to educate their employees, the New York City Department of Education started continuation schools in department stores. It would appear that the interests of both school authorities and businessmen coincided for "In one store nine out of the sixteen pupils have had their pay raised as a direct result of increased efficiency..."[142]

The development of the pneumatic tube in the 1890's and its installation in 1902 by major department stores like Macy's and Field's drastically cut the number of children employed. There was still a demand for errand boys to work with salesmen. There was always the hope that these menial jobs would turn into something better and that they could rise to the position of salesperson.[143]

The transition in retailing from pushcarts and stalls on the street to more fixed merchandising meant ultimately less opportunity for children, since department stores were more formal organizations and were subject to more stringent regulations. As part of a new service industry, department stores (along with food and other services) marked a response to new consumption patterns and a new market among the working class.

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142. Survey, June 13, 1914 p.304
143. Rev. J.Mervin Hull, "How to Succeed as an Errand Boy," The Junior Christian Endeavor (Boston and Chicago), v.10,no.8 (August, 1902) p.2
see also: Florence Kelley and Alzina Stevens, "Wage Earning Children" op.cit.
and Selwyn Troen, "The Discovery of the Adolescent," op.cit. "...the cash register, invented in 1878, had become sufficiently sophisticated ...to further reduce the need for cash boys by concentrating transactions at the counter where purchases were made."

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Child Labor in Canneries

Although not an urban based industry, canneries often drew upon immigrant laborers from cities, and it was not unusual for whole families to migrate to these food processing factories. At times padrones were sent out by canneries to recruit workers; the padrones were paid $1 per head.[144] The workers lived in shacks provided by the cannery and worked in the fields for farmers or more likely in the canneries themselves where they snipped beans for 1¢ per pound, or husked corn for 3¢ per bushel. Work was done by adults and children without distinction and as part of a family. Because the work was done as a family and because parents of children who worked there did not object to the labor of their children, it was difficult to implement the provisions of child labor laws in this area. Moreover, the seasonal nature of the work in canneries often coincided with slack seasons for work in the city, and thus were important in sustaining families over times of unemployment.

It is difficult to determine the extent of child labor in canneries. In New York State there were over 500 canning factories in 1900, but only 219 children were listed in the Census as employed in these factories. Yet, in one factory

144. Survey June 13, 1914, p.304

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alone the foreman admitted to having 300 children (under 14 years of age) working under him. In 1913, a New York State Factory Investigating Commission Report found that 942 children under 14 (141 of whom were under 10) regularly worked in upstate (New York) vegetable canneries and were unreported in official statistics. Most of the families were Italian and Polish.[145]

Virginia Yans-McLaughlin's study of Buffalo Italians provides a particularly insightful appraisal of the extent and impact of this work on the population. Her study can be applied to similar populations in New York City and is helpful in understanding the relationship between work and cultural predilictions. She found that work in canneries, in contrast to other forms of work (similar to home-work)

> permitted the possibility of extending community controls on the family into the factory...ever present parents, kin and paesani could keep a watchful eye on one another. Children remained directly under parental control, and adults could work assured that their young ones were safer than they would have been left home or playing in the city streets.[146]

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145. Pauline Goldmark, "Child Labor in Canneries," NCLC pamphlet, #128 ; see also: John Spargo, The Bitter Cry of Children op.cit., and "Report to Gov. Frank Higgens upon the failure of Commissioner John McMackin to enforce the labor laws," NCLC pamphlet, no date.

146. Virginia Yans-McLaughlin, Family and Community, pp.184-197 John Spargo also noted that in Maine, 117 sardine factories employed whole families in packaging - including children of 4 and 5 years old. In Maryland where there were no restrictions on the 290 canning factories, children were employed extensively in all of them.

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Conclusion

It is important to understand how and why children were used in the labor force; we must also understand why they were removed and how this changed the nature of childhood. As technology transformed methods of production, with increasing division of labor and changes in the labor market, child labor became less important in industrial production. As Marx wrote:

> By means of its conversion into an automaton, the instrument of labor confronts the laborer during the labor process in the shape of capital, dead-labour, that dominates and pumps dry living labor power. The separation of the intellectual powers of production from the manual, and the conversion of these powers into the might of capital over labor is...finally completed by modern industry erected on the foundation of machinery. The special skill of each individual insignificant factory operative vanishes as an infinitesimal quantity before the science, the gigantic physical forces and the mass of labor that are embedded in the factory mechanism and together with that mechanism, constitute the power of the "master."
> 147

As production was relegated to the factory and children were removed to schools the occupational lines separating children from adults were drawn on the basis of a distinction not within the workplace (whether home or factory) but between the workplace and the school. Not only did the

147. Karl Marx, Capital, op.cit., Vol.I, Chap.15, sec.4, p.462

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location of work change, but the notion of who should work, when they should do it, and the notion of work itself changed.[148] Within the workplace, the school (and other institutions), and the family, immigrant and working class children and their parents were confronted with new demands and expectations which would provide the basis for social and economic reorganization.

> Modern Industry indeed compels society under penalty of death to replace the detail-worker of today, crippled by life-long repetition of one and the same trivial operation, and thus reduced to the mere fragment of a man, by the fully developed individual, fit for a variety of labours, ready to face any change of production and to whom the different social functions he performs are but so many modes of giving free scope to his own natural and acquired powers.[149]

Does this not resemble the goals of Progressive reformers and educators?

The roles, values and behavior which children learned while working alongside adults were transferred to the classroom. The transition from childhood to adulthood, once integrated with the process of learning skills in a work process, became centered in schools. Children who were given responsibilities and who worked when and where adults worked developed quite different views of themselves and those around them than did those who were not employed and/or spent their time in school. The world of the working child

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148. "Work everywhere became more intense, free time more completely cut off from work and space, and it too, more intense." Sebastian de Grazia, Of Time, Work and Leisure (NY: Doubleday, 1962) p.195

149. Karl Marx, Capital, Vol.I, Chap.15, Sec.9, p.534

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was demanding, but it also taught a different kind of independence and acceptance of responsibilities, particularly in helping to sustain the family.

The elimination of child labor not only separated more clearly children from adults, not only implied the transformation of social relations within the family, but became a partial definition of childhood and society. The relationships between parents and children are at issue.

> It was not...the misuse of parental authority that created the capitalistic exploitation, whether direct or indirect of children's labour, but on the contrary it was the capitalistic mode of exploitation which, sweeping away the economical basis of parental authority, made its exercise degenerate into a mischievous misuse of power. [150]

The transformation of the productive relations of children and youths, their gradual elimination from the workforce and their location in schools, defined their status and function within the family and as part of a new middle class, with the consciousness and value structure which that assumes. The result was a far-reaching conceptual synthesis: the reification of childhood into a commodity and category so distinct from adulthood and so prolonged, that it had no useful function beyond that of consumer. It implied the

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150. Ibid., Vol.I, Chap.15, Sec.9, p.536
For a stimulating discussion of the impact of industrialization on work ideals, see: Daniel Rodgers, The Work Ethic in Industrializing America, 1850-1920 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978) Especially Chapter 5, "Splinterings : Fables for Boys."

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adoption of a bourgeois value system which revolved around the satisfaction of individual needs - accumulation, self-aggrandizement and indulgence - as part of the assimilation process and in the expansion of consumption.

> Where children as workers took their place in the production and survival functions of the family, the creation of childhood and adolescence - a period of time with none but a consumptive relationship to civil society - demanded that parents rely on external socializing agencies, as much of their own time was spent at work. Once a financial credit, modern childhood was a debit on the family - increasingly involving it in the consumption of goods and services connected to child-rearing.151

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151. Stuart Ewen, Captains of Consciousness, op.cit., p.137 and further:
"The fact that childhood was increasingly a period of consuming goods and services made youth a powerful tool in the ideological framework of business. Beyond the transformation of the period of childhood and adolescence into a period of consumption, youth was also a broad cultural symbol of renewal... The concept of youth was, at the same time, an instrumentation of modern control." p.139-140

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IV. ASPECTS OF STREET LIFE: ITS ROLE IN THE PROCESS OF ASSIMILATION

Introduction

This chapter examines some informal aspects (i.e. non-institutional/occupational) of children's lives at the turn of the century. In some respects, children make their own world through the games they organize and play, the associations and relationships they form, and the ways in which they present themselves to the world. These are ways in which children prepare themselves for adult roles and conditions. In other respects, their activities are responses to their environment. For children living in poor neighborhoods at the turn of the century, stealing from passing trains, pushcarts, or merchants were often ways of getting something necessary for themselves or their families. If they played in the street they had to account for traffic; if they swam in the river, or flew their kites from rooftops they had to contend with policemen. Unlike schools, playgrounds, or settlements, the street represented the world in all its strangeness, spontaneity, variety and adventure. Perhaps one was better prepared for life by the lessons learned there than the artificial and

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circumscribed atmosphere in other, more formal settings. In their desire to protect children, however, reformers tended to view the street with apprehension.

> The shrewd Americanism taught on the street stimulates courage, enterprise, and persistence, but it also encourages deception, a callous indifference to immorality, and a hard worldly wisdom which lowers the refinement of womanhood and the nobility of manhood. [1]

1. J.B.Reynolds, "Report of the Headworker," University Settlement Bulletin (1900)

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Life on the Streets

"I'm always a-movin' on, sir. I've always been a-movin' on, sir, ever since I was born." This timeless and poignant statement from a street waif in Charles Dickens' Bleak House captures the drama and tragedy of children who lived on the street. In the chapter on settlement houses we discuss how Charles Loring Brace first encountered street children in the 1850's, and the establishment of the Children's Aid Society and a series of lodging houses to ameliorate their condition. Brace was shocked one winter to find young boys sleeping huddled over steam-grates, in a burnt-out safe on Wall Street, in paper boxes, boxes of sand and in cellars. Luckier ones were able to get inside a building where they slept in a corner or on the stairs until morning. Although not typical of all children, their life-style suggested an aspect of the life of many children who worked and lived on the street.

In 1883, George Needham observed such children and differentiated several types among those he found. One kind of child was the "street Arab," or "Bedouin" (references calculated to evoke primitive and suspicious images).

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> their hand against every man, they trust no man thoroughly, save their own brotherhood...uncertain, vindictive and selfish...(they lived in) clans, or hordes for self-protection, however, rather than for love's sake, their own pre-eminent object in life is subsistence - food, shelter, clothing...Poverty, even, is sweeter to them than confinement. Naturally they become warlike and predatory.

Closer to the image of a scavenging animal were the "gutter snipes,"

> who are too utterly weak both mentally and physically to cope with the more sturdy "Arab." Like snipes, they are creatures of suction whose dinner table was the garbage pail.

And finally, there was the "waif,"

> a more comprehensive term embracing many grades of young unfortunates...something ownerless and unclaimed... deserted of their parents...or guardians in a bondage more relentless and calamitous than desertion.[2]

These animal-like images suggested a fear and loathing which fitted contemporary notions of "savages" (contrasted with domesticated or "civilized") and were classic examples of attitudes toward street children.

Like the graffiti artists today who enhance or deflect the drabness of our subways and personalize walls and sidewalks, children of the 19th century also left identifying markings. Names such as "Butts the Boy Detective," "Alone in London," "The Dead Sleeper," "One Lung Pete," "Tracy," "The Outlaw," and "Old Sleuth," offer insights into the self-images of these boys. They like to smoke discarded

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2. George Needham, Arabs of the City (Boston: Bradley and Woodruff, 1883 and 1891)

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cigar "butts" and identified with authority figures who solved crimes or with those who committed them. There was also a pervasive sense of loneliness, abandonment and hardship that was inevitable with this kind of life. On a visit to a Newsboys' Lodging House, Helen Campbell found boys with the following names and descriptions which indicate the street activities in which they engaged:

> A very thin little fellow was called "Skinny"; another boy with light hair and complexion, being nearly as blond as an albino, was known only as "Whitey." When "Slobbery Jack" was asked how he came by his name, "Bumlets," who appeared to be chief spokesman of the party, exclaimed, "When he eats he scatters all down hisself." "Yaller" was the name given to an Italian boy of soft brown complexion. Near him stood "Kelley the Rake," who owned but one sleeve to his jacket. In newsboy parlance a "rake" is a boy who will appropriate to his own anything he can lay his hands on. No one could give an explanation of "Snoddy's" name nor what it meant - it was a thorough mystery to even the savants in newsboy parlance. In the crowd was "The Snitcher," -"a fellow w'at tattles," said Bumlets, contemptuously, and near by stood the "King of the Crapshooters." "A crapshooter," said Bumlets, "is a fellow w'ats fond of playin' toss-penny, thrown' dice, an' goin' to policy shops." The "King of the Bums" was a tall rather good-looking lad, who, no doubt had come honestly by his name. The "Snipe-Shooter" was guilty of smoking cigar-stubs picked out of the gutter, a habit known among the boys as "snipe-shooting." "Hoppy," a little lame boy; "Dutchy," a German lad; "Smoke," a colored boy; "Pie-eater," a boy very fond of pie; "Sheeney," "Skittery," "Bag of Bones," "One Lung Pete," and "Scotty," were in the same group; and also was "Jake the Oyster," a tender-hearted boy who was spoken of by the others as "a reg'lar soft puddin"...[3]

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3. Helen Campbell, Darkness and Daylight (Hartford: Worthington, 1892) pp.

Additional names of newsboys may be found in Charles L. Brace's Short Sermons to Newsboys (NY:Scribners and Co.,1866) pp.38 and 222

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Children who spent their lives working in the streets and who had their own sources of income tended to gamble at "craps" or bet on horses. Newsboys in particular were often employed as runners to make bets and sell tips on horses. Most of the boys tended to smoke and drink coffee, there was not a great deal of alcohol drinking, although some boys were known to "tipple" gin and drink beer. Free meals were available in saloons with the purchase of a drink, but often the boys were able to swipe food without buying anything. Some of the more ambitious and pugnacious boys were hired to fight in prize rings; others might be allowed to perform on a variety stage where they could exhibit some talent (music, acting, etc.) which they had. Young girls were employed by saloons:

> Beer was served by girls from 12 to 16 years of age, wearing short dresses and red-topped boots, which reached almost to their knees and had bells dangling from the tassels. 4

> On every block there were a dozen or more grog-shops which sold liquor to children as well as adults. At night, most of these places opened "dance houses" in back rooms where a fiddler or two furnished music. They were always crowded with prostitutes, sailors, thieves and hoodlums. The area teemed with vagrant children half-naked, barefoot always. At all hours they could be seen rooting about in the gutters with the pigs, hungrily searching for scraps of food. Many of the boys roved the city to pick cinders, collect rags and bones, or steal. Some of them worked for Mark Maguire, a politician and owner of a notorious dive, who was known as "the king of the newsboys" because he employed five hundred lads to sell papers on the streets of the city. On mild evenings, many of the younger girls from the Five Points stood on the curbstones of Broadway, vending hot corn. 5

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4. Herbert Asbury, The Gangs of New York (NY:Avon,1950; Reprint of 1927 edition) p.24
5. R.E.Trebes, "The Toughest Street Corner in the World," in Llyod Morris, ed., Incredible New York (NY:Random House,1951) p.32

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During this earlier period older boys could become active in volunteer fire-fighting companies. Prior to their professionalization at the time of the Civil War, however, these companies included children as young as 10 years old, as "volunteer aides," who shared some of the work and activities of regular firemen in a unique form of "social fraternity."[6] Recalling his experiences during the 1850's, one writer portrayed the acceptance of children as part of these volunteer companies.

> Like most boys of all ages, we used to run to any fire within three miles of our homes. The joy of our lives was to hear the fire bell ringing at Jefferson Market, Tenth Street and Sixth Avenue. We would fling down our bats, throw our balls into the gutter and be off to follow the engines. We'd forget everything, even the time, and sometimes returned home late but happy, thrilled with the excitement of being treated like real men, for one thing. For the firemen would let us carry hose or buckets, or even let us do what we considered daredevil stunts, such as climbing the ladders to hand a hose-nozzle to a fireman three or four stories up in the air. At Eighth Street and Greenwich Avenue was the Metamora Hose Company. This was shortly after the first paid fire department was organized; in fact, there were still two volunteer companies in existence.[7]

Firefighting companies were intimately connected with politics, and were composed of men with some skill or craft. Membership in them was thus an indication of status in the community. Because they were connected to political organizations, and because some of these companies were often violent, unreliable and capricious, some thought

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6. For a detailed discussion of these fire-fighting and military companies see: Joseph Kett, Rites of Passage op.cit. pp.90-93 ; and Herbert Asbury, op.cit., pp.26-27

7. Frederick Van Wyck, Recollections of an Old New Yorker, (NY:Liveright, 1932) pp.106-107

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them to be subterfuges for gang activity. According to a "railroad rough" who recalled a period around the time of the Civil War, loyalty to a company was critical.

> Often, through having to pass through the boundaries of a hostile "gang" on our way to school, we were compelled to fight. For this reason we frequently went in companies of three or four. In passing through the territory immediately in the neighborhood of a fire company, a boy would sometimes be "tackled" and asked, "What hose do you go in for?" If he knew his neighborhood, and was shrewd enough to "go" for their particular hose, he was usually set free, but sometimes not before his pockets were rifled. If he was unfortunate enough to "go in for" some other company, he was usually set upon by his enemies and most unmercifully "lambasted." [8]

The street, as a unique environment which characterized a particular class of children, though basically a 19th century phenomenon, lasted until there were sufficient alternatives, such as schools and settlements. Remnants of this life-style survived, but not to the extent or manner in which it had existed before. Samuel Hopkins Adams described this type of child at the turn of the century with a characteristic mixture of praise and disgust. Living at a lodging house or on occasion with a relative, these boys picked up odd jobs, running errands or selling newspapers. "Gambling at craps netted him a wavering income when he chanced to have the capital for an original 'fade,' without which the crap-shooter finds no game open to him on the

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8. Stewart Culin, "Street Games of Boys in Brooklyn, N.Y." Journal of American Folk-Lore, v.4 (1891) p.236. The quote is from a letter from Rev. Henry Frankland of Cheltenham, Pa.

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sidewalks of New York." Although he tried to find work, "mostly he lived an innocently parasitic life."[9]

The ability to maintain this life-style was made possible by the large number of English and foreign language newspapers (133 weekly papers in New York City alone in the 1870's) which depended on a small army of newsboys for their distribution.

Mornay Williams, director of the New York Juvenile Asylum, observed that the street was like a "school" in some ways. It taught certain values, like loyalty to friends and self-reliance. But he too was critical of the "lawlessness" of the street. He viewed the street boy as a "young nomad" who, if alert, was nevertheless "primitive," "somewhat callous to pain but fond of inflicting torture, revengeful...despising work," one who was "dull, embruted, cunning but clever, hateful...a criminal in little."[10]

Children who worked in street trades were often characterized as "flotsam and jetsam of the municipal sea," basically pickpockets, thieves and beggars who lived from day to day by selling newspapers, carrying messages or doing odd jobs. Yet there was grudging admiration for them.

> The newspaper boy at 10 years of age has acquired more keenness of judgment and decision of character than the average college student at 23. Though a child, he is a man of the world.[11]

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9. Samuel Adams, "A Matter of Principle," McClures Magazine, v.26 (Nov.,1905 - April, 1906)
10. Mornay Williams, "The Street Boy," National Conference of Social Workers, Proceedings v.20 (1903)
11. Raplh Guggenheimer, "Some Possible Causes of Child Vagrancy," Survey, v.5,no.3 (December 29,1900)

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Despite its dangerous and damaging aspects, the street provided important ingredients for the development of independence and self-reliance. Even so, such children were regarded with suspicion and apprehension. If they posed no actual danger, they did represent to reformers the disorder of the system itself. Only by regulating the activities of these children, transforming them into "little citizens" would the potential threat to society be eliminated.

For children in particular the street represented not only a physical, but also a social definition of space. In the absence of other forms of community identification it was natural that strong attachments to one's street developed. These were colorful places where people thronged to shop, meet their friends, and play. During the day, with tenement rooms turned into workshops, there was no space for playing, and in a sense, the street became an extension of the home.[12] Streets were flooded and used as pools for wading or washing. Organ grinders and street musicians provided music and there was always something to provide amusement and entertainment spontaneously. On hot nights, when cramped apartments were unendurable, families slept outside, spreading mattresses on roofs, fire-escapes, or even on the sidewalk. The arrival of a new family, the death of friend or relative, or the mad chase of a petty thief were typical scenes on streets.

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12. Edith Davids, "Kindergarten of the Streets," Everybody's Magazine, vol. 9 (July-December, 1903)

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The street on which one lived was crucial in determining on whom one could depend upon - or at least where one was relatively secure from attack. The street on which one lived became part of one's identity, and one's home gave a sense of community. Streets reflected ethnic characteristics of their residents. For example, where Jews were predominant, the street might be quieter on Friday night and Saturday and busy on Sunday. Yet the street was by its very nature socially impermanent. One could and did change easily and often from one tenement to another and one street to another. For children in particular this meant not only a change in neighborhood, but in sources of identification and modes of behavior. In other respects streets offered opportunities for a variety of life-styles, as well as greater autonomy and individuality, at least with regard to a feeling of emancipation from one's family and background.

Although a child might feel some proprietary rights, streets were ultimately the property of the city and changes in their physical characteristics affected ways in which people related to them. Streets were torn up, widened, repaired, made rough or smooth; houses and apartments alongside were torn down or built up, and were low or high, cramped or open; the streets were lined with trees or bare, lined with commercial shops or strictly residential; streets were used as playgrounds, thoroughfares and marketplaces. Then, as now, it was not uncommon to see chairs placed on

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the sidewalk in front of tenements, along with a table for playing games, or a stand for selling items. If elevated trains ran over the street the atmosphere would be dark, dirty and noisy. Streetcars that operated on the surface were dangerous and changed the pace and quality of life alongside the tracks. Because the street was so accessible to children, it was an intimate part of growing up. Children identified with streets in ways different than adults.

> The streets were ours. Everyplace else - home, school, shop - belonged to the grownups. But the streets belonged to us. [13]

Streets offered a unique form of autonomy and freedom to explore, opportunities to test and be tested by the world of the street. It was a place of danger (if you were in the "wrong" neighborhood), a place of work (if you were selling or transporting something), and a place to relax. It was a place where one came into contact with the diversity of a world that beckoned to the adventurous and curious.

> The apartments signified a life too well worn, while the streets, despite their squalor, spoke of freedom. Freedom to break loose from those burdens that Jewish parents had come to cherish; freedom, if only for an hour or two, to be the "street bum" against whom fathers warned; freedom to live by the senses, a gift that had to be learned and fought for; freedom to sin. [14]

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13. Irving Howe, The World of Our Fathers, p.258 (see also: Jacob Riis, Children of the Poor p.164 (Of Cordasco edition)

14. Ibid., p. 258

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Along with their roles as intermediaries between American culture and that of their parents, children assumed a sense of power and permissiveness, a sense of importance and individuality in a world not limited by the attitudes, fears and traditions of their parents. Children thus had to deal with a heterogeneous cosmopolitan world on the street (or in schools, settlements and playgrounds) and return to a very narrow parochial one at home. Indeed, their active participation in that diverse world was part of being an American. The assertiveness that seemed to characterize such children, despite conflicts it may have provoked at home, was important for their survival. For one Jewish boy, who was attacked by an Italian gang and refused to back down, he encapsulated this challenge as a definition of his new status: "In America a Jew is not afraid."[15]

Descriptions of the 10th Ward (on the Lower East Side) are not attractive. It was known as the "typhus ward" by health officials, the "crooked ward" by the police, and the "suicide ward" by others. This ward had the highest population density in the world with all of the social problems that included. Tenements were not only places in which people worked and lived, but in addition, many families were forced to supplement their incomes by taking in boarders. This strained the already cramped conditions, and immediately

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15. I.S.Young, Uncle Herschel, Dr. Padilsky and the Evil Eye (NY: Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich, 1973) p.67

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affected notions of household and family. Yet, accepting lodgers was not without positive meanings.

> The family was not fragile but malleable. That so many misunderstood this distinction is itself symptomatic, for reformers who bewailed the imminent breakup of the family had displaced their concern from the hardness of life inherent in the industrial system to an institution that not only was a sensible response to industrialization but, in cushioning the shock of urban life for newcomers, was decidedly humane.[16]

In a typical tenement in this ward, 4 families lived on a floor and paid an average of $11-$12 per month for 3 rooms; this represented about one-fourth of their total income. Yet, in spite of the crowded, poorly ventilated conditions, neighborliness and mutual dependence prevailed. It was reported that when a Jewish boy was Bar Mitzvah all the tenants on a floor opened their apartments and all members of the synagogue were invited to celebrate the event together.[17] Such aspects of community, characteristic of European living, became anachronistic under the impact of urban and sub-urban dispersal. Mobility and privacy became cultural as well as social status symbols.

Prostitution was prominent in some working-class districts, and there were numerous references to young girls who had been lured or forced into this work. It is difficult, however, to determine precisely how widespread

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16. John Modell and Tamara Hareven, "Urbanization and the Malleable Household: An Examination of Boarding and Lodging in American Families," Journal of Marriage and the Family v.35, (August, 1973) p.477

17. Raymond Ingersoll, "Tenth Ward Home" University Settlement Bulletin (1899), and Jacob Riis, How The Other Half Lives (1890) and Battle With the Slums (1902)

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it was. Since it often appeared in contemporary literature it may have been more prevalent, particularly among Jewish women, than has been considered. Prostitutes seemed to be a rather common street sight on the Lower East Side and probably affected children's experiences and perceptions of sex. But these women did not seem to evoke the disrespect and intolerance which characterized attitudes of reformers towards prostitutes.

> There were hundreds of prostitutes on my street. They occupied vacant stores, they crowded into flats and apartments in all the tenements. The pious Jews hated the traffic. But they were pauper strangers here; they could do nothing. They shrugged their shoulders, and murmured: "This is America." They tried to live. They tried to shut their eyes. We children did not shut our eyes. We saw and knew.
> On sunshiny days the whores sat on chairs along the sidewalks. They sprawled indolently, their legs taking up half the pavements...At five years I knew what it was they sold.[18]

For many, the breaking down of sexual restrictions and traditional inhibitions was part of Americanization.

> Sex was not merely a pleasure to be snatched from the meagerness of days, it was the imaginative frontier of their lives, a sign of their intention to leave behind the ways of their parents. Sex might begin as an embarrassed fumbling toward the life of the senses, but soon it acquired a cultural, even an ideological aspect , becoming an essential part of the struggle to Americanize themselves.[19]

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18. Michael Gold, Jews Without Money (NY: Avon, 1972 reprint of 1931 edition) p.6; see also: Jane Addams, Twenty Years at Hull House (1910), Lincoln Steffens' Autobiography(1931), Lillian Wald, The House on Henry Street (1915), Emma Goldman, Living My Life which describes red-light districts and prostitution. Maude E.Miner's Slavery of Prostitution (1916) contends that a relatively large number of women arrested for prostitution were Jewish.

19. Irving Howe, The World of Our Fathers, p.262

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One of the most significant features of the Lower East Side was the pushcart.[20] These small wagons transformed the street from a thoroughfare into a marketplace and the economic activity which surrounded them merged with social relations. Here families bought their food, utensils and clothing - the black "Polish" bread, the "Jewish" beer, cheeses and pickles, fruit and vegetables, fish and meat. Often pushcarts were run by families, not only to allow children to participate in the family "business" but also because it was easier to contend with boys who were tempted to "snitch" something from the cart. This was apparently a favorite activity of children and a plague to pushcart owners. In one incident which involved stealing potatoes from a pushcart (hoping to "roast a mickey" in a tin can) one of the boys was caught. In the process, the pushcart was overturned and instead of leaving, all the boys returned to help replace the potatoes and onions that had spilled into the street.[21] This indicated a subtle moral code: that comrades were not abandoned, and that one did not jeopardize the business of a street vendor who was part of the community.

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20. Pushcarts could be rented for about 10¢ a day, and a license obtained for $25 a year; in 1899 the license fee was reduced from $15 to $4. Thus, the initial investment, aside from the goods sold, was relatively small, see: Harry Roskolenko, The Time That Was (NY:Dial Press,1971) pp.92-93 ; and also Mayor's Pushcart Commission, Report (1906) There were 4,515 pushcarts at the time in New York City, most of them operated by Jews and Italians. Padrones among ethnic groups often controlled multiple licenses - one as many as 170 carts - and hired new immigrants to run them. Thomas Kessner, The Golden Door, notes that a majority of peddlers were Russian and Polish Jews.

21. I.S.Young, op.cit., p.50

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A common establishment on the street was the saloon. Despite the antagonism of the temperance movement and reformers, public houses proliferated and played an important social function in the community. They provided free lunches, amusements and music, and could be used for parties and dances. For a nickle one could play a game of billiards and get a glass of beer, a box of cigarettes or a soft drink. As gathering places, saloons had direct political functions, especially during election times. They were places where one could find out about a job and were identified with the working class in function and name (e.g. "Workingman's Club," "Mechanics' Exchange," "Milkman's Exchange," etc.)[22] The barbershop quartet became popular in saloons, as did ragtime, honkytonk and similar musical styles. Saloons were thus places of entertainment, politics and on occasion, of relief and charity. It was one of those communal institutions, like the candy store, which developed from the life of the street and the community. It was also attacked by reformers.

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22. Royal Melendy, "The Saloon in Chicago," American Journal of Sociology, v.6, no.3, Nov.1900

Raymond Spaulding," Saloons of the District," University Settlement Bulletin (1899)

Upton Sinclair, The Jungle (NY: Signet, 1960 reprint of 1905) "The saloon keeper stood in with all the big politics men in the district..." p.21

Ernest Moore, "The Social Value of the Saloon," American Journal of Sociology, v.3 (July, 1897)

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> In some parts of our cities may be found a dozen or more saloons in a single block and in many places where streets intersect, these schools of crime are in full operation on each of the four corners. On Oliver Street there is a block in which there are 13 saloons. There are nearly 8,000 saloons and barrooms in New York ... [23]

Saloons provided space for community activities as well. In one instance, Jane Addams discovered an "Anarchist Sunday School" meeting in the back of a Chicago saloon.[24]

The candy store (of which there were about 50 in the Tenth Ward) functioned as a social center largely for older teenagers. It sold cigars, cigarettes and usually had a small lunchroom or soda fountain with a few tables. The owner usually lived in the rear of the store.[25]

In a sense, the soda fountain was a corollary to the saloon or cafe; it gave a social context to adolescents who wanted a special place for themselves. It offered a place where boys and girls could meet, and where, like cafes, it was socially acceptable to congregate, since no alcoholic beverages were served. It was particularly important to adolescents and young adults for whom new dating patterns were being established. Its development and its identification with an older group of adolescents underscore the emerging context of a youth culture with its own separate

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23. W.I.Hull, "The Children of the Other Half," Arena v.17 (December-June, 1896-1897), p.1046

24. Allen Davis, American Heroine (NY:Oxford, 1973) p.55

25. Benjamin Rich, "A New Social Center, the Candy Store as a Social Influence," University Settlement Bulletin (1899)

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institutions. In candy stores teen-age youths could congregate in an emerging "street-corner society" "composed not of wanderers, but of neighborhood toughs who preferred the life of the street to the 'pestiferous tenements' of their parents."[26] The development of the candy store also coincides with an enormous increase in sugar consumption of Americans, and the affluence of adolescents who had their own income or allowance. To a large extent, the soda fountain "jerk" became a youth culture "hero," the focal point of social activities (as the bartender was for adults), and the epitome of a modern American youth who would appeal to a growing number of high school students.[27]

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26. Joseph Kett, Rites of Passage, op. cit., p.170

27. A good example of this is the main character in Archie comic books. His entire life revolves around rivalries with Reggie and dates with Veronica or Betty. There seems to be a purposelessness and irresponsibility to his life, a sense that he and his friends are on the verge of something, but not quite there - ever. The success of these comics indicates their popularity with youths of a similar age range.

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Street Life and Street Games

With tenement house apartments converted into workshops during the day, and sleeping quarters for a fairly large number of people at night, it was only natural and practical that the street would be utilized to its maximum advantage. Only a few apartments had modern conveniences for bathing and cleaning. Access to bathrooms was through a hallway, or more often outside the building. Congested apartments made it necessary for children to leave when and if possible, especially because there was little room to play.

Because children are often their own best teachers Americanization was incorporated in street games, songs and other forms of play that taught children the process of assimilation. Streets were also sources of valuable things which children collected, including cards, stamps and coupons used in advertising which were used as items of exchange to be matched, traded or bartered.[28]

Girls seemed to be more restricted in their use of streets, partly because of parental apprehensions, but also because they were expected to care for younger children in or near the home and participate in household chores. In general, girls were excluded from games with boys. Younger

28. Frederick King, "Influences in Street Life," University Settlement Bulletin (1900)

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girls played with bean bags (a bag filled with pits or stones); older girls played "potsy" (or "potsies"), a kind of hopscotch which involved kicking a piece of material from one square to another. Girls also played "jack-stones" (which had replaced "mumblety-peg"), raced hoops, skipped rope and played house.[29]

As asphalt replaced stone paving in the late 1880's and early 1890's streets became more useful as playgrounds because the surface was cleaner, smoother and dried more quickly after a rain. Prior to asphalt paving, streets were often muddy, slippery and full of holes when it rained, and dry and dusty when it did not.

> ...a transformation is being worked in some of the filthiest streets on the East Side by a combination of new asphalt pavements with greatly improved street-cleaning services... [30]

Since hydrants were used to clean the streets, drainage was important. Children took impromptu showers (sometimes with their clothes on) when hydrants were turned on, and instant pools of water were places to cool one's feet, sail a makeshift boat, or splash a passer-by.

The East River was the nearest body of water to the East Side of New York and during the summer it was common to find young boys swimming and diving from the piers along

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29. W.I.Hull, "Children of the Other Half," op.cit. see also: Frank Chapman, "A City Playground," St. Nicholas v.18 (May-October, 1891) These games which girls played did not take them away from primary responsibilities of taking care of small children or doing errands. See: Catherine Brody, "A New York Childhood" American Mercury v.14, no.53 (May, 1928)

30. Jacob Riis, Children of the Poor, op.cit., p.162

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its banks. This was illegal, however, probably because there was some danger of drowning, and boys could be arrested if caught swimming on the vicinity. Picture cards of the time portrayed a policeman pulling a boy out of the water and dragging him away by the ear, presumably to be arrested.

During the 1890's, baseball became the most popular game among boys. It was often played in the street on cobblestones with street car tracks dividing the field and a variety of wagons and vehicles constantly passing through the game. Since it was prohibited to play baseball in the street, there were also interruptions when a policeman appeared.

There were also several variations and substitutes for baseball, which indicated the adaptability and inventiveness of the boys. These games showed the influence of other adult games which the boys incorporated. One variation was "stick-ball" in which a broomstick or piece of wood was used as a bat, a homemade or rubber ball was found, and the street was used as a playing field - including whatever vehicles, pushcarts or traffic happened to be there at the moment. Making a stockingball combined ingenuity with skills learned at home.

> We would take a stocking, black of course, and cut off the foot. Then we would scrounge around for rags. When we had sewed up one end of the sock (I learned later we were actually using the art of stuffing derma), we would stuff in the rags, pounding the stocking so it would be tight and hard, until the ball was about six inches in diameter. 31

31. I.S.Young, op.cit., p.75

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One bears some resemblance to cricket and may be an imitation of that game. Two bricks are placed on the sidewalk, opposite each other and about four inches apart; across them is laid a small stick six or eight inches in length. This constitutes a "wicket" before which the batsman stands. The bowler occupies the usual position and rolls the ball over the pavement at the wicket trying to dislodge the stick resting on bricks. If the stick is dislodged, or the batsman is caught out, or is thrown out while running, a new batsman takes his place. In this game but one base, generally a neighboring telegraph pole is required.

Another and more singular game has for its foundation an ash-barrel. Across the top of this is placed a board two or three inches in width, which projects about the same distance over the rims of the barrel. On one of these projecting ends a ball is balanced; the batsman then takes his bat and with all his strength strikes the other end of the board. The ball flies up and away...and the batsman, should he not be caught out, attempts to run to a base and return before the ball can be fielded "home"...

Marbles we shall see every kind, "miggles" and "alleys", "taws"and"agates." Generally the games are played in a ring drawn with chalk on the sidewalk, for holes are not made or found here so easily as they are in your playground.

After every rain-storm there is an outbreak of "suckers.". A circular piece of rather heavy leather, two or three inches in diameter, has a string passed through a hole in the center and a large knot both stops up the hole and prevents the string from pulling through. For some unknown reason, "suckers" are at times very popular; nearly every boy in the street has one, and the curbs will be dotted with figures soaking these leathern disks in the muddy water of the gutters. For, to be effective, the "sucker" must be thoroughly moistened, when it becomes sufficiently pliable to adhere closely to the paving or cobblestone upon which the boys pat it with their feet. The air being completely driven out from between the leather and stone, the pressure caused by the weight of the air is all from above, fourteen pounds of it to every square inch of leather, so you see that in theory they may carry the cobblestone with ease so far as the "sucker" is concerned...(however) owing to slight irregularities in the surface of the leather the "sucker" rarely adheres with all its sucking-power, and for this reason it is considered quite a feat to carry a stone ten yards or more...[32]

32. Frank Chapman, "A City Playground," op.cit. pp.513-614

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Stoopball was another popular game. It involved a few children and was thus easier to organize than stickball or baseball. In stoopball one threw a ball against the stairs of a building and the others tried to catch it. Sometimes it was scored like baseball (i.e. bounces were "base hits" and there were 3 outs, etc.)

Jewish boys liked to play a game called "one o'cat," a type of baseball in which the ball was replaced by a 3-4 inch piece of wood pointed at both ends. Eight to ten players were divided into two teams. There were no pitchers. The batter simply threw the piece of wood in the air, or hit it lightly and then swung with all his might. Like baseball, the object was to touch as many bases as possible before the other team retrieved the "ball."[33]

Children also played a game called "playing tinker," in which an old can, outfitted with a wire handle, was filled with ashes, coals or any combustible material, still aflame. The pail was then swung around in circles - hopefully without the loss of any of its contents. The sight of these whirling fire-pails in the evening must have been a strange and beautiful sight, despite their danger.

These examples of childrens' play in streets demonstrate the use of elements of their own environment, transformed into games, and the creation of their own forms of expression.

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33. J.A.Puffer, "Boy Gangs," Pedagogical Seminary, v.12 (June, 1905)

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Playing with marbles was inexpensive and an easily accessible form of amusement (or gambling). Multi-colored marbles were called "immies" and those which were solid-colored were called "puries." One game which children played involved drawing a circle into which players deposited their marbles. In turn, each player than tried to knock the other players' marbles out of the circle. This game has some similarity to billiards, with which children were familiar, as well as folk and ethnic games, such as the Italian game, bocci, played with heavy metal balls. In fact, the intermingling of traditional and modern games with every-day life was an important aspect of assimilation.

> Newsboys who are too young, too discreet (sic), or too impecunious to gamble amuse themselves with games of agility which the Italian boys have introduced during the past few years. One of these resembles the American schoolboy game of sheepfold, but has been christened in the park "swipe de base"; and another which seems to be the Italian idea of our "three old cat" is called "chase de rub." I believe "rub" is an abbreviation of rubber ball. But I am not sure, for it is never easy, and sometimes impossible to secure an English translation of newsboy language. "Nextry" is a condensed form of "Do you want an extra." "Rextry" is a condensed form of "Here is your extra." The newsboys of the lower end of town speak an identical dialect whether they are Irish, Italian, or Jewish. 34

Both boys and girls played "Prisoner's Base" (or "Prisoner's Den"). One side dared the other to touch their side of the street without being caught (and made a prisoner).

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34. New York Times, August 12, 1902 p.12

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When one side was sufficiently depleted, a tug-of-war ensued to rescue the prisoners, that is, to attempt to equalize the sides again. Other games had traditional origins.

> I watched a crowd of them (children) having a donkey party in the street one night, when those parties were all the rage. The donkey hung in the window of a notion store, and a knot of tenement-house children with tails improvised from a newspaper, and dragged in the gutter to make them stick, were staggering blindly across the sidewalk trying to fix them in place on the pane. They got a heap of fun out of the game ... until the storekeeper came out with his club. Every cellar door became a toboggan slide...unless it is hammered full of envious nails; every block a ball ground when the policeman's back is turned, and every roof a kite field; for that innocent amusement is also forbidden by city ordinance "below 14th Street."[35]

The most popular games were: playing with fire (starting bonfires, etc.) shooting craps (dice), pitching or matching pennies, marbles, potsie, leapfrog, jumping rope, baseball, cat (also called "one-o-cat"), buttons and tops (trying to split an opponent's top). In a game called "buttons," the players threw buttons against a wall; the one who was closest to the wall threw all his buttons in the air and was allowed to keep all those that landed "heads up"; the boy who came in second did the same, and so on. This was also played for cigarette pictures, pennies, or any flat item. It was also noted that "running games such as tag, prisoner's base, etc., are being replaced by cramped games such as leap frog, hop scotch, etc."[36] Other games included:

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35. Jacob Riis, Children of the Poor (in Cordasco edition) p. 165

36. John Chase, "Street Games of New York City," Pedagogical Seminary, v.12 (1905), p.503-504

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> tag, hide and seek, relievo, hoist the sail, chase by, run sheep run, leapfrog, kick the can, bull(deer) in the ring, puss in the corner, detective, hare and hounds, fox and geese, prisoner's base, blind man's bluff, snap the whip, duck the rock...[37]

Other activities included throwing snowballs, roller skating, playing with hoops and tops, flying and taming pigeons and boxing (one could make $5 or $10 in a preliminary fight).[38]

Political activity was also an entertainment for children rather than an act of honor or conscience. Politicians hired small boys to wear buttons or hang white cloths with their candidate's name from fire escapes. Election night provided an excuse for lighting bonfires throughout the city (a custom with English origins) which lit up the sky but also started fires in buildings. The police seemed reluctant or powerless to repress this activity especially around election time or holidays.

> The boys, organized in gangs, with the one condition of membership that all must "give in wood," store up enormous piles of fuel for months before, and though the police find and raid a good many of them, incidentally laying in supplies of kindling wood for the winter, the pile grows again in a single night, as the neighborhood reluctantly contributes its ash barrels to the cause. [39]

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37. J.A.Puffer, "Boy Gangs," op.cit

38. John Martin, "Social Life in the Street," University Settlement Bulletin (1899)

39. Jacob Riis, Children of the Poor, op.cit. p.166

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On July 4th, children exploded firecrackers and often ran into the police who sought to suppress this activity. Riis objected to these restrictions upon children and attributed more anti-social activity of gangs to this early suppression of "harmless delight." Apparently, one of the ways older boys established their status among their peers was to fight with the police (as well as among themselves).

> Greater even than his desire eventually to "down" a policeman, is his ambition to be a "gentleman," as his sister's to be a "lady." The street is responsible for the caricature either makes of the character. On a playbill I saw in an East Side street, only the other day, this repertoire was set down: "Thursday - The Bowery Tramp; Friday - The Thief." [40]

The origin and meaning of children's games are obscure. Many include representations of animals and fantasies which have special significance to children. Like fairy tales and myths, games are ways in which children learn to deal with reality and mitigate disturbing aspects of growing up.[41] One game was called "hon-pon." In it, two boys were designated "it"; one was "master," the other "cuckoo."

> The cuckoo was picked by a round of "Eeny, Meeny, or of fist-knocking for the pebble; and he in turn, chooses his master...The cuckoo, facing him, bends forward at right angles and rests his head against the master's stomach. He is blindfolded, and the master lays his fists on the cuckoo's back.[42]

All the boys then shout "hon-pon-kuck-a-da-hook" (a con-

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40. Ibid., p.167

41. For an analysis of fairy tales see: Bruno Bettleheim, The Uses of Enchantment (NY: Random House, 1975)

42. Robert Dunn, "Games of the City Street," Outing, v.22 (June, 1904)

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structed language, perhaps) several times and the "master" after choosing one boy from the group, asks :

> The wind blows East/ The wind blows West
> The wind blows over the cuckoo's nest;
> Shall he go East? Shall he go West?
> Shall he go under the cuckoo's nest?

The "cuckoo" choses a direction and the master tells him to go to some designated spot. If the "cuckoo" tells the boy to go "under the nest," the boy who was chosen must crawl beneath the "cuckoo." This continues until all of the boys are either "under the nest," or waiting at some place for the next stage of the game. When all of the boys were dispersed, the "master" shouted "Hon-pon-kuck-a-da-hook" three times; on the third time the "cuckoo" stood up and everyone who was hiding ran back to the "master" and "cuckoo." As each one arrived, he was beaten with knotted handkerchiefs or rags. The last one in, rewarded for having endured the most slaps, was made the next "cuckoo." This ritualized form of aggression allowed the boys an opportunity to express hostility within the group to engage in initiation rites as well as demonstrate preferences and hierarchies within the group. If the "master" had a grudge against a particular boy, he sent him farthest away so that he received the heaviest beatings. Nevertheless, a sense of equilibrium was achieved by giving that boy a chance to express his own preferences.

Other games were "hi-spy," "cops and robbers,"

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"ringalevio" (the Brooklyn name), "kick-the-wicket," "sixty-o," "throw (or fling) the stick," "I-spy-the-wolf" (played on the East Side of New York), "Yankee-dar-doo (or naroo)" (played in Harlem and the Bronx), and "Yoller."[43]

In ringalevio, the person who was "it" covered his eyes and counted (if it was 60, the game was called "sixty-o"). When he began to hunt, he shouted "ringalevio." The same rules applied in this game as in "hi-spy."

In "yankee-dar-doo" - similar to a game called "hare and hounds," those who hid are given a two-block start, and whenever they turned a corner, shouted "yankee-dar-doo," in order to give some hint (or 'scent') of their whereabouts. In order to be caught before getting back to the goal, the person must be tagged three times. As each one was caught he was transformed from "hare " into "hound " and helped catch the others, thus ensuring cooperation rather than isolation. In "throw-the-stick"(a version of "yankee-dar-doo") a stick was placed at the goal. If a boy reached the goal without being caught and threw the stick, all the prisoners were freed and the person who was "it" had to retreive the stick while everyone hid again.

Apparently, in some cities, "prisoner's base" was considered a girls' game, though this was not the case in New York. This game of tag involved constant equalization of the sides.

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43. A description of 36 games played at the time is in Stewart Culin, "Street Games of Boys in Brooklyn, N.Y." Journal of American Folk-Lore, v.4 (1891)

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> Two opposing goal lines, often street curbs chalked off for ten yards or so, with a danger area between in which the "it" tries to catch the players as they run from goal to goal, is the principle under all. In ringrover, whenever the "it" yells, "Ring-rover, ring-rover / Come over, come over," every player must make a dash for the other side, past the "it" who tries to catch and tag him three times. In versions that allow you to cross at your own sweet will, the "it" only has to tag to catch; and in nearly all versions the boys caught stay between the goal to help him.

Although there were variations (ring-rover, grand-daddy, corey, and pump-pump-pull-away) in nearly all of them the first one caught became "it" for the next round. In the Brooklyn version of this game, called "hop-a-da-goose"

> A rectangle about six by ten feet is marked on the sidewalk with chalk, or coal, or arc carbon. This is the den in which the "it" can walk on both feet, but may leave only by taking a hop-skip-and-jump. If he wants to go farther than that he must hop on one leg. The players to be caught crowd around him shouting,
> Hop-a-da-goose, hop-a-da-goose
> Come out of your den,
> Whoever you catch
> Is one of your men.

The boy who is "it" however, does not move until the others get closer, and then, with a hop-skip, he dives for them. If he lets both feet touch the ground, he must return to the "den" before the other players pile on him and beat him with knotted handkerchiefs or rags.

> "Duck-on-the-rock" is played with a baseball:
>
> The crowd's hats are lined up on one curb and a boy with the baseball from the other tries to toss it into someone's hat. Whoever gets it so, runs to get the ball while the crowd scoots the other way. As he picks it up, he shouts, "Stand" at which all must stop in their tracks, while the ball is hurled to "sting" anyone in sight; and the boy hit "rolls" for the next round.44

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44. Ibid

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In a game called "over" (played in areas of the city with houses and yards), two sides are divided on either side of a house. A ball is tossed from one side to the other.

> If the ball isn't caught the first time, it is thrown back; if not the second time, it passes to the other side. When it is caught, the crowd having it stampedes around the house and whoever is caught and tagged by the boy holding the ball under his coat - the point is, the other side never knows who holds it - goes over to the invading party. The game is won by the side which takes all the players. 45

On August 1, an event called "launching Day" was celebrated by boys along the docks of the East Side, with the avid observation and sometimes participation of the longshoremen and "dock rats." On this day, "poor urchins were sent out at dawn to spear drift-wood in the river by bending a horseshoe nail and fixing it to the end of a broomstick." When he had gathered his bundle of wood, probably for sale, he was jumped by a gang of "dock rats" (probably older boys) who promptly tossed the boy into the river. The "dock rats" were also fond of throwing well-dressed kids into the water as well. If the boy could not swim, he was rescued by the gang and sometimes taken back to his home with a demand for a reward for saving him from drowning.

It is difficult to know precisely what these games represented, or how they changed over time, or who played them. They were not only pastimes, but also provided

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45. Ibid

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natural outlets for physical and psychic energy. Games are also a blend of real and imaginary aspects of life. They have almost ritual or ceremonial aspects primarily directed towards the socialization of children.[46] As children spent more time in schools and settlements where their play was supervised and organized, the kinds of games they played changed. Moreover, changing perceptions of the world are reflected in games. In one study, it was found that children's game preferences changed from 1898 to 1921 and again to 1959 towards an increasing similarity between boys and girls games. This study concluded that greater sexual equality in society, less segregation of women, increased prominence of women in sports and society generally accounted for this growing convergence.[47]

While games may represent fantasies or rituals, they also correspond to living and working conditions. As definitions of self and society (both of peers and adults) games also attempt to set structures for acting out roles, testing values, behavior, expressing anger, competition or other emotions in socially acceptable ways. Games are also ways of teaching oneself and others (e.g. math, language and poetry).

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46. One analysis of children's games reduced them to the following categories: competitive/challenge (which express power by an individual), chase/capture, imitative/make-believe, team/co-operative, individual, skill, board and card games, organized sports, gambling/chance, status/ranking and others. See: Brian Sutton Smith, The Folkgames of Children (1972), B.Sutton-Smith and R.Herron, Child's Play(1971), and B.Sutton-Smith and E.Avedon, The Study of Games (1971)

47. B.Sutton-Smith and B.G.Rosenberg, "Sixty Years of Historical change in the Game Preferences of American Children," in Sutton-Smith and Herron, Child's Play (1971)

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Children's rhymes are a form of folk poetry which can be modified to fit the particular needs or conditions of the game. They also reflect real-life situations, often helping a child to come to terms with a situation which is conflicting or uncomfortable. For example:

Oh say, kid
What do you think I did?
I upset the cradle
And out fell the kid.
The kid began to holler,
I took him by the collar,
Collar broke loose,
And I got the deuce.

Rooms to let. Inquire within.
A lady was put out for drinking gin.
If she promises to drink no more
Here's a key to Anna's back door.

They may also have been intended to teach counting:

One, two, button your shoe
Three, four, shut the door...

Others taught patriotic themes associated with the melting pot:

Red, white and blue ("Rope held over jumper")
Stars over you ("Rope turned")
My father was an Irishman ("Jump")
My mother was a Jew.

And others were associated with household tasks:

Mabel, Mabel, set the table
Don't forget the salt, vinegar, mustard, pepper.
("Jump faster with each article named")

They also may reflect anti-authority expressions (perhaps referring to a teacher):

Tinkle bells and cockle shells,
EVIV over,
Mary Mack, dressed in black,
Silver buckles down her back!

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And, of course, many of them referred to dates with boys:

Twelve o'clock striking
Mother, may I go out?
All the boys are waiting,
For to take me out. [48]

A game of Philadelphia children danced by girls in the street told a story of courtship:

Water, water, wild-flowers
floating up so high
we are all young ladies
and we're sure to die
except -------
she's a fine lady.
Fie! fie! fie! for shame
Turn your back and tell your beau's name -------
---------'s a fine young man
he stand's at the door with his hat in his hand
Down comes -----, all dressed in white
a flower in her bosom and herself so white...
He knocks at the door and picks up a pin
And asks if Miss ------is in
"She's neither in, she's neither out
She's up in the garret walking about
Down she comes as white as milk
A rose in her bosom as soft as silk..." [49]

Often the stories deal with economic hardships:

Mama bought me a pincushion, pincushion
Mama bought me a pincushion, one, two, three.
What did Mama pay for it? Paid with Papa's feather-bed.
What will Papa sleep on? Sleep in the washtub.
What will Mama wash in? Wash in a thimble.
What will Mama sew with? Sew with a poker.
What will Mama poke with? Poke with her finger.
Supposing Mama burns herself? [50]

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48. Winifred Smith, "A Modern Child's Game Rhymes" Journal of American Folk-Lore, v.39 (1926), pp.82-85 (While in Central Park one afternoon I listened to several girls rhyming as they jumped rope: " EVIV over, here comes teacher with a big fat stick; I wonder what she's got for arithmetic...now its time for spelling...etc.")

49. The American Anthropologist, v.12 (1899) p.292

50. "A Dance Rhyme of Children in Brooklyn, N.Y." The American Anthropologist , v.12.(1899), p.293

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There are also counting-out rhymes which describe violence:

> My Mother and your mother were hanging out clothes.
> My mother gave your mother a punch in the nose.
> What color was the blood? RED![51]

Games which referred to a child-stealing witch have universal appeal (especially the myth of Lilith). In these games a child-stealing monster/devil/demon lurks around the house, obtains entrance under false pretences and steals the children; the children are pursued and rescued.[52]

Well-to-do children on New York's Upper West Side were overheard to shout various formalized cries of hostility, such as " -------is a sissy," or "Run and tell your mammy." Others were more insulting: "Nigger, Nigger never die/ Black face and shiney eye." There were, in addition tc the usual taunts familiar today, chants "of Negro origin":

> Juba.Juba
> Juba this and Juba that,
> and Juba kill the yellow cat
> To make his wife a Sunday hat. Juba![53]

Unfortunately, there is no indication that certain chants were identified with specific ethnic groups - an argument for their homogenizing effect.

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51. The American Anthropologist, v.31, 1918 p.274 This may also have been a reference to the "Red scare" i.e., the communists.
52. Ibid., v.13 (1900) see also v.3 (1890) pp.139,315
53. Anna Stimson, "Cries of Defiance and Derision, and Rhythmic Chants of West Side New York City, 1893-1903" Journal of American Folk-Lore, v.58 (1945)

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Children also tatto oed themselves:

> These tattooings were made with thin pictures, drawn on a system of dots and colored. The boys may have collected them. They probably came with cigars. From time to time we would manage to get some of them from our brothers, and the proper thing to do was to spread the picture on one's hand, face down, moisten the back with the tongue or a few drops of water and then rub it evenly. The tattoo-pictures would resist soap and water for a long time. Furthermore, they held the spice of danger. We always thought the colors might give us blood poisoning. [54]

Games, sports and activities of children had many aspects. They were basic socializing experiences, teaching not only about one's relationships with peers, but about the new culture. On one hand, a process of adaptation and innovation occurred; on the other, reformers sought through organized play to train social conscience. [55] Both became sources for the new definition of childhood. That definition, once related to one's work or participation in community activity, was now a function of the new life-styles of children.

> ...the process of maturation...is signaled by people taking the role of spectator with increasing frequency, so much that they "forget" that their activities produce all of social life. Children also find a world that they never made, but their accomodation to that world is suffused with resistance. They insist not only on re-creating the world made by significant adults, but on creating both an imaginary and real world of their own. [56]

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54. Catherine Brody, "A New York Childhood" American Mercury v.14, no.53 (May, 1928) p. 58

55. See for example, Henry Curtis, Education Through Play (1915)

56. Stanley Aronowitz, False Promises (NY:McGraw-Hill, 1973) p.67

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Gangs

One of the important phenomena noted by reformers and those who worked with youth was the rise of gangs[57] - particularly because they believed gangs were symptoms of social disorganization, and a threat to social stability. Robert Woods, for example, attempted to show the relationship between gangs and political corruption, focusing upon immigrant/tenement house sections of the city as breeding-grounds for these associations.[58] But gangs then as now (and throughout history) were pretty much a way of life for boys accustomed to an often violent environment. Gangs functioned to give group support, as mechanisms of protection and socialization. Because boys tend to go out into the world at an earlier age than girls, the gang stands as a half-way house, extended family and mediator between the harsh realities of the world and the protected environment of the home. As restrictive as they can be, they also provide opportunities for activities considered improper or illicit at home and are significant sources of sex-role identity.

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57. Some question may be raised as to the legitimacy of "gangs" as a category. However, since this term was used by contemporary observers, I have retained it.

58. Robert Woods, The City Wilderness: A Settlement Study... South Boston (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1898)

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Though not unique to this period, gangs constitute an aspect of what male children (for the most part) had to contend with as part of their initiation into peer groups and society as well. They represent not only expressions of power and status, but modes of identity and value formation. Despite their preoccupation with violence, gangs are essentially conservative and communal within the membership, and highly possessive outside the group. They function both to insulate and expose, in preparation for adulthood.

Gangs of boys developed according to the streets they inhabited[59] - which often gave them ethnic homogeneity. As such, the ethnic rivalries and suspicions of their parents (or the dominant culture) were reflected in the antagonisms between gangs, attitudes towards others and behavior/value systems. In the literature of that time and in personal conversations with people who were children in New York and other large cities at the turn of the century, constant references were made to getting beaten up by another ethnic gang, particularly if one strayed into alien territory.

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59. Stewart Culin ("Street Games of Boys in Brooklyn, N.Y.") lists the names and street locations of 50 gangs in Philadelphia, Pa., most of them among the "lower classes"; although secret organizations, Culin was able to discover several initiation rites which resembled games. For example: "FIRE is a game in which the new boy is made a fireman, who is sent in search of a fire; and when he cries out, as he has been instructed, "Fire!fire! fire!" the others come running from their engine-house, and salute him with a shower of stones." (p.237)

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J.Adams Puffer, who worked with juvenile delinquents in various Massachusetts institutions, saw gangs as the basis for the formation of a new set of definitions of identity, related to the development of adolescence, as a basis for "cooperation, self-sacrifice, loyalty, team play."

> That is what the gang is for. There the future businessman, politician, or citizen first practices the great art of getting on with other people. 60

This basically positive approach to gang formation reflected a growing belief that boys of this age were "little savages" and that with proper direction the fundamentally constructive aspects of the gang could be used to develop "little citizens."

> The gang is sacred as an expression of the friendship-making capacity of mankind...It marks the coming of the child out of the little self-centered years of childhood into the larger life of the neighborhood, the community and of society. 61

Perhaps the most important concept to the gang itself was that of "turf" - a specific area which was seen as an extension of one's home, and one's possession. Any actual or threatened invasion of this area was considered tantamount to an attack and fierce loyalties were established on this concept of territoriality. Thus, names of gangs were often taken from street or meeting places of the gang.

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60. J.Adams Puffer, The Boy and His Gang (Boston:Houghton-Mifflin, 1912) see also "Boy Gangs" Pedagogical Seminary v.12 (June, 1905)

61. William Forbush, The Coming Generation (NY:Appleton andCo, 1912), p.41

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The prevailing attitude toward gangs as "savage" and "primitive" (corresponding to theories of adolescence) was summarized in the following way:

> C.D.Warner, Being a Boy says "Any boy who is good for anything is a natural savage." "The child," says Ellis (Havelock Ellis, The Criminal)"is naturally by his organization, nearer to the animal, to the savage, to the criminal, than the adult..."The boy's gang seems to have many profits in common with a savage tribe. As Gulick (Luther Gulick, "Psychological and Religious Aspects of Group Games," Pedagogical Seminary, v.4 (March, 1899) says:"Savages who have reached the stage of cooperation under a chief, of fighting in organized groups, are doing that which the Anglo-Saxon boy commences to do soon after he is twelve...At the dawn of adolescence the impulse to migrate or wander shows a sudden increase."
> Savages are cruel, and maltreatment of persons outside of their own tribe is admired...The boy does not fall behind the savage in the unkind treatment of strangers. The savage tribe has a sense of possession of the territory which they occupy and will fight to hold it. The boy's gang likewise has a feeling of ownership... Savages live in dug-outs, tents and rude houses. The boys show a great love for out-door life and wild rude life...The less civilized a people the more informal are their methods of procedure in selecting officers or making laws and customs. The gang is thoroughly informal...Virtues most admired in the savage tribe and the gang are the same. Courage...truthfulness, fidelity and loyalty...62

These characterizations of gangs and youths were important aspects of a new conception of childhood which has been discussed previously. Increasing attention to the gang as a social process was an important ingredient in the development of "boys work" which is discussed in the following chapter.

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62. J.Adams Puffer, "Boy Gangs," Pedagogical Seminary, v.12 (June, 1905) pp.202-203

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Nicknames, that is, special names from peers (rather than family) based on initial perceptions, were important in initiation and acceptance of the individual within the gang, as well as a new sources of identity. They signified who he was to others based on some outstanding characteristic or difference - skin color, ethnic background, etc.

Generally gangs had a single leader who made the decisions and who was the oldest, or most powerful. The fact that no communal structure develops in gangs suggests the importance of the creation of an authority figure who is, at the same time, of the same peer group. This was consistent with the fundamental value of the gang: loyalty. All activity was based in one way or another on maintaining peer group solidarity. Initiation rites usually involved a test of one's endurance, strength, courage and loyalty. The gang was based on forms of male bonding and usually had little to do with girls, whom they often treated roughly. Gang activity was generally predatory (stealing), fighting, and playing games/sports.[63]

63. Luther Gulick, director of physical training in New York City's public schools, believed that despite the mischievous and illegal activities of some gangs, they also taught loyalty and cooperation through games and sports. Gulick advocated school athletic programs to channel primitive aggressive instincts into team sports. Both gang and team activities represented sharing, cooperative experiences that made for proper "citizens." The "gang instinct" was not to be destroyed, but incorporated into new forms of social relations...
Luther Gulick, "Games and Gangs," Lippincott's Monthly Magazine v.88, no.523 (July, 1911)

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Delinquency was apparently a major problem among poorer ethnic groups in the city, and some reformers tended to associate certain kinds of crime with particular ethnic groups. Jacob Riis believed that Jewish gangs were involved in stealing, while Irish gangs were mainly engaged in fighting.[64] Judge Ben Lindsey stated that half of the gangs he worked with were Jewish, and according to Riis, Jewish children accounted for relatively high percentages of children who were arrested throughout the period. Whether there was in fact a significant change in the behavior of Jewish children in urban areas is difficult to determine. Many Jewish children were arrested for minor offenses such as peddling or begging without a license. This does not constitute serious criminal activity and reflects more dire economic circumstances than anti-social activity. It is probably true that petty thefts and pickpocketing were as common among Jewish children as among other groups. That large numbers of children engaged in these activities may be more indicative of social and cultural disorganization and economic deprivation than immorality.[65]

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64. Jacob Riis, The Battle With the Slums, op. cit. Riis did not mention gangs among other ethnic groups, e.g. Italians.

65. Irving Howe, The World of Our Fathers noted that crime among Jewish youths seemed to rise shortly after the turn of the century; nearly 30% of all children arrested were Jewish. p.263

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Gangs of Jewish boys (from 6 or 8 to 20 years old) were usually from the "unskilled, poorer classes."

> Jewish boys of this class have a strong tendency toward playing the petty thief much more than toward drinking or committing an occasional misdemeanor, as is characteristic of other nationalities. Jewish boys make substantial profit by thieving, so much so that they are able, in certain cases, to hire furnished rooms, where they may live...The members of the "tough" gang either comes from the poorest homes or from homes where plenty of money is given them by parents and where there is a corresponding lack of incentive on their part to earn an honest living.[66]

One trick of such gangs was to start a fake fight and while people were watching, the rest of the gang would go through the pockets of the crowd. In one gang of 8-10 year olds, they were either homeless or had run away from home. They lived by stealing from pushcarts and slept wherever they could. If one of their members were arrested, the rest would pool their resources and raise the bail necessary to free him, as well as pay off the police.

One gang activity that was useful to the community was stealing coal from trains. Myron Adams described how a dozen boys hopped a slow-moving freight train carrying coal and threw off pieces, without apparent interference from the crew or flagmen.

> Numerous women and children who had watched the operations upon the trains now appeared as if by magic from the houses...(and) carted it off throughout the neighborhood. [67]

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66. Frederick King, "Influences of Street Life," University Settlement Bulletin (1900) p.31
see also: Harry Roskolenko, The Time That Was Then, p.103

67. Myron Adams, "Railroads and Juvenile Crime," Survey v.15 (1906)

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Apparently the activities of the boys were prearranged and were to some extent sanctioned by the railroad workers, some of whom may have had family or friends living in the neighborhood. Families living there generally regarded the railroad as an intruder and did not appear to have any qualms about "liberating" the coal. Gangs were known to break into railroad cars and steal the contents, either for sale or distribution in the neighborhood.[68] In fact, 21% of all offenses against railroads in Chicago were against the freight trains which ran through poorer sections of the city.[69] A gang in Cleveland had its headquarters in an old shanty between the Nickel Plate Railroad and the blast furnaces; they engaged in stealing from railroad cars, fruit stands, junk stores, 10¢ stores and attacking other gangs.[70] Typical of most large cities, many gangs found railroad yards to be good sources of supply and hideouts. One amusing practice of the Cleveland gang was to place rotten eggs behind books at the public library so that when the books were pushed back into place, the eggs would smash.

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68. Justice Julius Mayer, "The Child of the Large City," Survey, v.11 (1902)

69. Mable Carter Rhoades, "A Study of Delinquent Boys in the Juvenile Court of Chicago," American Journal of Sociology v.13 (1907)

70. Hiram House, Annual Report, (1908)

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Conclusion

This chapter has depicted non work-related activities of children in an effort to explore less formal modes of assimilation. Experiences on the street, in games, gangs, candy stores or saloons, communicated norms of behavior, values, and expectations which included new forms of socialization and incorporated spontaneity and autonomy with structure. While adults tended to see the street as fearful and disgusting, children transformed streets into play areas; it was an environment suited to their needs and reality. It is, of course, impossible to know what children learned from their experiences on the street; whether, for example, they saw "Kick the Can" as an exercise in "frustration-tolerance" or "Ring around the Rosy" as a form of "equalization." It would seem that "play is simply the reproduction of social roles and social structure assimilated from the adult world,"[71] that it often teaches subtle lessons about power, and is a form of testing what might be more frightening or difficult to face in reality. Contrasted with schools and settlements, the street was an environment which allowed for adaptation and challenge in a quite different way. The street was an essential ingredient in the process of Americanization.

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71. Stanley Aronowitz, False Promises, op.cit., p.59

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V. THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF CHILDREN

Settlement Houses

No institution was more typical of the dedication and involvement of the reform movement than settlement houses. Founded by socially prominent, upper class idealists, and staffed largely by middle class women, it stood in the chasm that divided immigrants and the poor from the surrounding culture that was often hostile, bewildering and shattering. Except for schools, no other institution was as influential on the lives of children and families undergoing the difficult process of assimilation.

The settlement house movement, though original in design, intention and services, did have roots in prior attempts to alleviate the immediate suffering many of those who were poor and dependent. An early precursor, for example, was the New York Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor (NYAICP). It was established after the depression of 1837-43, and, staffed usually by wealthy men, it introduced the first large-scale voluntary organization of visitors to the poor. In this way it seems to have some resemblance, at least in form, to later forms of social settlement work. The NYAICP did sponsor Hartley House at the turn of the century, but in this earlier period it retained a

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traditional organizational structure based on volunteer, non-professional help. It was not until the 1870's that a paid staff was gradually hired, giving the organization a more permanent and consistent basis.

Closer to the more conventional model of specific "youth work" was the YMCA. It was founded in Boston in 1851 by a converted Baptist sea captain, T.V.Sullivan. Fifteen years later, a similar organization was founded for women.[1] Both were primarily devoted to missionary work among young people (as Sullivan may have encountered on his voyages), and in particular middle class youths who had recently moved from the country to the city.[2]

As waves of immigrants flooded into the country during the 1840's and 1850's, child vagrancy and juvenile crime rapidly became serious and disturbing public issues. The problem was not a result of immigration, but of a general impoverishment of large numbers of people, those most affected by the pace and extent of economic and social disruption. Vast numbers of homeless and destitute children roamed the streets, sleeping in cellars and doorways, peddling and engaging in minor crimes. The problem presented by these children had been persistent and growing. In 1849, George

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1. In England the YMCA was established in 1844, the YWCA in 1855.

2. See: Joseph Kett, Rites of Passage, op.cit., p.102
David MacLoed, "Good Boys Made Better: The Boy Scouts of America, Boys Brigades and the YMCA Boys Work, 1880-1920," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin,1973), especially Chapter 3.

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Matsell, the Chief of Police in New York City, reported that 3,000 children were engaged in "infamy and sin." This was probably only the tip of the iceberg. In the Eleventh Ward, little more than half of the children were in school; the rest roamed the streets, living as best they could. Brace noted that from 100 to 150 boys were "known by the police to live exclusively by thieving and are frequently in prison...There are over 100 young girls from 11 to 17 years of age, who race the streets day and night, the younger ones sweeping crosswalks and the older ones peddling apples... and nearly all prostituting themselves."[3] From 1851 to 1853 over 300 children under 18 were arrested. It was estimated that nearly two-thirds of the vagrants were girls between the ages of 8 and 16 years old. There were, in addition, an estimated 2,400 truants in New York City. They were referred to as "wild Arabs" of the street, a picturesque way of de - scribing the nomadic, rootless quality of their lives. In 1852, the city prison held 16,000 criminals, one-quarter of whom were minors, and 800 of these were between 9 and 15 years old. It was evident that a social crisis was reaching epidemic proportions.

In response to deteriorating conditions, in February, 1853, Charles Loring Brace and a small group of friends organized the Children's Aid Society in New York City.

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3. "Early Diary of Charles Loring Brace" (unpublished manuscript at the Children's Aid Society, New York City)

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Seeking to contain the problem of "street children" Brace (through the CAS) established the first newsboy's lodging house in March, 1854. It was located in a loft on Fulton Street, and later moved to 49-51 Park Place. This was one of the first attempts to offer direct assistance to children themselves in the form of a temporary shelter (which included meals and clothes). Most of the boys who stayed at the house eked out a living as newsboys, bootblacks and errand boys; occasionally adults were permitted to stay there. There were classes in geography, and history; as the program expanded, training in industrial skills was included. But even Brace was not sanguine about the alternatives for these children and realistically sought to work within a framework which was acceptable to the boys.

> You cannot 'bind them out' they are too old; they are their own masters. You cannot offer them steady employment, that will support and remove them from the streets; they are too young for steady work. You cannot entice them into any orphan asylum, after their free life in the street, the asylum is, to their minds, a child's jail. You cannot get them into public schools; no healthy boy will go to school if he can help it, and these boys can help it. They have no friends to compel them and besides sufficient unto each day, with them, is the struggle thereof for daily bread and a night's lodging. These they must have and here is our opportunity. Offer them a good supper and a clean warm bed at a price so low that they can pay it but still at a price, so that they are not compelled to become beggars, or simply dependent on charity, and they will accept the offer... 4

4. History of the Brooklyn Children's Aid Society (1868) (no author)

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In the Fourth Ward, near Franklin Square, Brace found children living in underground cellars, attics and shacks. The children picked rags, sold fruit and the young girls prostituted themselves. Brace established an Industrial School in that ward for young girls, most of whom were Irish and German.[5] An East River Industrial School was also set up for poor girls who manufactured children's "torpedoes."[6]

There was some opposition to Brace's Industrial Schools, however, particularly from the Catholic Church, apparently because of the Protestant orientation of these schools. At the Industrial School located at 34th Street and Second Avenue, a carpenter was employed as a teacher, lessons were given and meals and lodging provided. But, as Brace sadly recalled, the response of some of the boys in the community was quite unappreciative.

> In return, they smashed out windows; they entered the premises at night and carried off everything they could find; they howled before the door and yelled, "Protestant School."[7]

Brace's unique experiment in dealing with the victims of severe social breakdown differed from traditional

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5. Most of the girls were probably Protestant at the Hudson River Industrial School (10th Ave and 27th Street). Poor Irish families lived in an area of the East 40's called "Dutch Hill" in shanties which had once been used as pig pens and hen coops.

6. Charles L.Brace, The Dangerous Classes of New York (NY: Wynkoop and Hallenbeck, 1872), p.164

7. Ibid., p.177

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solutions, namely institutionalization in one form or another. By establishing lodging houses throughout the city, he made available to poor and vagrant children an inexpensive place where they could find food and shelter, a library, some recreational facilities, and, as these houses developed, workshops and industrial schools during the day and classes that could help them learn useful trades. In such ways they resembled aspects of settlement houses.[8]

Brace was not the only one who worked with children in this way. In 1849, a group of women established a Boys' Sunday Meeting in the Eighth Ward (at 26 Wooster St., New York City) to help juvenile vagrants. Two years later this group established an Asylum for Friendless Boys (at 109 Bank St., New York City). On the eve of the Civil War several precedents had begun in work with youths, including the establishment of one of the first boys clubs in Hartford, Connecticut.

Although these early efforts on behalf of children were not settlements as they came to be defined at the turn of the century, they do bear some resemblance to the later organizations in that they attempted to provide classes, training and an arena for contact within a narrow age group. While distinctions between earlier and later forms of this work must not be blurred, there does appear to be a

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8. The genre of lodging houses is the subject of a special section of this chapter.

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sense of continuity and relationship between these dimensions of social work, both in philosophy and practice. Despite clear distinctions between the work of charity organizations and settlement houses, there is a correspondence between the two.

Following the Civil War, there was a significant development of agencies devoted to charity work. During the 1870's, the first decade of the New York State Charities Aid Association, attempts were made to organize and coordinate a variety of social welfare agencies and functions.[9] The New York City Bureau of Charities was formed in 1873, and in 1882, the New York Charity Organization Society was founded.[10] The COS attempted to set standards and policies for charity work, indicating a trend toward more efficient administration of charity and the professionalization of social work. Like some organizations which had existed prior to the Civil War, the COS relied heavily on women of wealth and social position who provided the direction as well as the implementation of programs. Much of the work of these earlier organizations focused on determinations of eligibility for welfare. Conscious of the "corrupting influences" of dependency, and mindful of public concern over welfare

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9. The New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children was formed a year later, in 1874.

10. The Charity Organization Society Movement began in England in 1869.

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expenditures, they took great satisfaction in discovering "professional beggars" and investigating the condition of needy families. They did not attempt to provide alternative social structures and environments for those whom they sought to help, but concentrated on direct forms of assistance to the poor and emphasized individual responsibility for poverty, a variation of Social Darwinism.[11] During periods of extreme economic distress, some charity agencies established work houses for recipients, although this also cannot be considered as part of the settlement house movement, despite important aspects of this work with the poor.[12]

Thus, prior to the 1880's, there were organizations which dealt with the poor generally, and in some cases with children specifically. Though not settlements, they were to some extent precursors in the sense that they sought to remove children from street work and improve their environment by providing structured programs and activities. As such, they influenced the changing nature of childhood and of the relationship between children and institutions within society. Their role in the process of assimilation as primary socialization agents became clearer and more fully developed with the establishment of settlement houses.

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11. See: Marvin Gettleman "Charity and Social Classes in the United States, 1874-1900," The American Journal of Economics and Sociology, vol.22, no.2,3 (April,July, 1963) Raymond Mohl, "Poverty, Pauperism, and Social Order in the PreIndustrial American City, 1780-1840," Social Science Quarterly,(March, 1972)

12. see Allen Davis, Spearheads for Reform (NY:Oxford, 1967) for the differences between charity organizations and settlements.

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The social settlement movement proper began in an East London slum in 1884 with the establishment of Toynbee Hall by Rev. Samuel Barnett and a group of Oxford University students.[13] It was founded on the belief that the best way to reach the poor was to settle among them, to share their experiences. By the force of example and deed (rather than charity) they sought to win the confidence of the poor and "help them to help themselves." In addition to this basic philosophy settlements were characterized by their organization around clubs, classes and educational and cultural events designed to provide a new context for social relations, and to teach basic skills attendant to a developing industrial society. Settlement house workers, therefore, did not perform charity work, but rather, in the spirit of social justice and the Social Gospel, they sought to ameliorate the traumas that accompanied industrialization, social change and assimilation. The activities and philosophy of settlement houses were thus consistent with broad programs of Americanization. This was not always easy. For example, when Vida Scudder tried to develop an appreciation of American culture among Italians at Denison House in Boston, she was disappointed that "this 'intellectual proletariat' in the city slums found the process of Americanization vulgar and degrading."[14] It was not unusual, therefore, for social

13. For a history of settlements, see Robert Woods and Albert Kennedy, The Settlement Horizon (NY: Russell Sage, 1922)

14. Barbara Solomon, Ancestors and Immigrants (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972) p.165

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workers to retain common perjorative attitudes towards their immigrant clients.

> In spite of themselves, New England philanthropists were bondsmen to the prejudices of their society and of their profession.[15]

In fact, there is a sense in which the term "settlement" connotes an outpost of alien "settlers" in a territory which they seek to conquer. This colonialist image seems to be validated by the not uncommon attitude of settlement house workers who saw their mission as a "civilizing" one. This is not to say that all philanthropic efforts were hypocritical, but rather to underscore the limitations of reform in a particular historical setting. We cannot judge reformers harshly, but we also cannot ignore the effects of their "crusade" and its failure to achieve social and economic equality. Despite good intentions, reformers represented a form of domestic analogue to colonialism which became more familiar as America emerged as an imperial power at the end of the 19th century.[16]

I do not mean to suggest that settlement house workers were insensitive to the needs of immigrants, or

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15. Ibid., p.145

16. "As a 'colony' the institution was dually functional: It was a reconstruction of a familiar ideological and social 'home' for young college women confused by a hostile world; and it was a middle-class outpost that concretized an otherwise abstract sense of uniqueness." John Rousmaniere, "Cultural Hybrid in the Slum: The College Woman and the Settlement House, 1889-1894," American Quarterly, v.22., no.1 (Spring, 1970)

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that they were not motivated by humanitarian ideals. They believed in the notion of America as a melting-pot, and sought to help in the often difficult process of assimilation. In particular they turned their efforts to children in order to achieve these goals.[17] They were, however, caught in a dilemma: although they tended to recognize the value of native cultural roots, the primary direction of settlement house work was towards assimilation and acculturation. This was, in their eyes, a prerequisite for success and they were probably right; they paid less attention to the costs and sacrifices of achievement. Jane Addams represented the more sympathetic attitude toward immigrant heritages.[18] Through programs to enhance the ethnic aspects of communities which Hull House served on Chicago's West Side, she sought to emphasize the contributions of each immigrant group, and she was a leader in defending immigrants from a growing barrage of nativist sentiment. Nevertheless, abandoning immigrant culture was the price of becoming part of the American melting pot, and whatever support settlement house workers gave to old world heritages, the goal was to adopt American life-styles and values.

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17. Jane Addams was clear about settlements not being exclusively (or even primarily) for children, though in practice the emphasis was on kindergartens and children's activities. Settlements did have adult education programs but they were not as successful as those for children.

18. As Emily Greene Balch (Our Slavic Fellow Citizens, 1910) wrote: "This nationalistic movement has revealed fresh human treasures and called forth some of the rarest and finest blossoms of the spirit of mankind." p.396

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> Jane Addams, for example, was anxious for mobility for immigrants, at least so far as expression of Americanization might imply it, but finally she came down on the side of stasis within the security of an active program of Americanization; to be good parents, she argued, people must first be good children.[19]

Although tolerant of ethnic differences, such efforts may have been self-serving methods for overcoming immigrants resistance to intrusions by settlement house workers (and others) and their philosophy. In general, the goal was total cultural absorption and assimilation.

This aspect of settlement work should be carefully considered, for, until the turn of the century, immigrants were traditionally seen by many social reformers and others with a good deal of apprehension. Not until 1904 did the New York Charity Organization Society shift from antagonism to support for immigrants and the National Conference of Charities took an even longer time to detach itself from its nativist prejudices.[20]

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19. Colin Greer, The Great School Legend (NY: Viking Books, 1974) pp.78-79

20. See: John Higham, Strangers in the Land (NY:Atheneum, 1970) pp.119-123
See also Robert Hunter, Poverty (1904) (especially chapter 6, "The Immigrant") for a less sympathetic understanding of immigrants.
See also: Report of the U.S.Immigration Commission, 1911 and E.A.Ross, The Old World and the New (1914)which sought to distinguish between "old" and "new" immigration. Ross and others characterized East and South Europeans as racially inferior - a position he repudiated following World War II. On the other hand there were organizations such as the North American Civic League which sought to help immigrants adjust to their new conditions.

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The growth of settlement houses was primarily a response to the needs of the poor, as an attempt to alleviate distress. It was also stimulated by larger numbers of children in urban areas, many of whom could not work either because of stricter child labor laws or lack of opportunities, or because they chose not to. Although both the number and percentage of children increased rapidly, the effect was felt most in the absolute rise in numbers of children who needed to be occupied in non-work activity. The problem was exacerbated by high truancy rates, and lack of adequate school facilities.

Similar to after-school centers, settlement houses added a social dimension to the educational experiences of children and compensated for the disruption of social continuity and uprooting within the community. Emphasis was placed on the participation of children in the process of group interaction through club activities. Teaching practical skills or specific activities drew children into one club or another; this was also a mechanism for teaching values and behavior appropriate to good and respectable citizens. The ethos of the settlement house, as well as its activities, reflected the dominant ideology of social justice and equality in a pluralistic society. If not an immediate reality, such an ideal was at least possible in future generations, those who were "little citizens."

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.... With these basic goals and ideals in mind, the first American settlement house called the Neighborhood Guild was established in 1886 by Stanton Coit and Charles Stover in New York City's densely populated Tenth Ward on the Lower East Side.[21] Coit began by organizing clubs of children who lived near his home at 146 Forsyth Street, and called his project the Neighborhood Guild. In addition to clubs, the program included small classes and a kindergarten taught and supervised by young, well-to-do college graduates. Coit left for Europe only a year later, and after some difficulties, the Guild was reorganized and renamed the University Settlement House in 1891, and relocated to a new building at 184 Eldridge St(its present site).

An examination of the kinds of clubs which were formed at the University Settlement gives some indication of the activities and structure of the program. These included: Social, Educational Improvement Guild Clubs, Neighborhood Guild Cadets, Potomac Cadets, and Order Clubs which included drill and gym, Little Women's, Mayflower, and Daisy Chain Clubs which taught homemaking and sewing, Literary Societies, Guild Conferences and Entertainments. These clubs were divided by age, sex and often ethnic background. Children also participated in a Penny Provident Bank, Tenth Ward Sanitary Union and Flower Mission.[22] In addition, the

21. The Tenth Ward covered 110 acres. In 1880 its population was 47,544; in 1890 its population was 57,514 (644 per acre).

22. Flower Missions had begun at the Rivington Street Lodging House around 1900. Their purpose was to send flowers to the homes of sick children and poor families.

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settlement had a kindergarten (in which each child contributed 10¢ per week for bread and milk), a library, a bookkeeping class, a drawing class (for both boys and girls), a children's dancing class on Saturday night, and a dancing "academy" for young adults in which ballroom etiquette was taught, a pool room and a gymnasium. In these clubs and activities children were imbued with the virtues of saving, cleanliness, proper manners, respect for American historical figures, loyalty and an understanding of their own roles as citizens; the children were also taught simple, practical skills. Kindergarten was considered extremely important, not only because of its function as a form of day-care, but also because it was capable of having a powerful impact on the children at an early age, and thereby on the family as well.[23]

Another example of the settlement house program can be observed in the Jacob Riis Neighborhood Settlement. It was located only a few blocks from the Henry Street Settlement House (established by Lillian Wald in 1893) and had been organized in 1890 as the Tenement House Chapter of Kings Daughters and Kings Daughters Settlement House, and as an outgrowth of the flower missions and relief work of that organization. It was incorporated in 1894, and its name was

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23. See: Allen Davis, Spearheads for Reform op.cit., pp.44-45 Louise Maynard, who ran the kindergarten at the University Settlement, was particularly active and imaginative. She took children to Central Park and other areas of the city to familiarize them with a variety of aspects of urban life.

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changed in 1902. It provided services commonly associated with settlement houses, such as kindergartens, baths, a savings bank, distributions of food to the needy, a library and "summer nursing" program. In addition, their range of clubs is significant in composition and activities. These included: Homemakers Club for adult women, a Saturday morning sewing school (probably for Italians, since Jews would not attend on the Sabbath), Little Housekeepers clubs for younger girls who wanted to read, sew and play games, "Ready and Willing" club of 12-year old girls to learn sewing and cooking, Iroquois club and Old Glory club for boys who studied history (note the masculine and patriotic symbols), Washington, Hamilton and Byron literary societies for Jewish boys (14-16 years old), a Vigilant literary club for Jewish, Greek and Italian boys, a Progressive club for Jewish girls (where they practiced cooking, had literary discussions and engaged in games and dances), a Young Columbians club for street boys (athletics), and a Silver Band of Mercy club (dedicated to the protection of all living creatures, a sort of junior SPCA).

These clubs reflect the essentially traditional orientation of the program. Girls were taught appropriate sex role tasks. In only one instance did one of the girls' clubs include literary discussion - probably because they were older girls. Jewish boys seemed to dominate literary societies which carried the names of illustrious historical

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and literary figures. Non-Jewish (probably Italian) boys seemed to predominate in athletic clubs (assuming the "Star of Bethlehem indicates this). Boys were prepared for more intellectual roles as their careers might demand; girls were prepared for roles as housewives and mothers. Typically, clubs were restricted by age, ethnic background and sex. This increasing segregation, especially with regard to age, indicated a growing preoccupation with the creation of specific categories for children, essential in a more highly differentiated economic structure and a more heterogeneous social milieu.

By 1909, however, the population of the area had shifted radically from multi-ethnic to primarily Jewish. The settlement viewed this as an obstacle to their attempts to bring Gentile and Jew together. This emphasis on integration and assimilation (the basis of the melting pot theory) can be seen in the creation of clubs identified with historical figures who, if they had no roots in the cultural experience of these children, or in their homes, were nevertheless essential to the process of assimilation and building a sense of patriotism. Inculcating such forms of identification, however, added further obstacles and distance to the growing cultural gap between immigrant parents and their children.

The College Settlement (located at 95 Rivington Street, near the University Settlement), established in 1887 and

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led by Jane Robbins and Jean Fine (Mrs. Charles B.Spahr) was staffed largely by graduates of exclusive women's colleges. It provided a kindergarten, various clubs in history, sewing, gym, drawing, basketweaving, cooking and music, classes in English and baths (a precious commodity in the area) for 10¢. A Mother's Club was established to involve older women and decrease hostility and suspicion among adults who saw the settlement as a threat to their traditions and customs.

Chicago's Hull House, led by Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr, was established in 1889. It followed a similar pattern to early settlements and became a model for others.[24] The settlement house movement spread quickly and by the end of the first decade of the 20th century there were over 400 settlement houses in this country.

Some settlements, like the Chrystie Street House in New York City, had a temporary shelter for young men and boys in trouble, and others like the Westminster House in Buffalo had special activities and facilities for working girls.

The Hartley House, established by the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor in 1897 was primarily for poor girls who "could be taught how to make and keep a home neat and tidy and attractive, not

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24. The East Side House in New York City was opened in 1891 and, led by Everett Wheeler, was associated with the Episcopal Church; the Northwestern University Settlement was founded by Charles Zeublin.

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for their own good merely, but for the good also of their families and husbands, brothers and friends..." Like all settlements it reinforced traditional stereotypes of women (as well as middle class homemaking to poor girls) particularly in selecting appropriate kinds of activities and work. Lest they be accused of "indiscriminate almsgiving," the settlement ran two large workshops in the rear of the building where women were given food, coal and clothing in exchange for work.[25]

The Home Garden of New York City was one of the few settlement houses that provided in-house care for children who were either temporarily homeless, or were paroled to them for supervision by the courts. Established in 1901, it served a particularly depressed area in East Harlem (the house was located at 419 East 115th Street) populated largely by Italians. It sought to instill confidence in the "possibilities for good in the street boy or girl" by giving them a place to meet after school (consistent with new dating patterns), providing them with constructive, positive examples of home life (assuming their own were not adequate), and trying to improve homes of the children (a reflection of their belief that such families were weak and unstable).

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25. The 15th Assembly District in which Hartley House was located was composed of one-third American born, one-third Irish, and one-third German, and an increasing number of Italians against whom the prejudices of the major groups were vented. Like most working class neighborhoods, there were a large number of unemployed people, saloons and prostitutes. Less than one-third of the children under 21 attended school, and there were only 3 bathtubs in the district (or 1 per 440 families).

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There were the usual patriotic and athletic clubs, emphasis on cooperation and proper citizenship, classes in cooking, kindergartens, baths, distribution of food and clothing, playgrounds, summer camp and nursing care. In addition, local craftsmen and community people taught a variety of classes in special skills. For instance, the Italian janitor who worked in the house was also employed to teach shoe-making to the boys. This incorporation of neighborhood residents was a useful technique in helping to break down the resistance of immigrants to the settlement house.

The first settlement house in Boston, Andover House (later called South End House), was established in 1892 by William Tucker and Robert Woods. Others soon followed, some with the intention of promoting a particular message. The Frances Willard Settlement House (in Boston) for example, established in 1897 by the Women's Christian Temperance Union, accepted only Protestant girls into the home. It did, however, allow others to attend its social activities. Its classes and clubs followed traditional patterns, except for special classes for 4 to 6 year olds in temperance. What is striking about this attempt to reach parents through their children is the early age at which children were expected to transmit a specific message to their families; it is hardly likely that the children could fully comprehend it them-

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selves.[26] It is also likely that, despite the middle-class Protestant orientation of the WCTU, the bulk of the homes they sought to reach were Catholic and immigrant.

Most settlements were located in areas which were already racially (as well as ethnically) circumscribed, and therefore ethnic and racial antagonisms which were apparent in the society were not obvious in settlements. The 1904/5 Report for the Willard House shows a picture of a "cobblers class" containing 6 black and 2 white boys, and a sewing class with 8 black and 1 white girls (thus demonstrating some racial integration). In all other pictures of clubs and classes the children were white. The 1907/8 Report shows a sewing class of Italian girls and their little brothers and sisters. All of the children (except perhaps 1) were white, indicating a more racially homogeneous or more segregated composition of neighborhood and classes. In the scrapbook club, the little housekeepers club, gym, music and shoe-repairing, the classes were all white. In the Temperance club, however, 3 blacks appear among 26 white boys. I have been unable to find any explicit policy regarding segregation,

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26. Children's temperance societies began in the 1830's as attempts to reach parents.
"Conspicuous in the Washington parades were throngs of children wearing white satin badges and carrying banners on which appeared pictures of fountains and processions of people wending their way through leafy groves. These were divisions of the Cold Water Army, founded by the Reverend Thomas Hunt in 1839 just before the Washingtonian crusade began. Greatly augmented by the current enthusiasm, the Cold Water Army became the medium for organizing children for temperance work."
Alice Felt Tyler, Freedom's Ferment (NY:Harper and Row, 1962; 1944) p.341

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either by race or ethnic background in settlement house records. In fact, the process was more subtle. As Allen Davis observed, "...many of the settlement workers decided that special segregated facilities would best serve the interest of Negroes."[27] Despite the fact that many settlement house workers such as Mary Ovington, Henry Moskowitz and William Walling were deeply involved in the founding of civil rights organizations such as the NAACP, they did not oppose racism in the settlements themselves. Rather, an informal process of segregation operated, reflecting patterns in society. The membership of sewing clubs seems to have been segregated both by religion and age. Whether this was a result of the children's own desires, or those of the settlement house workers is not known. In the "Busy-Bees" (8-11 year olds) and the "Forget-Me-Nots" (14-16 year olds) sewing clubs there were 12 Jewish girls in each; the same number (12) of Catholic girls were in the "Wide-Awakes" (8-14 year olds) sewing club. In manual crafts a "White Shield" club existed for Jewish boys; a "White Cross" club for Catholic boys. The age ranges of the clubs do not span more than 4 or 5 years, at most, and were generally only 2 or 3 years.[28]

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27. Allen Davis, Spearheads for Reform, pp.94-98

28. Virginia Yans-McLaughlin (Family and Community) has pointed out that the practice of mixing boys and girls, religions and nationalities in Buffalo settlements raised problems for Italian (and probably Jewish as well) parents who saw the settlements as antithetical to their own notions of propriety.

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A high proportion of Jewish children in the Elizabeth Peabody House (established in Boston in 1896) raised particular problems which may have been typical in other houses and symptomatic of the nature of cultural barriers between neighborhood and settlement. For example, this settlement house stressed manual work for both boys and girls. In itself this would raise problems for boys who were encouraged by their families to follow more professional and academic routes. The girls refused to do woodworking because they said it was "boys work" - a fundamental distinction in orthodox Judaism, as well as a reflection of a general cultural differentiation prevalent at the time.[29] Nevertheless, Caroline Brown observed that the girls' reluctance was overcome. The following year, Brown noted:

> Many very little boys (Jewish) spend long hours either before or after regular school sessions in their own homes, or in particularly unsanitary tenement house schoolrooms, studying Hebrew. To growing children, often underfed and whose hours of sleep are invariably too few, this must be exhausting in the extreme, and accounts in some measure, at least, for dislike to physical exertion and the particular concentration of mind necessary for all but the simplest forms of manual work. In their clubs a certain proportion of such children exhibit the physical restlessness and unnatural keenness - one might almost say irritability - of mind due to overstimulation of the brain, but a larger proportion are heavy and dull.[30]

A similar problem was present at the University Settlement; they emphasized the importance of physical training and certain

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29. Studies indicated that this distinction diminished in preferences for games. See chapter on Streets.

30. Peabody House, Annual Report (1904)

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kinds of work associated generally with specific sex-roles. When they tried to enroll boys in a cooking class one boy refused, saying "I don't want to be a lady." The response of the settlement worker was "But it is no harm for a boy to know how to help his mother."[31] Such notions of what men and women could and could not do conflicted with more rigid traditions which prevailed in immigrant (and other) homes. It was precisely this kind of cultural conflict that created tensions in the family, and between efforts of settlements to Americanize children and attempts by parents to preserve traditional patterns of behavior and values. Reformers, though not unmindful of these difficulties, accepted them as the price of assimilation.

Hiram House instituted a program of manual trades instruction and, utilizing the model of the George Jr. Republic (which was discussed in the chapter on newsboys) organized "Progress City" in which boys learned the discipline and function of self-government as "little citizens."

> They learned that they could not always do as they please, that it is for their own good that they subject themselves to obedience and that it is only justice to others. They learned to work for the community welfare, that the rights of others should be regarded as well as their own, that property cannot be injured or wasted without somebody losing thereby. Their voices counted as long as the citizens were trustworthy and when the laws which they had laid down were violated the disobedient were punished. Each citizen in voting learned the value of his vote.[32]

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31. Charities, v.1, no.7 (June, 1898)
32. Hiram House, Annual Report (1907)

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If a child did not hold an office in the government, he was required to work in carpentry, painting, brass hammering, cooking, sewing, weaving, street cleaning, banking, store keeping, or postal service. The social needs of the community were emphasized, and attempts were made to involve each child in this model society. A practical element was retained: the bank, which had a capital of $2,500, assessed a tax of 10% on each person's account. The children were encouraged to accept the obligations and responsibilities of their jobs and find contentment in its performance. What was important was not what one did, but how one did it, a philosophy consistent with the preservation of the status quo. Moreover, there was a distinct difference between this experiment and the perceptions of settlement house workers about politics and power as it existed in real life.

> The better class of young boys is at work, leaving the rougher elements commonly known as the "sons of rest" who become the petty tyrants, driving away all the small boys and girls and usurping the use of the swings and equipment for play...These loafers and idlers are the ones who later turn to politics and work such baneful influences in the congested portions of the city. 33

What settlement house workers hoped was that by training good citizens, they would transform the corrupting aspects of urban life.

Attempts at social reformation involved general values and skill-training as well as daily tasks performed around

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33. Ibid.,

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the house, such as methods of housekeeping, sewing, and even the preparation of food.

> Over and over again we drill the children in the making of simpler dishes and in different ways of mending on different kinds of material...our prime aim is to...lay the foundation for cleanliness and neatness, and to instill a knowledge of and to cultivate a taste for plain wholesome food in every child and in every adult who comes to us. 34

Apparently, "plain wholesome food" was considered healthier or more American than what appeared on the tables of immigrant families. The intention of settlement house workers was to replace old-world tastes with those of America. One can only speculate about the effects of trying to change cooking and other personal domestic habits and traditions of immigrants. It must have fostered some sense of cultural invasion, for even in the area of food, what was labelled "immigrant" was to be discarded. The intent of such contrasts was clear:

> These poor people...live without any system in their lives. They have breakfast or not, as there is anything to eat. They go to work or not, as there is a job. The children get their correction by a blow-a-day, a laugh tomorrow. Nothing is regular. The truth is never told. The children lie without any consciousness of what the truth is. They find indeed at the Settlement that if anything is promised it comes to pass, and they begin to rely on what is told them, and know there is one place where something is sure. 35

One reformer expressed his reaction to immigrants in a rather crude manner, asserting the necessity to

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34. Peabody House, Annual Report (1907); see also The Settlement House Cookbook, and Allen Davis, Spearheads for Reform p.46

35. H.F.Freeman, "University Settlement," Lend A Hand v.5 (1890) p.157

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> christianize and assimilate these (foreign) hordes into our religious and political life. When a foreign substance is introduced into the human body, one of two things happen. Either the substance is assimilated or expelled from the body, or the body dies from blood poison. [36]

Although extreme, this statement brings into sharp focus one aspect of the tangled attitudes that swirled around the process of Americanization. The ecological metaphor was significant in that it implied the kind of policies directed toward immigrants and their children, and the nature and form of assimilation which was expected. The new perspectives of children as dependent and marginal (emphasized in new notions of children) created mediating roles for them and allowed for intervention in their families.

Although it is difficult (if possible) to assess the impact of settlements on children and the creation of a new environment for them, it may be useful to examine aspects of the theoretical perspectives of its leaders. Moreover, despite variations in intentions and motivations, it may be possible to discern a common basis within the movement.

As we have suggested, a major role of the settlements was that of Americanizer,[37] or at least mediator between cultures. Indeed, the settlement was conceived by many as the basis for a new social order, one that changed not through revolution, but through the transformation of indi-

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36. Leonard Benedict, Waifs of the Slum and their Way Out (NY:Revell Co.,1902, p.216)

37. Allen Davis, Spearheads for Reform, argues that settlements were established to promote social justice, not Americanize.

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viduals. By providing the proper environment, settlements could accomplish the "social reconstruction of the mental and moral life" of the poor, bringing all classes and backgrounds together into a cooperative and harmonious community. For Stanton Coit, the work of the settlement was not only to give people a sense of importance and dignity through their integration and participation in society, but to provide a sense of order and discipline.[38] The freedoms offered (and promised) in the "land of opportunity" entailed self-restraint to avoid degeneration. Self-control and cooperation were thus fundamental aspects underlying the emphasis on parliamentary procedures (as well as a certain reverence for English institutions), for it was the respect for others and for structure that lay at the basis of citizenship.

The emphasis on "clubs" as a basic form of settlement house work was based on the belief that in this way a sense of "subordination of the individual to the whole, respect for fair play, and the gradual refinement in manners..."[39] would be achieved. In this way, peer group pressure would achieve the kind of conformity and sense of social responsibility that was deemed essential for social cohesion. Clubs not only provided needed alternatives to

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38. Stanton Coit, Neighborhood Guilds, an instrument of social reform (1891)

39. Greenwich House, Annual Report, (1902/3)

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to dance halls, candy stores and street corners, as places where young people could meet and spend leisure time, they were also environments where one developed a "social spirit;" i.e. became a good American. Whether in a cooking class, a George Washington Club, or on the playground, the goal was the same: individual iniative, group cooperation, and the internalization of norms and values promoted by the institution. In this context James B.Reynolds, Headworker of the University Settlement in 1894,cited three goals for youth clubs: to promote physical development; to develop "orderliness and to furnish food for the growth of mind and character"; and to encourage independence through "technical education." The underlying strategy of this approach was to enable children to learn to help themselves by providing an "uplifting social (and physical) environment."[40]

A less obvious goal of settlement houses was the inculcation of new standards and values which would be carried back to homes, neighborhoods and friends by children. An example of this notion with reference to Jewish children relied on obscuring basic differences between home and school in an effort to promote the acceptance of these values.

> It has sometimes seemed difficult to convince the little Jewish children that Christians worship the same God that they worship; and also it is difficult to make them feel that the world of school and the world of home are really one world.[41]

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40. University Settlement House, Annual Report (1894)

41. This belief might be questioned by those who had experienced anti-Semitism here or in Europe.

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The attempt by settlements to harmonize conflicting interests in the neighborhood, community and city was a significant part of the notion of social reformers of their civic responsibility. Seth Low, president of the University Settlement in 1894, placed great emphasis on the role of the settlement in mediating conflicts and providing an arena in which "the employer and laboring man can meet on equal terms." Involved as they were in various aspects of municipal reform, leaders of the settlement house movement quite naturally envisioned the settlement house as an integral part of their efforts to promote social reform. In molding the attitudes and behavior of children, reformers saw the basis for an enlightened active citizenry that would be "responsible" and could be relied upon for support.

The ambiguous position of the settlement and its workers in labor struggles, particularly with regard to strikes, was a source of mistrust, and rightly so. Although well-meaning, attempts by settlement house leaders to mediate disputes coincided all too often with diversionary tactics of employers. For example, in December, 1895, the University Settlement had come out in opposition to a cloakmakers strike. Despite this official stance, it did offer material assistance to strikers and did attempt (without success) to arbitrate the strike. Gradually, however, settlements took a more sympathetic position towards workers' struggles, although they tended to shun the more

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radical elements within the labor movement. In 1899, for example, the University Settlement offered the newly formed Waistmakers Union the use of its premises for meetings, and other unions regularly met there as well. Even James Reynolds,[42] hardly a radical, encouraged the formation of unions and assisted striking workers.[43] And, as Allen Davis observed, settlement houses were one of the few places where workers could find support.[44] Hull House was more clearly committed to assisting workers' struggles and provided a base for union organizing. In large part this reflected the influence of Florence Kelley and Mary Kenny (the first woman organizer for the AFL) - both of whom were deputy factory inspectors and thus in a position to investigate conditions,[45] and both on the staff of Hull House. Although Jane Addams wrote admiringly of "the spirit of youth" and its promise for future generations, even to the point of expressing sympathy for youthful rebellions (as did other reformers, like Randolph Bourne) she sought to adjust young

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42. Reynolds was a lawyer and sociologist and headworker at the University Settlement. He was also active in the Immigration Restriction League. See: Barbara Solomon, Ancestors and Immigrants, pp.123, 196-197

43. Moses Rischin, The Promised City (NY: Harper and Row, 1970)

44. Allen Davis, Spearheads for Reform, pp.103-122

45. Kelley was appointed chief factory inspector for Illinois in 1893 (until 1897). In 1899 she moved to New York City where she became Secretary of the National Consumer's League.
See: Allen Davis, American Heroine,

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people to a social order about which she herself had many misgivings. Although she condemned a society which cared more for the products of child labor than for the children themselves, she was reluctant to attack the system that promoted it. She was, as one critic observed, more interested in reconciling people to their work than attacking the repressive aspects of capitalism.[46]

> She defended their right to organize, yet she deplored strikes and violence, and hated the pettiness and corruption which she detected in some labor organization... She rejected class conflict...she never followed the logic of her position to march in the picket lines as did Ellen Starr, nor was she as aggressive and consistent in support of labor's cause as Florence Kelley...(she) preferred to stand aside and interpret rather than to get involved in the fray. [47]

The relationship between settlements and labor organizations illuminates an important aspect of the role of settlements in the process of assimilation. Their position was part of a more delicate attempt to shift attention away from political and economic issues to those which revolved around the growth and development of the child. Behind their humanitarian efforts, however, was the pentimento of fear that without definite social controls, albeit gently administered, society would collapse. These apprehensions were based on a sense of unprecedented social and economic crisis highlighted by the devastating

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46. Christopher Lasch, The New Radicalism in America pp.155-157

47. Allen Davis, American Heroine, pp.110-111

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depression of the 1890's. Moreover, from 1881 to 1905 the struggle of workers to exercise a measure of control over their lives led to no less than 38,000 strikes, involving 7,500,000 laborers.[48] Much of this activity occurred on the streets in urban areas where children could see and learn about workers' struggles. In addition spontaneous street demonstrations, rallies and radical ferment led many to fear the influence on children, as well as the potential for violent confrontation itself. Fearing such violence, Progressive reformers clung to their belief that efficient and effective means of social control would eliminate conflict and establish harmonious relationships. This, they believed, would depend on working together in such groups as the National Civic Federation which brought together representatives of labor, management and government. Americanization included the belief that democratic society would best be preserved through cooperation. The new corporate society found enthusiastic support among those who believed that social legislation, control and regulation and the application of "scientific" principles would provide the "proper" basis for social change.

48. U.S.Bureau of Census, Historical Statistics of the U.S. Colonial Times to 1957 (Washington, 1960)

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The Educational Alliance

As suggested earlier, there were precedents for the settlement house movement which influenced the direction of its work. In addition, a number of organizations developed along with and/or as a result of settlement houses. These groups may also be considered within the scope of this chapter since their activities were often similar to those of settlements. The difference was that those who worked at such institutions did not live there. One of the most important representatives of this type of organization was the Educational Alliance.[49]

The Alliance grew out of a movement to establish a Jewish community center on the Lower East Side which would assist in the assimilation and Americanization of new (largely Russian-Polish) immigrants. Originally founded as the Hebrew Institute in 1889, it was renamed the Educational Alliance in 1893, indicating a shift in emphasis from a Jewish to a secular organization. The Alliance was developed and run by wealthy "uptown" Jews (largely German and Sephardic) who had come to this country between 1840 and 1870, were relatively assimilated, and feared that the new

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49. Unfortunately the records for the Educational Alliance prior to 1920 have been destroyed, making an in depth analysis of the early history of this institution difficult. Morris Berger, "The Settlements, The Immigrant and the Public School," (Unpublished Ph.D., Columbia University Teachers College, 1965) Chapter 3

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immigrants would tarnish the image which they had struggled to achieve. These Western European Jews viewed their Russian and Polish "cousins" as wild and uncivilized, responsible for much of the growing crime rate among Jews,[50] and who were not ready to enter the mainstream of American life. Therefore special schools, like the Jewish Training School, were established to prepare children for entrance into public schools.

The Alliance operated a day and evening school with courses in English, Civics, American History, American customs and traditions, vocational courses and cooking and sewing classes for women. For younger women there were classes in dressmaking, millinery, housekeeping and social clubs. There were also special classes in Jewish literature and culture, as well as Greek and Roman history. In an effort to bring workingmen into the program, the Alliance organized a Breadwinners College.[51] A major innovation of the Alliance was lectures (often on Civics) in Yiddish. The Alliance also worked closely with settlement houses in the

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50. Harold Silver, "Some Attitudes of East-European Jewish Immigrants toward Organized Jewish Charity in the U.S. (1890-1900)," (Unpublished Ph.D. Graduate School for Jewish Social Work, 1934) p.29
Oscar Handlin, "American Views of the Jew at the Opening of the Twentieth Century," American Jewish Historical Society v.40 (June, 1951) pp.323-344
Zoza Sajkowski, "The Attitude of American Jews to East European Jewish Immigration (1881-1893)," American Jewish Historical Society, v.60 (March, 1951) pp.264-271

51. Morris Berger, op.cit., pp.60-62
See also: Sherry Gorelick, "Social Control, Social Mobility, and the Eastern European Jews," (Unpublished Ph.D. Columbia University, 1975) pp.140-149

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area, sponsoring art shows, lectures and plays. In addition the Alliance sponsored a "People's Synagogue."[52] services were in German and English, though, of course, the bulk of the immigrants who lived in the vicinity did not speak either of these languages well, if at all.

The main focus of the Alliance was to develop an appreciation, understanding and acceptance of the American way of life and to discourage European customs and traditions. A graphic example of their approach may be seen in a Thanksgiving Day program. The director of the Alliance, David Blaustein, paraded 50 newly immigrant children across the stage of the Alliance auditorium carrying American flags. After reciting the pledge of allegiance en masse, Blaustein urged the children (and of course their parents) to observe the holiday in every detail, including eating turkeys.[53]

The Educational Alliance was a controversial institution. One observer noted that the Alliance was founded to "educate the immigrants out of their old ways so that they might not disturb the peace and good will that the older inhabitants had attained." Although the classes and clubs were useful to immigrants, the reluctance of the Alliance to identify with the culture of the new immigrants raised problems similar to those encountered in settlements.

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52. Harold Silver, op.cit., p.63 (Quoting the Daily Forward in 1900); see also: Annual Reports of Educational Alliance 1895-1896

53. Moses Rischin, The Promised City, p.102

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> A "religious school" and Sabbath services for children have indeed been conducted, but in the manner and spirit antagonistic to the conceptions of the Russian Jew for whom the institution was created. Whatever was most vital and spontaneous in the neighborhood received no support and often, as far as lay in its power, was suppressed in the single-minded effort to make "good Americans" out of the Russian Jew. 54

This critic attacked Americanizers at the Alliance as exclusionist and narrow-minded people who ultimately suppressed the individuality of the inhabitants of the area in an effort to make them conform to American standards and expectations. He was particularly critical of the negative attitude of German Jews towards those from Russia/Poland and pleaded for a mutual toleration of ethnic differences. His views contrasted sharply with the notion that in order to become an American one had to give up one's cultural roots. His criticism touched a sensitive issue with regard to the relationship between immigrant parents and children. Although the kinds of programs offered by the Alliance may have been well-intentioned and even necessary, such efforts only increased the distance between parents and children. What was taught at the Alliance reinforced a conflict between what was stressed at home and in school. The process of rooting out traditions alienated children not only from the culture of their parents, but from their parents as well. In fact, the leaders of the Alliance expected or hoped that children would repudiate the values and traditions of parents.

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54. Isaac Berkson, Theories of Americanization (NY:Teachers College, Columbia University, 1920)

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The work of the Alliance is an example of members of a specific religious or ethnic group engaged in a broad program to Americanize new immigrants within their own group. The results of its work are difficult to assess, but its intentions precisely represent the nature of the cultural tug-of-war taking place, a struggle most acutely felt in the arena of child-rearing. Children were a barometer of social change and the alteration of their world had profound repercussions on that of their parents.

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Boys and Youth Work

Another mode of organizing children was through boys clubs. Prior to the Civil War, a number of organizations attempted to reach a broad population of children (both immigrant and non-immigrant). In particular, these efforts were directed towards children who worked or lived on the street. An early example following the Civil War was the Salem (Massachusetts) Fraternity, organized by the International Christian Workers Association in 1869. It lasted for nearly three decades and was an important predecessor for the later boys clubs.[55]

The work of boys clubs overlapped other forms of work with children, for example industrial and other schools, which had existed prior to the Civil War. Thus, the exact origins of these clubs is difficult to determine. One observer wrote: "The first boys club is said to have been the one at the Wilson Mission at 125 St. Mark's Place, New York, started in 1878."[56] The club was primarily devoted to providing alternative activities for street children, similar to the activities and programs in lodging houses,

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55. David Macloed, "Good Boys Made Better: The Boy Scouts of America, Boys Brigades and the YMCA Boys Work, 1880-1920" (Unpublished Ph.D. University of Wisconsin, 1973) This work provides an excellent background to this area.

56. Joseph Lee, Constructive and Preventive Philanthropy (NY:Macmillan, 1902) p.190

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and was probably related to a church group.[57]

Gradually distinctions were made between the kinds of children to be enrolled in these organizations. As larger numbers of lower class children entered schools, as more children were restricted from the workforce, and as adolescence became universalized these distinctions became more important. For, as notions of what constituted childhood for the middle class were extended to lower class children the distinctions between them became crucial. This was part of the effort to assimilate immigrant children and their families and to legitimate the roles intended for these children when they entered the workforce. Professionals who worked with children reflected their class biases and popular assumptions that upper and middle class children were contaminated by their contact with street "urchins," "Arabs," and "savages." The YMCA's secretaries' manual warned, "Street boys needed to be civilized, not admitted

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57. Although the first Boys Club in England was probably the "Cyprus Boys Club" in South London in 1872, the modern boys club movement began in the 1880's. Its roots however extend back to the Chartist movement of the 1840's when upper class reformers tried to enlist working class youths in organizations, like the YMCA (founded by George Williams for warehouse clerks in 1844) and the Ragged School Unions in 1844. After 1874 the RSU organized boys' institutes for youths who were too old for night school. A "Lads' Drill Association was established in March, 1898.
For studies of the RSU, see: William McG. Eager, Making Men: the history of the boy's clubs in Great Britain (London,1953).
Brian Simon, Studies in the History of Education (London,1960-1965)has information on these early boys' clubs.
The leading book on clubwork at the time was Charles and Lillian Russell, , Working Lad's Clubs (London:Macmillan, 1908)
Frank Broadhead, "Social Imperialism and the Rise of the British Youth Movement, 1885-1914"

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to the YMCA."[58] Such organizations preferred to work exclusively with "respectable," "average" boys, those who they felt ought to assume positions of leadership.[59]

Although the boys work movement had begun in the 1860's it was not until the 1880's that renewed interest in this work gave it a new dimension. During the 1870's most boys work was directed by women who were concerned about the decline in moral standards of youth. It was not until men assumed positions of leadership (as professional secretaries) that these youth organizations flourished.[60]

> Although precedents for church youth societies existed, the period between 1880 and 1900 was important, for in these years Protestant churches attempted, as never before to take over the spare-time activities of youth... The young people's movement, dry as a stone was in large measure a response of the native Protestant population to the challenge of the city, but a response which aimed less at elevating the moral tone of the metropolis than at building a moat around villages and towns, the places in which evangelical strength was rising rather than declining.[61]

> The boys recruited in the 1880's and 1890's were not pariahs neglected by fashionable churches but were increasingly middle class in origin.[62]

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58. David MacLoed, op.cit., p.71

59. Joseph Kett, Rites of Passage notes that youth organizations "were essentially defensive institutions that sought to demarcate the life styles of a certain class from those young people of different social classes." (p.211)

60. Ibid.,pp.199, 222
61. Ibid.,pp.191-192
62. Ibid., p.200

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By 1890 nearly every church and most church-related associations sponsored affiliated youth groups - "junior societies" - parallel to (and imitative of) senior and "young adult" groups. In addition, by this time, organizations had established separate groups for children to enlist them in a variety of reform crusades including the campaign against the use of tobacco and alcoholic beverages, promoting church attendance, and "sexual purity." The involvement of churches in the social organization of children, particularly boys, reflected the enhanced position of young people as well as concern about the increasing number of youths who were not working[63] and thus susceptible to corrupting influences of "the street." In a deeper sense, this dimension of church-related activity also indicated anxiety about changing values and behavior generally and the effect of these changes upon young people. Turning to youths, particularly in terms of providing special groups, special privileges and a differentiated social and age classification, was a protective measure to insure social stability.[64]

One example of a church-related effort was the Junior Christian Endeavor Movement. It originated in Tabor, Iowa

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63. See Joseph Kett, Rites of Passage, Chapter 3 "Doubling the Cape." It is also unclear whether there were in fact more "idle" youths on the street than had been previously, or if this was metaphoric.

64. For example, of the 32 boys' clubs and reading rooms listed in Jacob Riis' Children of the Poor, more than two-thirds (25) were apparently (from the names) operated by religious organizations.

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under the leadership of Rev. J.W.Cowan in March, 1884,[65] and was directed largely toward middle class children.

> Christian Endeavor had become a halfway house for youth who, while technically converted, were not assimilated into the active life of the church.[66]

Kett insightfully notes that there was a shift in focus in organizations like Christian Endeavor from self-motivation to adult-sponsored groups in which children were more carefully directed rather than left to their own devices. The involvement of children in church activities was a way of reaching adults and emphasis was not on a pledge of theological commitment (as had been the case in religious conversions). "In other words, the focus had shifted from content to process and from involvement to substitutes for involvement."[67] Indeed, the required pledges were often not specific. As Kett observes, "The act of pledging and the ardor it summoned up were more important than what was being pledged." The pledges required of both adults and children were not only directed to changing behavior (and thereby character)[68] patterns and, like religious catechisms, were a formalized set of instructions, but were also an attempt to

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65. Junior Golden Rule, March, 1893

66. Joseph Kett, Rites of Passage p.195

67. Ibid., p.195

68. "Character building" was a key expression used at the time to denote the activities of boys clubs. What it may have stood for is a mode of inculcating acceptance of the status quo, especially in terms of class relations. The term also raises interpretations of behavior in terms of self-critique and self-control. "Character" may have also been the more modern equivalent of "soul."

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alter perceptions of the nature of the relationship between the individual and society as part of a class system. The pledges were intended to inculcate a sense of the constant necessity and personal responsibility for reformation for themselves as well as those around them - thus linking personal salvation to the purification of society - a society which did not alter property or class relations. The emphasis was not so much on the present but rather on future behavior. Adolescence was a time to prepare for future roles; rather than inquiry and exploration, children were to follow prescribed guidelines and designated mentors who stood as authority figures - often in the place of parents.

There were also more secular attempts to work with both middle and working class children. In 1895 a General Alliance of Workers with Boys was formed to coordinate and promote these efforts.[69] In 1906 the Federated Boys Clubs was created. This indicated an attempt to provide a common social environment for boys which maintained age and class distinctions.[70]

In addition to traditional groups working with youths, there were several adult organizations which were also important. The "Ministering Children's League," an inter-

69. This organization later became the National Boys' Club Association.

70. See: Shelby Harrison, "The Federated Boys' Clubs" Survey v.23 (October,1909-March,1910). In 1915 it became the Boys Club Federation. See also: William Forbush, "Clubs for Street Boys," Survey, v.16 (1906)

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national order founded by the Countess of Meath to "promote kindness, usefulness and the habit of usefulness among children" claimed about 50,000 members in the United States alone.[71]

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71. The Countess of Meath, wife of Sir Reginald Brabazon, Earl of Meath, was a prominent social reformer. "In 1875 she founded the"Girls Friendly Society" which within a decade had enlisted 20,000 "ladies" and 100,000 working girls in a "friendly league for the protection of female virtue." Throughout her married life she undertook the erection and rehabilitation of model dwellings and playgrounds on the Meath properties in Dublin. Also in 1881 she founded the "Brabazon Employment Society" to provide work for the old and sick; and much later she organized a smiliar charity, the"Lord Roberts' Memorial Workshops" to aid wounded and maimed ex-soldiers. In the mid-1880's, finally paralleling her husband's concentration on the problem of working class youth, Lady Meath founded the "Ministering Children's League"..." Lord Meath organized the"Young Men's Friendly Society" in 1879 (with the help of the Archbishop of Canterbury).
; Frank Broadhead, op.cit., Chapter 2, pp.4-5
Broadhead also notes that in 1888 the London Federation of Working-Boys' Clubs numbered 28; in 1890 there were 47; in 1900 there were 34; and in 1910 there were 37 - indicating that the renewed interest in youth after the Boer War had little effect on the organization of Boys' Clubs.
By 1889 there were about 300 parochial (mostly Anglican) institutions for men and boys in London. The predominant form of club organization was based on the "public school model" of youth work (i.e. competitive games as a team to teach character building). This was the direct influence of graduates of public schools who organized these clubs.

See also: Henry Sheldon, "The Institutional Activities of American Children," American Journal of Psychology, v.9, no.4 (July, 1908) p.445
John Gillis, Youth and History (1974) has excellent material on youth agencies and youth culture in Europe.

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Edward E.Hale's Ten Times One in Ten club had a children's branch called the King's Sons and Society of King's Daughters. In 1892, William Forbush organized the Kights of King Arthur;[72] other clubs attempted to lend a regal aura to their membership, a popular trend at the time. In Indianapolis, two secret organizations of children were formed, "The Princely Knights of Character Castle" (for boys 12 to 18 years old) founded in 1895[73] (religiously oriented) and the "Coming Men of America" (which was devoted to business enterprises - a forerunner of Junior Achievement).[74] There is no indication why these should have been secret, except perhaps to lend an air of exclusivity to the club - or perhaps in imitation of organizations like the Masons.

Another example of work with boys was the Boy's Brigade. It was founded in Scotland in 1883 by William Smith and promoted in this country during the late 1880's by Henry Drummond, a professor of natural sciences in Scotland.[75] In this country it was composed largely of boys who worked in street trades as messengers, newsboys, bootblacks, street vendors and errand boys, most of whom were between 12 and

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72. Chivalry was an important concept and value of late-Victorians. They adopted very English names and titles and sought to imitate (and idealize) knightly virtues. See also : Joseph Kett, Rites of Passage, p.302, and David MacLoed,op. cit., p.380

73. Joseph Kett, Rites of Passage, p.198 notes the common ideals of purity, patriotism and heroism in many of these organizations.

74. Henry Sheldon, op.cit., p.447

75. Austin Birch, The Story of the Boys Brigade (1959;1965) and MacLoed, Chapter 2
See also: F.P.Gibbon, William Smith of the Boys Brigade (London:Collins Press, 1934)

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17 years old.[76] Drummond described the "new process" of creating a "Christian boy out of a street boy," by regimenting youths along military lines to teach respect for authority and self-discipline (though as a pacifist he denied any militaristic intentions). This form of behavior was, he believed (conveniently) "congenial to boy-nature" and that boys had a "natural aptitude" for it. Rather than encourage a martial spirit, Drummond advocated the use of military drill and discipline as the most "stimulating and interesting means of securing the attention of a volatile class..."[77] What concerned Drummond, like many of his contemporaries was the fear that these "boys of the working class" would, without strict guidance from either parents or supervisory adults, grow up to become "untamed, unprincipled and lawless."

The Boy Scouts movement was founded in England by General Robert Baden-Powell in 1908 in the aftermath of the Boer War (1899-1902). The American organization was founded three years later. The Girls Scouts and Camp Fire Girls were established in 1912. These movements combined individualistic

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76. In Baltimore the Brigade was composed largely of boys employed in glass houses, factories and breweries. See: L.V.North, "St.Pauls Guild and Boys Brigade," Open Church, v.2,(1898)

77. Henry Drummond, "Manliness in Boys - a new process," McClures, v.2,(December,1893-May,1894), pp.68-77
See also: Joseph Kett, Rites of Passage, pp.201-203 and his reference to Henry Curtis who claimed that scouting's "quasi-tribal life proved the theory of recapitulation (p.224) as well as provided children with "surrogate experiences of the rural past." (p.61)
See also: "Military Drill for Boys Clubs," Charities Review v.4 (May, 1895); military and drilling societies for boys had been established during the Civil War and perhaps earlier.

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skill, survival training and group cohesion in a para-militaristic style which served to integrate the goals of loyalty, obedience, patriotism, self-reliance and self-discipline.[78] The Boy Scouts of America had a committee on Americanization[79] and in part through the "scouts' oath" sought to teach fundamental traits of citizenship and individual responsibility - as well as the skills upon which primitive people depended, as for example rubbing sticks together to make a fire. Walter Lippmann thought the Boy

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78. Baden-Powell was a frontier scout, which may have influenced his emphasis on individualistic traits necessary in guerilla warfare and patriotism to offset the impact of British defeats in South Africa, thus linking his efforts with colonialism and imperialism. The fact that the scouting movement in this country developed as America emerged from its first imperialist, overseas war was not just coincidental. The war intensified the belief that military regimen was a healthy outlet for boys (with Germany as a model), encouraged national chauvinism, and lent support to the emphasis on asceticism and personal purification - concepts which G.S.Hall had emphasized. These were ways in which inequality, exploitation and injustice could be internalized and dealt with as individual, rather than social deficiencies. The application of military forms and organization to youth work became a mode of preparing youth for social responsibilities. The Scout Motto "Be Prepared!" suggests a constant need for vigilance and a sense of continually being on the brink of disaster. In a similar way, this notion of protectiveness could be applied to the need to guard the country from any corrupting elements.
See: Frank Broadhead, op.cit.,
J.O.Springhall, "The Boy Scouts, Class and Militarism," International Review of Social History, v.16, pt.2 (1971)

The influence of Britain's defeat in the Boer War cannot be overestimated. Indeed, the emergence of militant Christianity which emphasized "The advancement of Christ's Kingdom among boys and the promotion of habits of Reverence, Discipline and Self-Respect all that tends toward a true Christian manliness," was reflected in boys work generally. By the end of the Boer War, the Boys Brigade had enrolled 50,000 youths. See: Frank Broadhead, op, cit.

79. David MacLoed, op cit., p.353

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Scouts provided an example of "constructive reform" by making boys' gangs "valuable to civilization."[80] The use of uniforms (the BSA was one of the few- if not the only - groups to use them) was part of this process of assimilating children and providing new sources of identity for them.

Other similar groups incorporated craft skills and outdoor activities, particularly in rural settings, with patriotic ideals, such as the Woodcraft League of America, established by Ernest Thompson Seton in 1902 and the Sons of Daniel Boone and Boy Pioneers three years later.[81]

Many adult organizations included junior divisions. The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, for example, formed a youth group, the "Bands of Mercy" to assist in protecting abused animals. Other groups were specifically directed toward young people, like the Order of the American Boy (in 1901), the Big Brother Movement (in 1904), a youth division of the Socialist Party (in 1904) and the 4-H clubs (in 1909) - to cite but a few.[82]

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80. Walter Lippmann, A Preface to Politics (AnnArbor: University of Michigan Press, 1914) pp.41-43

81. See: Brian Morris, "Ernest T.Seton and the Origins of the Woodcraft Movement," Journal of Contemporary History v.5, no.2 (1970), pp.183-194

82. See: Walter Stone, The Development of Boys Work in the United States (Nashville: Press of Cullom and Gertner, 1935) and the periodical, Work With Boys

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It was estimated that "at least one child in every three belonged to some such association and their number and influence are rapidly increasing."[83] This calculation seems highly inflated, however, and was probably more self-congratulatory than accurate. It does indicate an attempt to organize children of all classes and backgrounds into homogenizing groups which would minimize the differences between them and emphasize patriotic nationalistic ideologies. These organizations helped to reformulate and incorporate the new place of the child in society - a place exclusively for children, as a prelude to adulthood, but one which was tied to conditions in Industrial America. It was also an attempt to combat the fear that children who remained un-American and whose lives were unstructured posed a serious threat to society.

> The political ideas of the future will have to be adjusted to a shifting world-population, to the mobility of labor, to all kinds of new temporary mixings of widely diverse peoples, as well as to their permanent mixings.[84]

Youth organizations at the turn of the century were directed precisely towards these ends.

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83. Henry Sheldon, op.cit., p.445

84. Randolph Bourne, War and the Intellectuals(NY: Harper and Row, 1964; reprints of essays from 1915-1919) p.127

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Street Cleaning Leagues

Another example of efforts to enlist children in community activities, which has some similarity to club work, was Street Cleaning Leagues.[85] In 1896, New York City passed a municipal ordinance which required residents to separate garbage and ashes. Not surprisingly, most did not comply, and sanitation workers refused to pick up the garbage. As a result, accumulations of refuse began to threaten public health. The Commissioner of Street Cleaning, partly as a form of indoctrinating parents, and partly to enlist the help of children in cleaning up the mess, directed Reuben S.Simons to organize school children into Juvenile Street Cleaning Leagues. The children were reluctant because they feared they would be used to inform on parents and friends who violated the law. They were not far wrong. The reports turned in by the children contained the names of people who were investigated and some were brought into court and fined. Impressed with their "civic responsibilities as well as the shiny badges they were allowed to wear, the children made these Leagues successful. In 1897 there were 44 Leagues with a membership of 2,500; two years later there

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85. Reuben Simons, "The Juvenile Street Cleaning Leagues of New York," The American City, v.1-3 (Sept.1909-Dec.1910) The Neighborhood Guild established an Anti-Filth Society to combat rat and insect infestation and generally sought to involve neighborhood residents in communal health campaigns. See: Morris Berger, op.cit.

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were 75 Leagues and twice as many child volunteers. But they may have been a little too successful, for in 1900, the Commissioner disbanded all the Leagues, possibly because of neighborhood opposition.

Simons was transferred to Brooklyn, but he continued to organize children. With permission from the Board of Education, he travelled from school to school to enlist students into Leagues. In 1907, the Commissioner invited Simons to extend his activity to Manhattan, and a systematic canvass of settlements, schools and churches was organized. But, again perhaps because of local resistance, the Commissioner cautioned Simons to proceed slowly. By December, 1908, only 9 Leagues had been created. The Leagues had apparently created some antagonism, perhaps from irate parents who saw their children turned into informers by the city, or local politicians who viewed this as a threat to their power.

The Leagues met in private institutions in the beginning, but with the aid of the Board of Education they established themselves in public schools. A teacher was assigned to supervise each League; delegates from the advanced grades met after school to appoint committees and plan the work. The biggest incentive, perhaps, was the badge, made of German silver and bearing the official coat of arms of New York City with the motto, "We are for clean streets."

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Certificates were also given to the children to signify that the recipient was a volunteer with the Department of Street Cleaning. Committees in school helped janitors keep the school grounds clean and warned "litterbugs." They reported landlords who did not supply their tenants with proper receptacles. Armed with a copy of the sanitary laws of the city, these children would dutifully explain the law to their parents and neighbors, handing out circulars in English and the native languages of the neighborhood. Special public meetings were held to hand out badges and certificates, commend special work accomplished, and parade under silk banners of each League and American flags. By the end of 1909 there were 71 Leagues operating in public schools. The students helped clear snow from crossings near their schools, formed clean-up brigades and represented to the community at large the kind of civic concern and involvement that municipal leaders hoped would influence parents and friends. If nothing else, the Street Cleaning Leagues proved that children could successfully be recruited and could perform socially useful tasks which enhanced their own neighborhood, and their self-conception as independent and responsible "little citizens."

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These attempts to mobilize children - all children, not simply those of the lower class - implied a widespread wish to socialize them to accept responsibilities and obligations incumbent upon citizens. In a similar way Judge Ben Lindsey organized gangs into "Kid Citizens' Leagues." In this way the organization of children into socio-political groups which implied or included special powers was an attempt to confront what appeared to be a growing problem: the narrowing and increasingly restrictive options for children. The increasing separation of children into groups and institutions specifically designed to prepare them for roles in the industrial order, whether as members of a Street Cleaning League, Boy Scout troop, housekeeping or civics class, amounted to a redefinition of childhood itself. Such programs became essential mechanisms of assimilation and were particularly important as the sense of community was undermined by changes in neighborhoods, geographic mobility (due to the development of mass urban transit), and demographic changes (largely as a result of immigration). These organizations also reflected a growing trend towards programs intended to promote the internalization of certain values and to encourage the self-regulation and self-discipline of children.

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Playground and Recreation Movements

One of the most important aspects of the social organization of children was the establishment of playgrounds and play centers throughout the country. As urban congestion intensified with each new wave of immigrants, and the number of children in low-income areas added to the crowded conditions of tenement, street and neighborhood, attention was turned toward the problem of control. Although schools were overcrowded, and truancy rates relatively high, larger numbers of children attended schools during weekdays, and older children attended at night if they worked during the day. Schools were turned into social centers for adult activities in the evening, "vacation schools" were established during the summer, and a variety of educational alternatives were made available to urban children. But even with these opportunities, there was still the pressing problem of what to do with children when they were not in school.

At the end of the 19th century the child study movement explored a variety of ways in which children's time and space could be restructured to conform to extended periods of childhood and new expectations of children. In particular it emphasized the notion that greater attention

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should be placed on inner-directed behavior. Reformers spoke of these concerns in terms of the environment and the kinds of activities in which children were brought together - in the home as well as the school. By placing these forms of child behavior in central positions in the psychological development of the child, the programs provided the intellectual underpinnings for a far-reaching movement to provide children with a wide range of supervised after-school activities. In this movement too we find a dialectical process: efforts by concerned educators, reformers and social workers to enhance the lives of urban ghetto children; but also an attempt to more closely regulate, supervise, and circumscribe the kinds of experiences and behavior of children in structured settings, i.e. to create new forms of assimilation and social control. The recreation movement not only attempted to mitigate the effects of urban-industrial life on the child, but tried to insure a predictable, disciplined, homogeneous context for growth. In the eyes of these reformers the prospects of unsupervised children raised some anxiety.

> The lack of space for play, as was natural, brought into existence a generation of children in New York who do not know how to play, whose knowledge of activity is expressed in mischief more or less destructive or malicious, noisy always, with sharpness, shrewdness and lack of definite purpose, each producing its destructive and undermining effects on character and intelligence. 86

86. Lillian Betts, "The Children Out of School Hours," Outlook, (September, 1903)

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This conception of children's activity denied the existence of legitimate forms of behavior which did not conform to the expectations of reformers. Moreover it supported those who labelled children who did not fit in as "delinquents."

By the end of the 19th century, a number of efforts were made to incorporate recreational activities into institutional structures. A Small Parks Act was passed in 1887 which recognized the absence of parks in lower Manhattan (where most of the immigrants were concentrated), and in 1890 several small parks were established in that area. The New York Society for Parks and Playgrounds was established in 1890, and, led by prominent social and political leaders, brought the issue of recreation to public attention.

Public health programs quickly became central features of settlement houses. They developed clinics, visiting nurse programs (which had originated in settlement houses) and provided educational programs on disease prevention. Other organizations also contributed to this work. For example, in 1891 the New York Society for Improving the Condition of the Poor erected a People's Bath on Center Market Place and at the turn of the century New York City opened a number of free public bath houses. These efforts to ameliorate the

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86. Moses Rischin, The Promised City, p.208
Marilyn Williams, "The Municipal Bath Movement, 1890-1915," (Unpublished Ph.D., New York University, 1972)

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health and sanitation problems of poorer areas were largely a response to growing fears of epidemics.

Because urban land was at a premium, settlement houses developed backyards and adjacent areas for recreational purposes. Schools had outdoor play areas set aside either on the roof of the building, or in nearby lots. But there were few systematic efforts to develop a clear and definite recreational plan (perhaps due to rapidly increasing land values). The NYAICP and the Public Education Association inaugurated programs in schools which attempted to draw children away from the street into organized after-school recreational programs. Their success was recognized when, in 1898, the New York State Legislature gave the Board of Education the right to use schools for recreational and other purposes. Parks began to be more numerous and accessible to the public and other playgrounds were developed in local neighborhoods. The Outdoor Recreation League (established in 1898)(which began in 1890 as the Society for Parks and Playgrounds)[87] was at the forefront of this effort and was able to persuade the Parks Department to develop structured play areas in the parks themselves. With the organization of the Playground Association of America in 1906, these efforts became national in scope and influence. But

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87. Allen Davis, Spearheads for Reform, pp.63-65 David MacLoed observes that reformers felt that participation in uncontrolled sports encouraged wild behavior. See also: Cary Goodman, "Choosing Sides; Labor, Capital and the Rise of Organized Play (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Union Graduate School, 1977).

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providing parks was a quick and easy palliative to a more complex problem of assimilation and social change.

Another important aspect of the reform movement was the development of schools as "play centers" where every member of the family and community could find some activity suited to his or her needs. Similar to settlements, these play centers were structured around clubs and meetings which brought a new socializing dimension to schools and sought to break down the suspicion and hostility of communities toward the school. The utilization of public schools for social and recreational purposes (complementing the settlement houses) underscored attempts to more firmly establish schools as integral to neighborhood and community life. Blending educational and social roles was essential in the reformulation of childhood as well as the broad process of Americanization.[88]

88. We do not know the extent to which such school centers competed with indigenous ethnic and community organizations.

For a discussion of these centers see: Allen Davis, Spearheads for Reform, pp.76-81 and Joel Spring, Education and the Rise of the Corporate State, pp.78-84

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Children's Aid Society: Lodging Houses

As mentioned earlier, lodging houses were established prior to the Civil War and soon became important parts of the lives of large numbers of New York City's working and homeless children; the lodging houses were not only refuges but also functioned as industrial (vocational) training schools.[89] The early lodging houses were not only for boys, although boys comprised the majority of their residents.[90] During the 1850's one could find older newspaper sellers (like "Alick" mentioned in the section on Child Labor). The fact that a wide range of ages was accepted into the houses indicates a lack of emphasis on age segregation. One would also expect some racial conflict. One such incident involved a Black boy (referred to in the source as an "American Pariah") against whom a conspiracy was organized by the other boys. After a talk with the superintendent of the house, amicable relations were apparently established.

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89. Other CAS organizations were established in Baltimore (1860), Boston (1865), Brooklyn (1866), Buffalo (1872) and Philadelphia (1882).

90. As late as the 1890's, adults were still found in lodging houses. Shortly after finishing his novel Struggling Upward Horatio Alger, Jr. suffered a mental and physical collapse and was caredfor by his close friend, Charles O'Conner, Superintendent of the Newsboys' Lodging House for about 6 years.
Richard Fink, ed., Ragged Dick and Mark the Match Boy (NY: Collier Books, 1962), p.15

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The newsboys appeared to be patriotic and celebrated Washington's birthday at the lodging house with enthusiasm.

> Though there was no display of transparancies or medallions, mottoes, or devices at the Lodging House tonight, there was an earnest patriotism, with a sincerity in those representatives of Young America, the Newsboys, which was delightful to witness.[91]

In the late 1870's a CAS report indicated that there were 6 lodging houses for boys and 1 for girls (established in 1862). The "Newsboys Lodging House" was a 6-story brick building. After registering (giving name, age, birthplace, names of parents/relatives, occupation, etc.) he paid for his lodging (6¢ per night) if he could afford it, and if he could not, he was given a bed and two free meals. His underclothes were washed free and if he had no shirt he was given one. If he had a home, his parents were contacted; if not, he was often urged to accept placement with a family or in the West.

The beds were arranged in tiers in a large dormatory room, or in special rooms with 2 or 3 beds (@10¢ per night),[92] and the rooms were guarded until 11 pm. There was a gym, baths, dining hall, drying room and reception room (which also served as a schoolroom in the evening). The reception

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91. From a diary in possession of the NY CAS, no author or date (probably written in the 1850's).

92. The more expensive accomodations were called "dude's quarters" and included a bed enclosed by curtains, a locker by the bed, and a piece of carpet on the floor.

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room contained a large table with 110 numbered holes, which served as a deposit bank for the boys. In 1875, $3,206 was deposited by 1,311 boys (or nearly $3 per boy). This particular lodging house was the first to be opened (in 1855) and was located at 9 Duane Street. It was used as an Industrial School during the day, largely for children who had homes but had to work and could not attend public schools. About 150 boys were admitted to the house each night. A library was available with 250 books. Most of the boys paid for their room and board, though in cases of dire need children were allowed to defer payment, sometimes for years.[93] Between 1865 and 1866 of the 7,256 boys given shelter, 6,296 (about 87%) were born in the U.S. or Ireland; most of the boys were 13 to 15 years old, could read and write and declared themselves to be orphans or half-orphans.[94] During 1869-1870, 8,835 different boys were cared for in the house; they contributed $3,349 toward the costs of their meals and lodging.

Although it appears that the number of children who were given shelter fluctuated, larger numbers were enrolled

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93. New York City, Board of Education, Journal, (July-December, 1897), p.2376 ; Walter Johnson, "Boys Lodging Houses in New York," Lend A Hand v.8 (1892) ; Enoch Wines, State of Prisons and of Child Saving Institutions in the Civilized World (1880) Book 2, Part 1, p.128-129

94. Charles L.Brace, Short Sermons to Newsboys (NY: Scribners, 1866), pp.49-51

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in schools of various sorts. Because of changes in the way children were listed, it is not possible to determine accurately the number of "half-orphans" - which in 1880 comprised a substantial number of children. In fact, in 1880, of the 13,463 children who were cared for in a lodging house, 7,307 were listed as orphans. In addition, 9,662 children were enrolled in a day or evening industrial school. According to Annual Reports of the lodging houses, only about 1% of the children in any year in this period were sent to homes in the West through the Children's Aid Society.

In addition to rudimentary skills taught in the schools run by the CAS, children were given clothing, meals and, if necessary, medical attention. There were kindergartens, classes for crippled children (at the Avenue B School), an employment bureau which found jobs for children (such as domestic work, odd jobs, farm work at a training school or in the West, or enlistment in the Army or Navy) and helped destitute families. The actual day-to-day functioning of the individual house and school is difficult to determine. Some children were "restored to friends" (picked up by someone who knew the child), others were "supervised in family" (perhaps foster care); these terms are unclear, and it is not known what special arrangements were made for these children and in what circumstances.[95]

95. Lettie Johnson, Newsboys and other Street Trades Annual Report of Bureau of Statistics and Information, Maryland, v.24 (1915)

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In 1887, the number of children who went into the CAS lodging houses dropped to 11,820, two-thirds of whom (7,600) declared that they were orphans, and one-third (3,100) that they had lost a parent (half-orphan).[96] These statistics indicate the number of homeless children who were without care. Even more striking however is that so many half-orphans did not return home for one reason or another. This suggests a major family breakdown.

Lodging houses were not only shelters, but also provided alternatives and supplements to public education. Staffed largely by divinity students and other volunteers during its early history, lodging houses offered industrial education and general evening classes for children who did not attend public school. They were taught such skills as sewing, printing, textile-trades , housekeeping, carpentry and woodworking; the average cost per child was $40 per year.[97] This aspect of lodging houses is of primary importance because New York City schools at the turn of the century were so overcrowded that an estimated 8 to 10 thousand children were denied admittance because of lack of space. The labor of the children in these houses was not wasted. At the Girls' Lodging House, residents were required to

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96. Opening of the Eleventh Ward Newsboys Lodging House and Industrial School, Children's Aid Society (March 28,1887)

97. George Needham, Arabs of the City , p.242
See also Annual Reports for CAS.

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learn rudimentary skills in cleaning, dressmaking and laundering which were put to practical use; the House took in laundry and did mending for which it charged a modest sum. The proceeds went to support the maintenance of the House. At the East 44th Street School there was a crippled boys brush shop which sold its products. In this way the Houses were able to offset some of their costs while teaching skills.[98]

In 1893, the CAS owned 19 schools and/or lodging houses and rented 6 more. In addition, the Newsboys' Home Club offered summer camp for 25¢ per week, and the CAS operated a "Health Home" in Coney Island for sick children and a Sick Children's Mission in the city.[99]

An analysis of an account book kept for the East Side Lodging House, located on East Broadway, for a period between November, 1894 and June, 1897 gives some indication of the kinds of boys who used the facility.[100]

Most of the boys were between 13 and 18 years old, (most between 15 and 17); boys of 10 years and boys over 21 also used the facility, but not to the extent of the middle teen-agers. It would appear from this that younger children were not as prevalent among homeless or vagrant boys, or were cared for in families or child care institutions.

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98. Lettie Johnson, Newsboys and Other Street Trades

99. Jacob Riis, "New York Newsboys" Century Magazine, v.85 (December, 1912)
National Conference of Social Work, History of Child Saving in the United States (1893)

100. I am indebted to Mrs. Ethel Lambert of the Children's Aid Society for this source.

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The house was used more heavily during the winter and early spring when it was more difficult to sleep outside. An average of about 80 different boys per month were cared for during the winter months; this dropped to an average of about 45-50 during the summer. The fact that boys used the house at all during the summer indicates its importance since they could have slept outside. During the winter 3,500-4,000 boys per month stayed at the house; this figure dropped by a thousand during warmer months.[101] On an average, several hundred more meals were provided for boys than were lodgings, which would indicate that many boys were coming into the house simply for meals. Most boys (85-90%) paid for their meals and lodging. Nearly 90% of the boys declared themselves to be orphans (an unusually high number and probably inaccurate, indicating a desire for anonymity); 7-8% said that they were half-orphans, and the remainder indicated that both parents were living. Over 90% said that they could read and write - a high rate of literacy; only a few could not master either skill. Over 90% of the boys said that they were born in the United States; except for a few others, the rest said that they were born in Scotland (or perhaps had Scotch/Irish parents).

101. It is curious that more lodgings were provided per child than days per month. Perhaps some children returned, or smuggled meals to friends in some way. Or, perhaps the figures are simply inaccurate.

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Newsboys represented less than 10% (at most) of the boys who registered at the house; a larger number of peddlers appeared, though still not over 10%; errand boys and bootblacks were the next highest categories. Scattered throughout the months were a variety of other occupations.[102] Only 10-15% of the boys declared that they had no employment. The broad range of occupations indicates the extensive use of children in many sectors of the economy and their relegation to menial work at substandard wages.[103]

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102. The occupations included: carter, bell boy, milk and ice carts, cigar makers, boxes, riveters, plumbers, brassworks, clerks, safemakers, cracker bakers, tobacco strippers, watchers, tailors, printers, express wagons, telegraph messengers, foundry workers, tin smiths and roofers, brush sellers, flower boys, dock workers (hoisting), butchers, canal boys, bakers, oyster openers, grocery store clerks, dish washers, machinists, painters, waiters, hatters, umbrellas, bill and poster distributors, shoemakers, bottle labelers, truck drivers, harness makers, fruit stand, toy shop, file cutters, elevator, hostlers, candy store, picture framers, sandpaperers, varnishers, laborers, carpenters, glaziers, sailors.
The information on occupations was gathered by a month-by-month analysis of the account books; a comparison was made to determine the extent and trends in utilization of the House. A survey was made of the montly listing of occupations of each boy registered in order to obtain the range of occupations.

103. The construction of an additional newsboys house (which had been promoted by newspaper owners) met with some opposition. Owen Lovejoy was suspicious about the motives of the sponsors of the house; he believed that they were primarily interested in perpetuating their exploitation of and control over the newsboys.
Confidential letter from Owen Lovejoy to Felix Adler in 1915
Municipal Archives of New York City

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Conclusion

This chapter has examined aspects of the social organization of children and youths in settlements, quasi-settlements, club and boys work, leagues, lodging houses and other groups as examples of ways in which children were used in the process of assimilation and in the development of new categories and definitions of childhood. The elaboration of these organizations gave form and structure to Americanization programs and more abstract notions of childhood. As suggested earlier, this organizational effort to enroll children and youths into social/patriotic groups was a corollary of attempts to remove children from the workforce and emphasisize their roles as future citizens. Despite the altruism of reformers, the success of their efforts to alleviate some of the pernicious aspects of industrial/urban society and their attempts to ease the burdens of assimilation, they seldom calculated the other costs of their reforms.

> ...as we tend to disintegrate these nuclei of nationalistic culture do we tend to create men and women without a spiritual country, cultural outlaws, without taste, without standards but those of the mob. 104

Transferring traditional child-rearing functions from the

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104. Randolph Bourne, "Trans-National America," in War and the Intellectuals, p.114

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family to institutions created and supported profound changes in the nature of family relationships and in childhood itself. Settlements and other social organizations, while helping to develop capacities of children, often did so at the expense of parental authority and values. These institutions prepared children for roles ("little citizens") compatible with the requirements of a modern capitalist and industrial society. This process was more fully elaborated in the schools.

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VI. ASSIMILATION AND THE CLASSROOM: ASPECTS OF SCHOOLING

To assess the extent to which schooling affected the transformation of childhood during this period we must extrapolate the dimensions of the process that occurred from the barest of impressions that were left. Although the development of the institution is clear, the impact it made on children is not. We do not know what day-to-day experiences occurred, nor what children thought about them and how they and their families changed as a result. At best we have only their reflections long after they were participants, and the observations of reformers and other contemporaries. We need to examine not only the transformation of the school, but its effect on relationships between parents and children, its role in the process of Americanization and assimilation, and its influence on the nature of childhood and the role of children.

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> The educational system does not add to or subtract from the overall degree of inequality and repressive personal development. Rather, it is best understood as an institution which serves to perpetuate the social relationships of economic life through which these patterns are set, by facilitating a smooth integration of youth into the labor force. [1]

This approach shifts the analysis from a qualitative discussion of education to one that focuses on its role in the context of much larger social and economic problems.

Although compulsory education laws were initiated prior to the Civil War, not until the decades after the war did such legislation expand as part of an attempt to restructure the working lives of children and to provide a minimum standard of education. Although motives behind the passage of such laws differed - some sought to curb child labor, others sought to insure the survival of a democratic society by educating and indoctrinating its potential citizens, and others wanted to substitute schools and other institutions in place of parental/familial influence - by 1912, every state had them. This did not insure careful enforcement or implementation. Due to the reluctance of parents, economic necessity, and/or the failure of public schools to provide adequate facilities, these laws were often circumvented, as evidenced by the

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1. Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, Schooling in Capitalist America (NY: Basic Books, 1976) p.11

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constantly high absentee rates. Nevertheless, the school stood in a unique position to create a special world for children. Here a greater emphasis was placed on children, particularly as cultural intermediaries. Less obvious was the process in which childhood as a cultural category changed and became largely defined by experiences in school and as part of an increasing specialization and division of labor. By the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, childhood and schooling were becoming synonymous (to the extent that penalties were imposed on truants and their parents).

As urban schools struggled to meet the increasing demands made upon them by immigrants from Europe and migrants from rural areas of this country, they underwent a major period of development. A large bureaucratic system was created; rigid systems for grade level, pupil promotion and teacher standards were gradually established; and innovations in school curricula and functions were incorporated.[2] But school facilities never seemed to keep pace with the demand. Class sizes increased, often to over 60 and in some cases as high as 158.[3] Two-thirds of the

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2. David Tyack, The One Best System (Cambridge: Harvard, 1974)

3. James Penniman, "The Criminal Crowding of Public Schools," Forum, v.19 (March-August, 1895); he cites a report of the Superintendent of Schools of New York City for 1893

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children in New York City did not finish elementary school; even those who did finish were unprepared for the kinds of skills needed in industry.[4] Those who went on to high school were in the minority, and it was not until much later that immigrants (particularly Jews) took advantage of the city college system. Even if a student wished to attend a public high school in the 1880's it would have been difficult, since there were so few.[5] Therefore, in addition to the ease with which one could leave school (either through reaching a certain age or having a job), and the sporadic enforcement of compulsory education laws, the institutions themselves were unable to accomodate all those who wished to attend.[6] Some have estimated that 50-60,000 children in New York City were unable to attend school because there were no facilities for them.

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4. Sol Cohen, "The Industrial Education Movement,1906-1907," American Quarterly, vol.20, no.1 (Spring, 1968); He estimtes that only half of the children in public schools finished the 8th grade.(p.97)
See also: Colin Greer, The Great School Legend(NY:Viking,1972) who argues that in 1898 more children in Chicago schools failed than succeeded.(p.108)

5.Until 1903, only 4 years of schooling were required (between the ages of 8 and 12) to obtain working papers. Later, the minimum age which a child had to attain before leaving school was raised to 12, to 14, and then, in 1913, to 16 years of age, where it has remained ever since; the minimum grade level to be achieved was increased from 6th to 8th.

6. Selma Berrol, "Immigrants at School; New York City,1898-1914" (Unpublished Ph.D., City University of New York,) Indeed, until 1898 there were no high schools in New York City (Manhattan and the Bronx), and only 5 in 1914.

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> At the turn of the century 1,100 willing children were refused admission to any school for lack of space. Pupils in part-time classes had increased from almost 10,000 to 45,000 since 1898 and in 1902 they numbered 70,000; by 1906 over 14% of the elementary school registers were on such sessions with the heaviest strain on first grade classes.[7]

The problem of overcrowding and lack of space had been a serious problem for at least a decade. In 1887, 3,000 children had been refused admission to schools and almost 4,000 in 1888.[8] In the 10th Ward (south of Rivington St. and east of Broadway) 1,527 children seeking admission to schools were turned away; 7,353 were turned away in the city as a whole. In the 19th Ward, 1,250 children were refused admittance and in the 12th Ward (mainly poor Italians), 2,880 children were refused.[9] The high truancy and absentee rates throughout this period are related to these conditions. In one example, 117 boys were brought into a school by the truant officer, but there were only 8 vacant seats in the class. This led many to conclude that the truancy program was a farce.[10]

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7. Colin Greer, The Great School Legend, p.118

8. Diane Ravitch, The Great School Wars (NY:Basic Books, 1974) p.115

9. Jacob Riis, "The Making of Thieves in New York," Century v.49 (November, 1894)
See also New York City Dept. of Education, Annual Reports of the Superintendent of Schools to the Board of Education, 1898-1915. The Board admitted that thousands of children were denied admittance to schools for lack of space.

10. Lillian Betts, "The Italian in New York," University Settlement Studies, v.1-3 (1905-1907)

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The problem of truancy is not a simple one, and like other aspects of education, is interrelated with other factors, such as the lack of school facilities, economic hardships that forced children out of school and into jobs, and the inability of schools to provide meaningful educational experiences. Increasingly, reformers linked truancy with delinquency. Julia Richman wrote, "Truancy and waywardness in children must be regarded as moral diseases and must be dealt with scientifically."[11] Paul Klapper believed truancy was the first indication of more serious problems that ultimately led to criminal behavior. The methods to deal with the problem were uncompromising:

> Irregular attendance contributes in no small measure towards truancy, retardation, elimination and juvenile delinquency...The truant must be stamped out; he is shamed by his teachers, punished by his principal, paroled by the local superintendent and finally made to feel the strong arm of the law when he is committed to a reformatory or custodial institution.[12]

Ultimately, the purpose of truant officers, truant/parental schools, similar to that of probation officers, was to make a direct intervention in the home life of the child.[13]

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11. Julia Richman, "Blame for Truants and Incorrigibles," National Education Association, Proceedings, v.47 (1909) p.228 Richman had established the first truant school (P.S.#120) to deal with "incorrigibles."

12. Paul Klapper, "The Bureau of Attendance and Child Welfare," Educational Review, v.50 (November, 1915) pp.369-391

In 1914, the New York Bureau of Compulsory Education, School Census and Child Welfare was established to deal with rising truancy rates.

13. See: Steven Schlossman, Love and the American Delinquent (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), pp.61-62

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In addition to limitations in school capacity, immigration created special problems of cultural and linguistic barriers. During the first decade of the 20th century at least two-thirds of the children in New York City and Chicago public schools were of foreign-born parents.[14] Thus, schools had to function in dual roles, as assimilators and as educators. These roles overlapped and included direct intervention on a personal level with families - often in non-educational roles. In this way the creation of a special context in which children were to develop outside of the family and outside of a work situation was laid at the doorstep of educators. Their response, although well-meaning, was shaped by the need to assimilate large numbers of foreign children and by the demands for efficiency and economy - criteria which often reflected a corporate ideology. A distinguishing feature of this development was the utilization of the

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14. Lawrence Cremin, The Transformation of the School (NY: Random House, 1961) p.72
According to the U.S.Immigration Commission, Abstract of the Report on the Children of Immigrants in Schools Senate Document 61st Congress, 3rd Session (1911) v.13, pp.18-19
By 1911, 57.8% of the children in public schools of the 37 largest cities were foreign-born or of foreign-born parents. In 1900, one-third of New York City's 3½ million residents were foreign-born; they and their children accounted for 85% of public school enrollment. A decade later immigrants and their children were more than 70% of the school population. By 1924, one-third of the country's population were immigrants or their children (80% in New York City). Between 1898 and 1915, the number of children enrolled in public schools doubled.
See also: Colin Greer, The Great School Legend, p.117

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ideology of "social engineering" and "social efficiency." These phrases suggested the need to exercise greater control over the social environment. Through schools, reformers sought to reify their belief in the perfectability of American society and provide mechanisms for the integration of immigrant children and their families.[15]

In addition to the role of the schools in the process of Americanization, the educational system experienced a change from an emphasis on moral training to useful and practical knowledge, the acquisition of information for "daily living," and "life adjustment," as John Dewey and other Progressive educators spoke of it. The growing technological demands of the economy thus helped shape the ecology of public education and prepared children for roles more suited to the requirements of an industrial economy and mass consumer market. Efficiency and adapta-

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15. Aspects of this can be seen in: Carl Kaestle, The Evolution of an Urban School System (Harvard University Press, 1973) Michael Katz, The Irony of Early School Reform (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968) and Class, Bureaucracy and Schools (NY:Praeger, 1971), Stanley Schultz, The Culture Factory (NY:Oxford, 1973) have examined the evolution of the school and its ideology in the pre-Civil War period; Joel Spring, Education and the Rise of the Corporate State (Boston: Beacon, 1972) Raymond Callahan, Education and the Cult of Efficiency (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962) David Tyack, The One Best System (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), Marvin Lazerson, The Origins of the Urban School (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), Colin Greer, The Great School Legend (NY: Viking, 1972), Clarence Karier Shaping the American Educational State (NY:Free Press, 1975) have focused on the post-Civil War (particularly the Progressive) period.

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bility became key models in redefining the roles and functions of children through schools. In this way the educational system served as a mechanism to accomodate children to the new industrial order. The adaptation of curricula to the needs of this socio-economic system, though well-intentioned, was an important part of the process of assimilation and profoundly affected the nature of the family, especially the immigrant family.[16]

The role of the school in the Americanization of children and in the alteration of family relationships was problematic. Some educators suggested that parents be included in the process of education and that bridges be built between the Americanized child and his/her immigrant parents.[17] For others, immigrant parents were obstacles. Edward Cubberley, for example, a leading educator at the turn of the century, believed the task of public schools was to break up ethnic settlements of immigrants and assimilate them.[18] William McAndrew, the principal of a girls technical high school in New York City in which most of the students were from immigrant homes wrote:

> All the seeds of crime are in this soil (children in his school): Deceit, cheating, lying, stealing, vulgarity, impurity, and all the long sad list of sins that mar our moral state are here in nascent form...[19]

16. David Cohen and Marvin Lazerson, "Education and the Corporate Order," Socialist Revolution, v.2, no.2 (1972)

17. Mary McDowell, "The Struggle in the Family Life," Charities (December 3, 1904)

18. Edward Cubberley, Changing Conceptions of Education (1909), p.14

19. William McAndrew, "A Days's Work in a New York Public School" World's Work, v.4 (1902) pp.2635-2636
McAndrew was principal of Washington Irving High School

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McAndrew believed that the only solution to what he called "moral delinquencies" was discipline, something he found sadly lacking in the homes of his students. The tension between home and school, not uncommon today in the struggle for community control, was of major concern to educators.

> For school purposes, a parent's ideas about her own children are usually worthless...To resist parents will always be part of the work of a school teacher.[20]

Imbued with the belief that they, as professional educators, were the best guides for children, and dedicated to the goals of Americanization, educators remained firm in their conviction that complete adaptation to the "one best system," was the solution.[21]

These notions of childhood, translated into educational philosophy, were expressed in the belief that adults must learn from children and that children's natural impulses must be given full expression. Thus, adult intervention should be minimized to allow children's natural imagination, spontaneity and curiosity to develop.(guided of course by the teacher). The task of education (in the eyes of the reformers) was not to create miniature adults out of children, but to enhance the "uniqueness of childhood," through the "republic of children" (i.e.schools and citizenship).

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20. Ibid.,
21. David Tyack, The One Best System, p.237

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Schools were to become "legatee institutions" (as John Dewey called them), surrogates for home and family.

> Educational functions traditionally carried on by family, neighborhood, or shop are no longer being performed; somehow they must get done; like it or not, the school must take them on. [22]

> Whereas formerly the child participated in the industrial activities of the household, he now participated in the industrial activities of the school. [23]

When placed in the context of the functional aspect of the school as Americanizer, the emphasis on (and rhetoric of) "free expression" of children's "natural impulses" (because it was centered primarily in schools) became another form of social control. For Progressives, "self-expression, free and uninhibited, was the secret of youth, on which the progress of humanity...had come to depend." [24] But such allusions to permissiveness and free expression had little basis in practice. Despite attempts to implement an individualized curriculum to meet the needs of students, and efforts to eliminate or reduce memory work, education retained its static quality. Children then as now, were expected to fit in, rather than express themselves.

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22. John Dewey quoted in Lawrence Cremin, The Transformation of the School, p.117

23. Ibid., p.156

24. Christopher Lasch, The New Radicalism in America, p.89

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Although educational reformers spoke of the attempt to balance individuality with adherence to a specific set of standards and the needs of the individual with those of the community, the primary goals were efficiency and the preparation of a reliable and relatively flexible workforce. Reformers spoke of "preserving" childhood, but behind this lay the attempt to utilize schools to restructure children's lives - separating them from family ties, culturally and generationally, differentiating among them more carefully and inculcating in them modes of conformity and loyalty. Reformers emphasized the spontaneous, self-realized individual, but only as one who accepted the values and norms of the new corporate society.

> The promise of democracy held out to children in this literature is not the liberty to do as one pleases but the opportunity to become what one could be by accepting responsibility for service within the discipline of self-culture.[25]

Increasing distinctions within childhood and between children and adults were reinforced by reformers like John Dewey. Dewey believed that "children had as much to teach their teachers as they had to learn from them...that children had a more highly developed talent for social life than adults."[26] Such conclusions, while valid, reinforced the

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25. R.Gordon Kelley, Mother Was a Lady (Westport, Conn.,1974) p.103

26. Christopher Lasch, The New Radicalism in America , p.159

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role of the school as an instrument of Americanization. Dewey acknowledged that even his theories of progressive education, in the hands of inadequate educators, could be used to enforce conformity as easily as creativity. What was more obscure was that such theories, because they did not entail a critique of the system in which they would function (in fact, they were purposely vague), and in the context of more dominant efforts to Americanize immigrants, helped to shift the focus away from adults and toward children, exaggerating the importance of youth at the expense of age. As one historian observed, the historical effect of Dewey's concept of education as growth exalted the child and dismissed the problem of society.

> I believe Dewey did American education a major disservice by providing what appears to be an authoritative sanction for that monotonous and suffocating rhetoric about "democratic living" with which American educationists smother our discussions of the means and ends of education.[27]

The importance of Progressive educational philosophy to this study is its impact upon the function of schooling and new conceptions of childhood. As part of a broad change in liberalism itself, Dewey's influence was immense.

Structural changes in American capitalism at the turn

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27. Richard Hofstadter, Anti-Intellectualism in American Life (NY: Random House, 1963) p.380
See also Randolph Bourne's essay "Twilight of the Gods" in his War and the Intellectuals: "The defect of any philosophy of 'adaptation' or 'adjustment' even when it means adjustment to changing, living experience, is that there is no provision for thought or experience getting beyond itself." p.61

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of the century had promoted a reformulation of basic tenets of classical liberalism - free enterprise, laissez-faire, private property, individualism and freedom from state interference.[28] Liberal reformers, like Dewey, concerned with the problems of assimilation, stressed the need for consensus, conformity and faith that "scientific methods" applied to social problems would accomplish the ideals of democratic society. Through experts, bureaucracies and institutions, these reformers urged a planned, managed corporate economy, state and society. The application of efficient methods and reliance on "professionals" would correct the injustices and inequities of the system and provide an atmosphere for creative growth.

> Fearing the potential for violence and chaos implicit in the uncontrolled immigrant masses of our urban ghettoes, the new liberal turned increasingly toward the development of nonviolent but coercive means of social control.[29]

Dewey's faith that education in a democratic society could facilitate self-development and promote equality, though inspirational, did more to enhance the institution than change what went on inside. His theories, however,

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28. Louis Hartz, The Liberal Tradition in America (NY: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1955) defines Liberal Reform as "the Western movement which emerged toward the end of the 19th century to adapt classical liberalism to the purposes of small propertied interests and the laboring class and at the same time which rejected socialism." (p.228)

29. Clarence Karier, "Liberalism and the Quest for Orderly Change," The History of Education Quarterly, v.12, no.1 (Spring, 1972)

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lent support to the new conceptions of childhood, as well as to the restructuring of the family.

> Despite all Dewey's concern with becoming - with growth, as he put it time and time again - he was weak on what growth really amounted to when a rigorous answer was demanded...He transferred the romantic view of the adult to the child, for example, and thereby provided an exceedingly undemocratic definition of human relationships. For by taking the child very largely at its own valuation, Dewey implicitly, and often explicitly, discounted the adult.
> Granted that adult control of the child has a propensity to become confinement, and granted that Dewey was everlastingly justified in trying to check and limit that tendency, it nevertheless is true that to accept the child's judgment of himself is to make the child more important than the adult. But the present is just as important as the future. At most, and in equity, the child is as important as the adult. But no more. And in many respects, the adult is more important for the simple reason that he has the responsibility for the present. Indeed, Dewey's emphasis on children amounts in many ways to a frontier that enables the adult to escape the hard realities of the present by living in the child's future. [30]

Reformers argued that (at least for immigrant parents) it was precisely this adult responsibility that represented a barrier to assimilation. Some recognized the problem.

> We have no right to educate a child away from its parents, and failure to recognize this truth has caused a serious breach between the old and the new in the family and has led to serious results in the social life of these foreign communities. [31]

Few, however, were able to implement their awareness.

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30. William A.Williams, The Contours of American History (Chicago:Quadrangle Books,191,1966) p.403
"Since in reality there is nothing to which growth is relative save more growth, there is nothing to which education is subordinate save more education."
John Dewey, Democracy and Education (NY:Macmillan,1916)p.60

31. David Tyack, The One Best System p.237 (quoting an "Americanizer.")

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Educators continued to view their students as cultural teachers and mediators in immigrant families, altering behavior and expectations in the desire to conform.

> Deep interest is shown by parents. That interest has been brought about by the effort of the children themselves. The feeling of each girl that she does not want someone else to look better than she does is a very important factor in the matter. The children educate the parents... school has been intrenched as a powerful center for social service. It is a settlement of the broadest most far-reaching type. It is furnishing an untrained people with standards of comparison in that cleanliness which is indeed not so widely removed from godliness, and in that care for health which spells efficiency...[32]

The intervention of the school in matters of personal hygiene were often direct. There were programs to teach cleanliness, weekly inspections for personal health and grooming, and formal and informal relationships with other municipal agencies.[33] In some cases, schools attempted to involve themselves in what can only be called medical hysteria, as for example the program of mass adenoidectomies in 1908, in New York City schools.[34]

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32. Winthrop Talbot,"A Public School in the Slums That Does Its Job; the Work of School#4 in the NY Ghetto," World's Work, v.18 (1909)

33. The first medical inspection in schools was established in Philadelphia in about 1890 (they had begun in Europe in the 1860's and 70's) and in Boston in 1894. By 1911, 433 cities had medical inspections in schools and 89 cities had dental inspections and clinics. By the turn of the century, Lightner Witmer and others had established working relationships between public schools, courts and children's clinics. His clinic, and later his hospital school attempted to identify and treat children who were considered "mentally and morally retarded."

34. Selma Berrol, "Immigrants at School," (Unpublished Ph.D. City University of New York,)

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Cleanliness, neatness and good manners were considered at least as important as what was learned from books as indications of adaptation. Children received grades on deportment, self-control and "citizenship" (getting along with others) as ways of reinforcing hierarchical notions and obedience to authority, as well as their progress toward Americanization.[35]

Despite the altruistic intentions of reformers, schools resisted attempts to innovate and change; they remained bound to stereotypical notions of themselves and their students.[36] Teachers were less interested in developing and stimulating minds than they were in being drill masters and overseers. They became mental and moral disciplinarians who conceived their task as transforming the "savage" undisciplined child into an orderly "little citizen" - one who had successfully shed the values and norms of his/her immigrant background and was fully integrated into the social structure. Instead of greater latitude, teachers required students to consult them for the "most minute standards of conduct."

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35. "Manners, cleanliness, dress, the simple business of getting along together in the schoolroom - these things had to be taught more insistently and self-consciously than ever." Lawrence Cremin, Transformation of the School, p.72;

36. Although it is impossible to accurately determine the nature of teacher-pupil contact in schools, one gets the impression that teachers were relatively resistant to new approaches.

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> They could satisfactorily submit to the rules and regulations of the teachers only by purging themselves of their individuality, by submerging their identities, and by incorporating the goals of the teachers as their own. In fact, the teachers demanded nothing less than perfect adherence to the values of self-control, self-restraint and self-government... Somewhat paradoxically, we find that with all the stress on conformity, teachers engaged also in a series of activities designed ultimately to isolate students from each other, to make them intellectually as well as socially independent within the classroom.[37]

This perceptive understanding of the dynamics which pervaded schooling indicates not only attitudes of adults, but also the constricting and often compulsive environment which was created for children. The most intimate areas of their lives were subject to scrutiny.

> The drawing-out of spontaneous selfhood, especially in children, became the primary means, therefore, of socializing democracy; the primary means, as the new radicals put it, of achieving "social control."[38]

A contemporary observer described the rigidity of a classroom she visited in which

> attention was perfect (but no child expressed) a thought in his own words...It ignored absolutely any individuality in the pupils and fitted them for nothing more than a mechanized obedience to another's thinking.[39]

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37. Barbara Finkelstein, "Pedagogy as Intrusion," History of Childhood Quarterly, v.2, no.3 (Winter, 1975), p.349 see also her work "Governing the Young: Teacher Behavior in American Primary Schools, 1820-1880" (Unpublished Ph.D., Teachers College, Columbia University, 1970)

38. Christopher Lasch, The New Radicalism in America, p.144

39. Adele Marie Shaw, "The True Character of New York Public Schools," World's Work, v.7 (Nov.1903-April,1904) pp.4204-4221

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Classrooms were strictly regimented and no child was allowed to raise his hands above the level of the shoulder except during arithmetic recitation. Pencils, when not in use, were expected to be held in the right hand, "the right elbow resting on the desk, the left hand laid flat on the other side."[40] This somewhat prison-like atmosphere was, in the eyes of this educator, the fault of the Board of Education, whom she accused of treating its teachers in a similar way.

In addition to the desire to teach obedience and root out deviance, culturally or behaviorally, this emphasis on order and conformity may have been the result of anxiety over conditions which accompanied rapid social change and latent fears that democracy was under attack from "undisciplined" immigrants and their childrem. Thus, several themes converge during this period, which guided the direction of educational reform and policy: first, that assimilation would best take place in schools; second, that such forms of social conditioning demanded the acceptance of the new industrial order as the basis for American democracy; third, that education was the basis for the "new citizenship," implying not only an individual sense of allegiance, but the right and authority of state and institutional inter-

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40. Ibid., For other examples see Diane Ravitch, The Great School Wars, pp.127-128 ; and David Tyack, The One Best System, pp.55-56

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vention. Stimulated by efforts to mobilize popular support in World War I, the National Education Association Committee on the Reorganization of Secondary Education emphasized this approach to children. "The child was now conceived not as a mind to be developed but as a citizen to be trained by the schools...It was the business of the schools...to serve democracy by developing in each pupil the powers that would enable him to act as a citizen."[41] Citizenship became an euphemism for determined and "scientific" efforts to achieve social control, and to overcome cultural conflicts between schools (and other agencies) and immigrant families.

One of the methods used by teachers and schools to break down the sense of remoteness and distance between home and school was through home visits. In such visits the teacher was able to get a sense of the child's environment which affected work in school, and might allay the resistance of the parents.[42] Superintendent of Schools William

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41. Richard Hofstadter, Anti-Intellectualism in American Life, p.335

42. Often a special "visiting teacher" was assigned this task. Although precedents had been established by individual teachers, the notion originated in settlement houses. A resident social worker was assigned the function of visiting families in which children had been identified as having educational, emotional, or physical problems. Conflicts between schools and settlements however prevented the expansion of these services. It was not until 1907 that the Public Education Association hired a full time visiting teacher; New York City did not establish such services until 1913. In addition to visiting teachers, volunteers from private organizations, churches and public health agencies were also utilized. See for example:
Eleanor Johnson,"Social Service and the Public School," and Mary Flexner "The Visiting Teacher in Action," Survey v.30 (1913)

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Maxwell himself urged teachers to make these home visits and function as social workers and public health officers as well as educators. In fact,he believed all of these aspects were related, and the child's progress in school was dependent upon other factors, such as health and home environment. Maxwell related stories of teachers who, in the course of their visits, found families without money. The teachers arranged for food, helped to find employment, took children to doctors, and even helped to clean the house. In one example, a teacher befriended a young Jewish girl who appeared "ragged, dirty, dishevelled." The teacher visited the home and found, in addition to two boarders and many children "a confused mass of bedding, children, rickety furniture and broken cooking utensils," and the "inevitable sewing machine." Informally, the teacher suggested to the girl how she could "reform the home." The boarders were asked to leave and the rooms were cleaned thoroughly, even the smaller children were given baths. Although the mother was initially resistant, she went along when the father supported his daughter. Allegedly the loss of income from boarders was not a hardship. The teacher then gave the girl an illustrated magazine with a picture of a "table set with silver and cut glass and garnished with flowers." The girl, who had learned to cook in cooking class (one wonders why not at home), used this as a guide. The samovar and challah

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were replaced by new symbols of respectability. She arranged the home according to the magazine and her teacher's ideas. The teacher was subsequently invited and was paid "all the reverence due to a queen. And she was a queen, for was she not to those poor Russian Jews, the incarnation of American womanhood and civilization?"[43] This example seems to assume that few if any values or traditions of immigrants were worthy of such a queen. The story reflects the antagonism between new and old cultures. But underneath lay the internal conflict in the home between these roles and models. The teacher may have represented a model of womanhood and respectability, but what did this incident teach the girl and her parents about their own culture? In such examples we can observe the role of the school in the process of Americanization and the denigration of immigrant culture.

Such conflicts between immigrants and the school were also evident when the issue of hunger among poor children on the Lower East Side was raised. Julia Richman, the first female district superintendent in New York City, actively supported a free lunch program for needy children. Her attitudes towards immigrants and their culture was provocative. For example, Richman forbade the use of Yiddish and

43. William Maxwell, "Stories of the Lives of Real Teachers," World's Work, v.4,(August, 1909) pp.11877-11880

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Italian in the schools in her district. This regulation was not only enforced in classrooms, but teachers also patrolled halls, bathrooms and playgrounds in search of culprits. One form of punishment for this offense was to wash out the child's mouth with soap. Richman's prejudice, as well as the resistance of parents, was revealed in this example:

> School children are starving partly because their parents are desperately ignorant, but partly also because of a sluggish response to the suggestions and demands of highly trained, experienced charity workers. It is significant that the suffering is found chiefly among Russian Jewish children. Heavily handicapped by Oriental superstition, ignorance of the English language and American customs, and by an almost inevitable clannishness, the Russian Jewish parent is sure to feel the pinch of poverty in dull times long before the wide awake, mobile and optimistic Italian, or the clearly independent quick-witted North European does... 44

Richman was accused of simply advancing her own political aspirations by leaders and parents on the Lower East Side. An investigating committee from the area composed of physicians and businessmen countered Richman by reporting that children of the area were doing well and the community could take care of itself. Parents also objected to the fact that the lunches were not kosher. This conflict reflects an additional aspect of the problem: the issue of community control often created antagonisms between immigrants and those who sought to change them. Since the dispute occurred

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44. New York Daily Tribune, June 4, 1908, p.8; see also Sept. 9, 1908, p.7 and June 3, 1908, p.4; New York Evening Post, June 4, 1908, p.1
See also Richman's address to the National Education Association Convention of 1904.
I am indebted to Martha Kransdorf for these references.
See also Morris Berger (1956) for other examples of "Orientalism," as an issue within the Jewish community, esp.p.54

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during a period of depression (1907-1908), it is likely that there were hardships. But Richman's approach rubbed the wounds of assimilation and may have been interpreted as a way of undermining parental authority and the family, particularly for Jews who struggled to maintain their "Oriental superstitions" such as laws of kashrut.[45] These attitudes were consistent with Progressive and liberal movements whose primary aim was to encourage and facilitate assimilation. It is not surprising, therefore, to find Richman on the Board of Directors of the Educational Alliance and other social work and settlement groups. In 1906 she established Teachers' House, a settlement for teachers, which sought to blend the objectives of social work and education and extend the influence of teachers throughout the community.[46]

45. In another example, Richman led marches of teachers and students through the Lower East Side to help publicize the anti-pushcart campaign. This was undoubtedly resented by parents of these students who may have earned their living by selling from pushcarts, and it certainly raised conflicting loyalties in families where that was the case. Richman also made many contributions, including differentiating among students, establishment of special classes, and adapting instruction to students' capacities. See: David Tyack, The One Best System, pp.202-203, 237

46. Allen Davis, Spearheads for Reform, p.78

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Kindergartens and High Schools

Kindergartens and high schools deserve special attention for several reasons. They were both emphasized at the turn of the century in response to growing concern over juvenile crime, immigration and radicalism and to incorporate younger and older children (or youths) into the educational system. In this regard they also helped to more clearly differentiate among age groups within the population and provide an institutional category for that distinction. Both were important aspects of programs to assimilate immigrant children, and through them, their families. Both were extensions of the educational spectrum that helped to more closely identify childhood with schooling. Both derived, to a greater or lesser extent, from non-educational sources: kindergartens originated in settlement houses; non-academic high school programs were initiated by organizations like the Children's Aid Society (industrial training and vocational schools) or unions (apprenticeship programs).

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The first kindergartens in this country were established by well-educated, liberal German immigrants who had arrived here during the 1840's, like Adolph Douai and Mrs. Carl Schurz. They had been influenced by the work of Friedrich Froebel in Germany who had studied preschool children and had opened the first kindergarten there in 1837. Mrs. Schurz founded her kindergarten in 1855, and she helped Elizabeth Palmer Peabody establish the first English speaking kindergarten in the United States in Boston in 1860.[47]

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47. Infant schools (for 2 and 3 year olds) had been founded in England at the turn of the century to meet the problem of juvenile crime attendant to industrialization and poverty. The first of these schools was founded in 1800 at New Lanark by the social reformer and utpoian socialist Robert Owen. Concerned by the neglect of small children in families among his own workers, Owen hoped to educate these children to become socially useful workers and citizens. An enlightened approach to schoolroom discipline emphasized a more permissive atmosphere which included games and music as part of the curriculum. The movement attracted the attention of leading educators and led to the establishment of the Infant School Society in 1824 (by Lord Brougham and James Stuart Mill) and the Home and Colonial Infant School Society a dozen years later (under the directorship of Charles and Elizabeth Mayo). Infant schools were also popular in this country in the 1820's and 1830's; they accepted children from 1½ to 6 years of age.
In addition to the work of Froebel, Pestalozzi in Switzerland, Jean Frederick Oberlin in France and Johann Friedrich Herbart in Germany attacked traditional teaching methods based on new notions of child psychology and educational philosophy.

See: Marvin Lazerson, "Urban Reform and the Schools: Kindergartens in Massachusetts, 1870-1915," History of Education Quarterly, v.11, No.2 (Summer, 1971)
Morris Berger, "The Settlement, The Immigrant, and The Public School," and Timothy Smith, "Progressivism in American Education, 1880-1900," Harvard Educational Review, vol.31, no.2 (Spring, 1961) place the establishment of the first kindergarten in a public school in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1873.

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With the help of Mrs. Quincy Adams Shaw, Peabody expanded her kindergarten classes in that city during the 1870's. Mrs. Shaw founded two kindergartens for workingmen's children in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1877 and within a few years more than a score had been established in Boston.[48] In the 1880's Felix Adler, a founder of the Ethical Culture Society established a Workingman's School for Children of the poor which included a kindergarten and manual trades courses.

> In 1881, Grace Dodge and other socially prominent philanthropists organized the Kitchen Garden Association to help slum dwellers by teaching them such practical subjects as household management. The Kitchen Garden Association was reorganized in 1884 as the Industrial Education Association to agitate for the inclusion of industrial education and manual training in public schools.[49]

Kindergarten Associations were established in San Francisco, Chicago (which had 14 in 1886), Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Boston and other cities.[50] The first public kindergarten in New York City was opened in 1893. By 1899, 6,524 children were enrolled in kindergartens; 22,000 were enrolled by 1914. Kindergartens were established almost immediately by most settlement houses. In fact, some settlement houses had developed from kindergarten work and day care nurseries.[51]

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48. Timothy Smith, "Progressivism in American Education"
49. Diane Ravitch, The Great School Wars, p.112
50. Timothy Smith, op.cit
51. Allen Davis, Spearheads for Reform, pp.43-45

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During the 1880's, early childhood education became a growing field of interest, prompted by the growing number of immigrant children in slum areas, the concern for the welfare of these children, the development of kindergartens, and the child-study movement. The child-study movement, particularly influenced by the work of G.Stanley Hall, helped to focus attention on the psycho-social dimensions of young children through detailed analyses of their behavior and development.[52] Kindergartners believed that by structuring play activities the spontaneous and natural instincts of children could be adapted to conform to the needs of the group or, as"little citizens,"to the society.

> while kindergartners urged emancipation, they also argued that their ultimate goal was order. The kindergarten was, after all, a "guarded company of children," and children could not be left "to a chaos of chance impressions." Individualism, with its potentiality for disorder and conflict, was another form of self-centeredness, vitiating the primary goals of kindergarten learning.[53]

In addition to specific educational reforms, kindergartners (and educators generally) viewed the classroom as a model for society, as a "republic" or "commonwealth." In such an egalitarian environment each child fulfilled his/her own needs (individualism), while learning to work in harmony with others (cooperation). The challenge of the

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52. The importance of Hall's early work, The Contents of Children's Minds (1880) was his assumption that children's minds contained anything at all worth considering.

53. Marvin Lazerson, "Urban Reform and the Schools," op.cit.

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movement was to achieve a balance between the needs of society and the individual. The assumptions which underlay the movement held that artificial obstacles placed in the path of natural growth distorted childhood. If these obstacles could be removed in the early stages of development, natural instincts would emerge, guided of course by appropriate instruction. The result would be a child who was more properly fitted to society.

The predominant attitude reflected in the kindergarten movement was essentially anti-urban (and, as a corollary, anti-immigrant culture and tradition). It assumed that city life itself was demoralizing, artificial and unnatural; through kindergartens, an attempt was made to compensate for this absence of natural and rural experiences by providing order and structure through specific forms of play and exercise . Again the leitmotif of a conflict between permissiveness and restrictiveness reveals on the one hand, the goal to emancipate children towards spontaneity, self-direction and self-mastery. On the other hand, uniformity, control and authority were stressed.

> Time was when children were regarded as an inert mass, all to be moulded to the same shape by the same outward pressures. Today they are rightly regarded as distinct beings to be comprehended. However, between the two extremes of liberty and license lies the golden mean of wisely tempered authority and discipline.[54]

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54. Clara Craig, Montessori System of Child Culture (Providence: Rhode Island Education Dept., 1913)

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> The great school virtues of regularity and punctuality, as well as order, have been cultivated. Attendance is not a matter of whim and caprices; the child has a sense of work and duty to be performed, and the winds of self-indulgence and variations of weather no longer determine his daily acts. He has learned in the kindergarten to cooperate with those about him, to control wayward impulses, to attend to business.[55]

Such training conformed to requirements in schools, employment and as citizens. This emphasis was particularly important in its application to Americanization. Educators increasingly presented the dichotomy between the "unwholesome influences of street life" to the healthy atmosphere of the school. This reflected the attempt by schools to intervene in the family and create new sources of standards and values.[56] In this sense kindergartens were viewed as laboratories in moral and social (as well as educational) reform.[57] The goals were not simply to educate, but to prepare children for roles as assimilators of their parents, as well as workers and citizens.[58]

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55. Laura Fisher, How the Kindergarten Prepares the Child for the Primary School (Boston: Rockewll and Churchill, 1897)

56. This perspective is similar to what we would now refer to as a "culture of poverty." See Charles Valentine, Culture and Poverty (Chicago:University of Chicago Press,1968) for an excellent critique of this notion.

57. See: Kate Wiggin, Children's Rights (Boston:Houghton-Mifflin, 1892), p.109

58. In this regard, Joel Spring, Education and the Rise of the Corporate State points out that kindergartens were organized in factories as a way of preparing future workers and as a way of getting into workers' homes.(pp.36-37)

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Educators, increasingly concerned about the impact of immigrants at the turn of the century looked to enforced and prolonged periods of education as the best insurance against social catastrophe. Urban schools and kindergartens in particular were perceived as bulwarks against instability, as educational supplements and as places where children of workers could be influenced towards moderation. Concern about the home life of immigrant and working class children was directly related to the fact that in many of these homes the parents, or friends and relatives, were involved in strikes.[59] A subtle attempt to show these influences on children appeared in a cartoon entitled, "A Strike in the Nursery." It showed children marching with picket signs that read: "Down With Oatmeel" (sic), "No bed time until 9 o'clock," "2 lumps of sugar in our tea," "Jam 3 times a day."[60] While the demands are trivial, the activity is not; it suggests the growing assertiveness of children, and the influence of workers' struggles. Educators and reformers realized that kindergartens would not only socialize children, but their parents.

> Through the child, the poor would be taught how to raise their children. They would be introduced to cleanliness and health standards, the English language, and proper behavior patterns. The kindergarten would thus assimilate parents and child, bringing social harmony to family life in the slums.[61]

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59. Diane Ravitch, The Great School Wars, p.125
60. St. Nicholas, v.19 (November,1891-April,1892) p.307
61. Marvin Lazerson, The Origins of the Urban School (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971) p.36

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The early introduction of very young children into schools also more firmly established educational boundaries for older children.

> The high school was to give shape and direction to the efforts of the lower schools, and the lower schools were needed to simplify and clarify the functions of the high school. [62]

Both high schools and kindergartens represented corollaries to the increasing division of labor and differentiation in other areas of social and economic life. High schools more particularly were established in large part as a response to the loss of economic functions of adolescents and the need to create a more highly skilled and mobile workforce.

The sudden rise of public high schools was extraordinary. From 1890, the enrollment in high schools nearly doubled every decade. In 1890 only 4% of all 17 year olds had graduated from high school; the same percentage of 14-17 year olds were in high schools. In 1910, 35% of all 17 year olds were in high schools and by 1930, 29% of all 17 year olds had graduated high school; 47% of 14-17 year olds were in high school.[63]

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62. Joseph Kett, Rites of Passage, p.125

63. U.S.Bureau of Census, Historical Statistics of the U.S. Colonial Times to 1957.(Washington, 1960)

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The reasons for the rise of high schools are cause for speculation. Generally their curricula did not correspond to specific needs in industry and commerce, or to technological advances. In fact, the skills that most immigrant and working class youngsters needed in the jobs they found were taught previously in public schools.

> School prepares them for jobs; girls go to work at 14 and are able to get jobs which require good hand-writing. Instead of working as a "cash girl" for $3.75, some are taken into offices and get $4.50 as a result of their writing.[64]

In this school, which was probably typical of schools in immigrant and working class neighborhoods, of the 65 pupils who graduated, only 5% went on to high school. Most were forced to become self-supporting or helped to support their family. The girls who completed a course in "retail selling" could get higher wages in department stores (where more than half of the girls found jobs). Given the opportunities, there seemed little incentive to continue schooling.

Other factors which contributed to a rise in enrollment in high schools were population movements to the cities and the notion that social and economic advancement was

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64. Winthrop Talbot, "A Public School in the Slums..." op.cit. P.S.#4 located on the Lower East Side had 2,269 pupils, almost 90% of whom were girls. Almost all were under 15, and were children of foreign-born parents; more than 70% were born abroad. Only one-half to one-third of the pupils were in school for more than a year; the rest were new students. Working papers could be obtained at 14, and most chose to leave. Colin Greer, in The Great School Legend, points out that high schools were also quite selective. More girls than boys graduated probably because extended education was considered a luxury unaffordable to young who were expected to find jobs and a career as quickly as possible.

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correlated with education. Since "the great majority of the 5050 new high schools created between 1890 and 1905 were just high schools,"[65] it would appear that the rise of these schools and their appeal to larger numbers of students cannot be attributed to their being vocational. Perhaps the problem here is one of periodization: the "take-off" period for the industrial education movement was from 1906 to 1917.[66]

Nevertheless, the shifts in educational developments with regard to children, adolescents and youths can be related to two major structural changes: first, the increasing differentiations in the work force and among young people, and second, the breakdown of the apprentice system.

The nature of change in the social and economic roles of children and their assimilation as workers is clearly demonstrated in the decline of apprenticeship. This form of labor is not merely a definition of one's relationship to a teacher, but a much broader social category that defines and symbolizes one's relationship to the world. In its most comprehensive sense, apprenticeship is a form of initiation as well as a process of learning a craft.

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65. Edward Krug, The Shaping of the American High School (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964), p.186

66. Sol Cohen, "The Industrial Education Movement," American Quarterly, vol.20, no.1 (Spring, 1968)

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The process of learning by doing, of learning the art of a craft from one who is a skilled master was an essential part of production in the pre-industrial world, but not in the modern one. The kinds of social and economic contractual relationships that had existed between children and adults were swept away by new methods of production. As early as the 1820's, "the practice of apprenticeship had become outmoded and neglected."[67] During the anti-Abolitionist riots in the Jacksonian period many of those who were arrested were young apprentices and journeymen shoemakers (or cordwainers, as they were called) who were upset about changes in the apprenticeship system in their industry. Changes in apprenticeship were more marked, however, after the Civil War, particularly with the introduction of techniques of mass production.

Apprenticeship had involved not only training in a craft, but in character building as well; it was not only vocational, but moral development. To be sure, this was an ideal and in practice apprenticeship was often little more than exploitation in the guise of instruction. As in the case of freedmen following the Civil War, the idea that there had to be a transition period between slavery and

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67. Stanley Schultz, The Culture Factory, p.47

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freedom (or in our case, childhood to adulthood) proved to be profitable for former slaveowners who sought to retain their former chattel. But in less restricted situations (as in Europe) where formal structured relationships were more important, the teaching and learning of a trade was an essential aspect of growing up as well as of accepting the hierarchy of status and class. Apprenticeship, therefore, could function in a variety of ways: as a system to insure cheap labor, as punishment for debt, or as an educational and socializing process.[68]

As industrial/corporate capitalism eliminated the methods and skills one learned in this more intimate and informal way, the training of children was taken over by schools. Whether in vocational classes or more abstract academic subjects, children were increasingly separated from the processes of production and situated in schools. There were exceptions of course. Many children worked in families as homeworkers, in canneries or in industries, such as mining and textile mills. But here children were not learning a craft, nor were they apprentices. They were simply cheap, unskilled workers.

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68. Free public schools for the poor developed slowly as alternatives to traditional apprenticeship when peasants would not or could not pay debts or taxes, or as in the case of parish children, when they became wards of the state. See: Paul Douglas, American Apprenticeship and Industrial Education in Studies in History, Economics and Public Law (NY: Columbia University) v.xcv no.2 (1921)

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Once traditional modes of apprenticeship were eliminated, new ways had to be instituted to redefine these relationships. The major change was the elimination of specific skill-related objectives, except (of course) in vocational schools. Even then such instruction was often only minimal, or irrelevant. The vacuum left by omitting skills was taken up by the other side of apprenticeship -"character building" (which was an important phrase in boys work) and formal education. Thus, alongside academic subjects (the 3 R's) secular equivalents of morality were emphasized: citizenship and deportment.

As a result of the Industrial Revolution, children were transformed from apprentices to child laborers where once these categories had been synonymous. The process of education shifted from the shop with a master to a schoolroom with a 'schoolmarm.'[69] For male children in particular this changed their significant instructors from men to women. Where once the apprentice received room and board in exchange for work, a cash payment of a wage replaced this under the factory/industrial system. In addition, as technological innovations and an increasing division of labor changed the nature of the production process, the kinds of skills which one acquired also changed. One was no longer judged on the quality and integrity of his/her work, but on the quantity

69. This change from apprenticeship-training to school is also noted by Philippe Ariès (Centuries of Childhood, p.369) in the Renaissance.

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which was produced.

> The introduction of high-speed machinery did not always accelerate the demand for cheap labor. Sometimes it had the opposite effect, with the availability of cheap adult labor and the complexity of the machinery itself the determining factors...
> Prior to large-scale industrialization, the extensive use of apprentices, often called "berkshires" or "two thirders" developed principally in occupations like iron molding, where journeymen worked on a piece rate basis; the journeymen hired apprentices directly without consulting either the furnace proprietors or the employers, who provided patterns and purchased the finished product. Berkshires were potential threats to the status of journeymen, but since the latter did the actual hiring, they had little reason to view berkshires as clear and present dangers. Rather, journeymen routinely raided their rivals for berkshires who knew enough about the craft to be useful but not so much as to be intimidating...
> The gradual concentration of workers into factories purchased added efficiency at the price of altering the relationship between apprentices and journeymen, for the latter were now strictly employees, devoid of even the appearance of freedom, while the former, still subordinate in theory, were no longer necessarily under the control of journeymen.
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In addition to the negative impact of technological innovations on the use of child labor, more attention was paid to children as the nature of relationships between working men and apprentices changed, and as a surplus of apprentices threatened the already fragile grasp of working men on their position.

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70. Joseph Kett, Rites of Passage, pp.146-149

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> As late as 1890, only 17 of 48 trade unions, comprising 16½% of the total membership, regulated or attempted to regulate apprenticeship through national bodies...By 1904...70 out of 120 national unions comprising 900,000 members out of a total of 1,675,000 had enacted apprenticeship regulations.[71]

The major reasons for the tight control over apprentices were to limit the number of workers and keep wages up, issues that also played a major role in the attitude of unions to trade schools.[72]

During the 1880's the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions, the precursor of the AFL, passed several resolutions which attempted to regulate apprenticeship. But as industry turned to mass production, there was less demand for skills and more demand for machine tenders, jobs which required little training or skill.

> The old idea was that no child should be in industry unless he was actually learning a trade. When the numbers of employed children were observed, it was thought that they must be in this class. And when it was discovered that they were not being taught as apprentices should be, the cry was immediately raised that apprenticeship was being abused. The fact was not clearly grasped that a new class of workers was being created: namely, children who were valued for their immediate labor, not for their ultimate productivity.[73]

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71. Paul Douglass, op.cit., p.69

The regulation of apprentices had been the province of trade unions (as it had been traditionally of guilds).

72. E.W.Bemis, "The Relation of Trades-Union to Apprentices," Journal of Social Sciences, v.28 (October, 1891)
Bemis notes that only about 1% of the strikes were over control of apprentices.

73. Douglas, op.cit p.74

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The establishment of vocational schools was intended precisely for this "new class of workers." As we have suggested, the function of schooling is not only to teach specific skills, but to inculcate work habits and discipline, to accomodate children and adolescents to future roles as adults and to transmit a particular set of values and norms which reflect a class ideology. This was nowhere more clear than in the vocational and industrial schools that multiplied rapidly at the turn of the century.[74] Their swift rise to prominence coincided with two other developments in education, the kindergarten and high school movements. These innovations contributed to the rationalization and differentiation of the future work force. While kindergartens met the problem of caring for and indoctrinating the very young, a similar process functioned for older working class youths. In an effort to stem the high rate of truancy,[75] absenteeism and early termination of schooling, and to differentiate more carefully among youths who were about to enter the labor market, the industrial educational movement was critical. It siphoned off large numbers of adolescents into industrial training,

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74. "New York City had 3 evening trade schools for apprentices 16-20 years of age. In Sept.,1909 however, it opened what was called a "day vocational school" designed for boys who left school at 14." Edward Krug, The Shaping of the American High School, p.232

75. For an exhaustive study of the problem in Chicago see: Gertrude Howe Britton, et.al., "An Intensive Study of the Causes of Truancy in 8 Chicago Public Schools including a Home Investigation of 800 Truant Children," published by Hull House in 1906, and Edith Abbott and Sophonisba Breckinridge, Truancy and Non-Attendance in the Chicago Schools (1917)

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thus providing a convenient dimension to the tracking system which had developed with the increase in academically oriented public high schools. Furthermore, industrial and vocational education schools filled gaps created as a result of the breakdown of the apprenticeship system during this period. Due to the mechanization of industry and rapid advances in technology, the traditional shop-oriented training of young workers no longer adequately met the demands of industry. In this situation, both industry and labor supported the establishment of trade schools, albeit for different reasons. Industry wanted to restrict the power of the labor movement; unions wanted to insure their control over future workers. Both the National Association of Manufacturers and the American Federation of Labor had an industrial education committee, but each mistrusted the intentions of the other.

> The N.A.M's specific concern was with the influence of labor organizations over the general character of the worker. The more general concern of industrialists was that the schools produce an individual who was cooperative, knew how to work well with others, and was physically and mentally equipped to do his job efficiently. A cooperative and unselfish individual not only worked well with his fellows in the corporate organization but was also easily managed.[76]

Corporations and individual businessmen supported vocational

76. Joel Spring, Education and the Rise of the Corporate State, p.43; see also: Paul Kellogg, "National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education," Survey, v.17 (1906-7) who indicates that labor leaders feared that trade schools would be used to turn out strike-breakers. Lawrence Cremin, The Transformation of the School notes that Samuel Gompers opposed trade schools not controlled by labor. See: pp.37-38

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education, although there were critics. William Maxwell responded to attacks on public schools by accusing businessmen of organizing such criticism for their purposes:

> No longer training their own mechanics, they have found it difficult to obtain a sufficient supply of skillful artisans, unless they import them from Europe at great expense. Out of this dilemma the exit was obvious - persuade the State to assume the burden.[77]

It would appear, however, that educators were increasingly influenced by the ideas and needs of businessmen and industrialists.[78] Vocational education and social activities which had been introduced in factories (though not especially designed for children) became models for public schools.[79] The essence of these programs was to incorporate social and economic reorganization with new modes of discipline, acceptance of authority structures, and paternalism of corporate managers.

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77. Raymond Callahan, Education and the Cult of Efficiency (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962, 1972) p.13

78. Callahan describes in detail the internalization of these ideas and their application to school programs and administration particularly in terms of efficiency and forms of scientific management.

79. The companies provided clubs, baths, pools, assembly and lecture halls, special books and magazines for workers in their factories. By transforming the workplace into a place of social contact, distinctions between who the worker was and what he/she did for a living were blurred and transcended. Health services were provided for workers primarily because it would reduce absenteeism and encourage preventive hygiene and reinforce paternalistic notions. Kindergartens were provided to allow women to work and as a way of getting teachers into workers' homes to monitor their private lives.

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Spurred by examples of industrial education in Germany, Sweden, Russia and England, by deteriorating conditions in public schools in this country, and by America's emergence as a world industrial and colonial power at the turn of the century, American educators turned to vocational and industrial education as a method for solving what they called the "Industrial Problem,"[80] - the consolidation of capital and the growth of mass production industry and the need for a labor force to meet the demands of industrial production. There was also concern about "youthful floaters," thousands of adolescents who were not working or working at unskilled or temporary jobs and who had left school when they were young. This reflected the exploitation of children as well as the waste of energy, the need to conserve and build an efficient labor force. Vocational education, however, was all too often meant to prepare "the youth for industrial efficiency for the sake of the producer rather than of the product."[81]

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80. The influence of Germany's industrial development as a competitor to the U.S. cannot be over emphasized. See: E.O. Holland, Child Labor and Vocational Work in the Public Schools," Child Labor Bulletin, v.1,no.1 (1912) Raymond Callahan, Education and the Cult of Efficiency wrote: "...it is doubtful whether the concern of manufacturers would have been as great if Germany had not emerged as an industrial competitor to the United States." (p.11)

81. James Hiatt, "Vocational Guidance" Industrial Arts Magazine, (1914)

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The promotion of vocational education by businessmen and industrialists (like J.P.Morgan and John D.Rockefeller) and organizations like the National Association of Manufacturers led labor leaders to regard the schools cautiously. Employers saw vocational schools as a means of undermining the control that skilled workers exercised over hirings and the apprenticeship system.

> The ideological rationale for limiting the power of the skilled workers was propagated by the school of scientific management which held that the behavior of workers down to the very movements involved in a mechanical operation must be controlled and dictated by technicians and managers according to scientific principles...Moreover, vocational education offered a useful method of training and labeling the growing strata of foremen so as to set them above and apart from other production workers. [82]

Some labor leaders accused the schools of being dominated by business interests and referred to them as "scab hatcheries" when it was discovered that some schools (like the New York Trades School) trained and encouraged their students to break strikes. In response, some unions established their own schools (e.g. carpenters in 1907, typographers in 1909, and pressmen in 1912). Such suspicions also led to the establishment of vocational schools which were not connected with the public school system, or unions, but were privately funded, like the Manhattan Trade School for Girls, founded in 1902.[83]

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82. S.Bowles and H.Gintis, Schooling in Capitalist America p.193

83. Mary Schenck Woolman, "The Manhattan Trade School for Girls," Survey, v.10 (1903)

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Vocational (industrial and manual training) schools became essential ingredients in creating a disciplined workforce, in stratifying high schools and tracking youths, in postponing entry into the job market, and in dealing with increasing numbers of youths who had been displaced from jobs or left school to work when they were quite young.[84] The conclusion that "apprenticeship is a means of mopping up, at least temporarily, reservoirs of otherwise unwanted juvenile labor"[85] would appear to apply to vocational schools as well. The fears of more radical educators and labor organizations that vocational education would simply channel immigrant and working class children into semi- or unskilled jobs was not unfounded.

> the vocational education movement was less a response to the specific job training needs of the rapidly expanding corporate sector than an accomodation of a previously elite educational institution - the high school - to the changing needs of reproducing the class structure.[86]

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84. "Employment certificates were issued by the Dept. of Health in the Borough of Manhattan alone, to 8,600 children between 14 and 16 in 1904, to 9,721 in 1905, to 11,387 in 1906, and to 12,454 in 1907...More than 80% of these children came from the elementary grades..." Jessie Adams, "The Working Girl from the Elementary School in New York," Charities and Commons (February 22, 1908) pp.1622-3

85. Frank Musgrove, Youth and the Social Order, p.23

86. S.Bowles and H.Gintis, Schooling in Capitalist America, p.194 See also: W.Norton Grubb and Marvin Lazerson, American Education and Vocationalism (NY:Teachers College, Columbia University, 1974) for an extensive discussion of this subject.

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Conclusion

Shortly after the turn of the century, a Swedish feminist, Ellen Key, wrote one of the more influential and prophetic books of the period which brought together many current theories of childhood.[87] She recognized the new emphasis on the child as a measure of the progress of American democracy and Western civilization, a vision which placed the child in a critical position in the process of Americanization. New perspectives of childhood derived from the belief that democracy offered unlimited opportunities. With sufficient attention to the special needs of children, for example, allowing them time to play and inquire, their self-awareness would develop. This consciousness would encourage a sense of obligation to participate in and accomodate to the needs of society. It was in this sense that many reformers spoke of "saving" and "preserving" the child who would then "redeem civilization." Such a perspective placed a responsibility on the child to reject

87. Ellen Key, The Century of the Child (1909)

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parental values and traditions in favor of those taught by the school. Educators maintained the belief that through the school children would be assimilated and accomodated to the new industrial corporate society; through the children, parents would also become Americanized. This intent was often contrasted by efforts of immigrant parents who wanted to teach their children their own traditions, language and customs. Social, religious and cultural institutions established by immigrants provided a sense of continuity and insulation during the process of transition. At the same time, however, attempts to preserve traditions were barriers to assimilation.[88] The establishment of separate schools, for example, by Jews presented an essential dilemma. They were conservative and reflected resistance to demands to become American by adopting all the values and traditions of the new culture. They were also attempts to moderate the process of assimilation by compromising and attempting to accomodate partially to pressures to conform. The establishment of such schools, in addition to religious requirements (such as the need for Jewish boys to study for their Bar Mitzvah) were also attempts by parents to exercise direct control over the education and training of their children in situations where that control was being undermined. Finally, it was through the children that immigrants sought to preserve and maintain their ethnic and religious heritage.

88. Most children who attended Jewish schools (chederim) did so after public school and until they were 13; nearly all of the students in these schools were boys.

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Schools not only transmit culture through their curricula but are institutions which preserve and maintain class relationships.

> The educational system serves...to reproduce economic inequality and to distort personal development... enhancing workers' productive capacities and perpetuating the social, political and economic conditions for the transformation of the fruits of labor into capitalist profits. 89

Moreover, the problem of the schools may be more than one of institutional restructuring.

> The schools, as caretakers of children and young people, are indispensable for family functioning, community stability, and social order in general (although they fulfill even these functions badly). In a word, there is no longer any place for the young in this society other than school. Serving to fill a vacuum, schools have themselves become that vacuum, increasingly emptied of content and reduced to little more than their own form. Just as in the labor process, where the more there is to know the less the worker need know, in the schools the mass of future workers attend the more there is to learn, the less reason there is for teachers to teach and students to learn. In this more than any other single factor - the purposelessness, futility, and empty forms of the educational system - we have the source of the growing antagonism between the young and their schools which threatens to tear the schools apart. 90

The struggle over what schools were, and are, reflects a deep and complex problem aboutthe purposes of education. If, in fact, major structural changes in education - centralization, bureaucratization, innovations like vocational schools and kindergartens - were intended to meet the needs of industry, of Americanizers, or of those who sought political

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89. S.Bowles and H.Gintis, op.cit., pp.48-49

90. Harry Braverman, Labor and Monopoly Capital (NY:Monthly Review Press, 1974) p.440

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power, then it follows, that the crisis of the school is not only educational, but social and economic as well.[91] Despite the altruism and idealism of educators, the necessity to create "little citizens" whose behavior and values were consistent with goals of Americanization - and who would become the assimilators of their parents - often took precedence. The struggle which took place in schools over what children were to become was paralelled by an equally intense struggle within the family.

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91. In an important critique of Bowles and Gintis' discussion of the concepts of "hierarchy" and "correspondence" between social relations and those of production, Sherry Gorelick writes: "Culture is more than structural style. In its substantive content, in its omission of working-class culture, and its pejorative (and racist) view of the working class, the culture of school is not in correspondence with culture experienced in home, family and neighborhood...from the point of view of educational professionals, the working class either has no culture or it has the wrong culture. For over 130 years educational leaders have seen the major task of public schooling the "uplifting" of "filthy slum children" by obliterating their cultures. The struggles for slum control have centerd in part around the efforts of parents to maintain, and of the capitalist class to destroy cultural correspondence between school and family."
Sherry Gorelick, "Undermining Hierarchy," Monthly Review vol.29, no.5 (October, 1977) p.25

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VII. AMERICANIZATION AND THE FAMILY: SOURCES OF GENERATIONAL AND CULTURAL CONFLICT AND THEIR EFFECTS

This chapter examines aspects of parent-child interaction under the corrosive impact of assimilation and Americanization. The premise of this inquiry is that immigrant families experienced severe cultural conflict as children rapidly became Americanized and rejected the traditions of their parents. The result was a growing distance and separation within the family.

> A sensitive observer of Americanization wrote that a "fear of losing the children haunts the older generation. It is not merely the natural desire of parent to retain influence over child...It is a vague uneasiness that a delicate network of precious traditions is being ruthlessly torn asunder, that a whole world of ideals is crashing into ruins; and amidst this desolation the fathers and mothers picture themselves wandering about lonely in vain search of their lost children."[1]

Nevertheless, such family disruption was considered necessary in order to separate immigrant parents from their children. In this way reformers hoped to restructure the process of socialization and to create children who were willing to

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1. David Tyack, The One Best System, p.241
There is no way of knowing if reformers exaggerated the extent of family crises; I have assumed that the popularity of the notion indicated substantial accuracy.

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accept different values and attitudes from those of their parents. In fact, such a process of detachment and division which undermined the social and economic bases of parental authority was deemed essential to that process of becoming an American.[2]

> There is additional irony in the fact that the newcomers brought with them a far more authoritarian family system than that prevailing here, and concentrated themselves in precisely those settled areas that might be expected to be most vulnerable to authoritarianism. Yet the net result of this infusion was further democratization. For although new pockets of familial authoritarianism did develop in unassimilated ghettoes, those individuals who were able to enter the mainstream of American culture had to reject their parents all the more strongly. Social mobility always produces an experiential chasm, even without an immigrant background. But since the immigrants typically began in poverty, assimilation and social mobility tended to occur simultaneously. Thus the price of entry into the American middle class was the pulverization of those conditions which nourish the authoritarian family...Once uncertainty is created in the parent how best to prepare the child for the future - once the parent can in any way imagine his own orientation to be a possible liability to the child in the world approaching - the authoritarian family is moribund.[3]

The transformation of the family at the turn of the century was not limited to immigrants. Christopher Lasch points out that a similar phenomenon was occurring among

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2. When the family worked together in the home it was more difficult to separate children from parents. This may have been a factor in anti-child labor legislation and intervention of institutions and agencies in the home.

3. Philip Slater, "Social Change and the Democratic Family" in Warren Bemis and Philip Slater, The Temporary Society (NY:Harper and Row, 1968) pp.42-47

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middle class families in which a weakened authority system of parents, in part represented by permissiveness

> gave rise in the children of the middle class to a powerful contempt and revulsion...All of them complained...of the tyranny of the family...they meant that the very atmosphere of middle-class family life had come to be inimical to creative effort of any kind. The family, it seemed, gave off some subtle poison; and children, imbibing it, lost their natural, primitive creativity. The very "advantages" that their parents lavished upon them led to an excessive cultivation and refinement in which all the spontaneity of childhood was finally extinguished. Even at its best, the family was still the transmitter of a sterile and decadent culture, still the agent of "civilization." 4

New attitudes towards childhood encompassed a growing isolation and estrangement of children from their families and their separation from and distinction in the world of adults both ideologically (conceptually) and practically/ functionally (as workers). As children no longer contributed to family income, they became more dependent. In addition, new forms of parenting arose to cope with this. Parents were admonished to "understand," "tolerate," and "nurture" children's individual motivations and expressions - forms of permissiveness in child rearing. But this permissiveness was based on the perception of children as their own masters; children were less willing than those of pre-industrial societies to take parents for models, especially when their parents were less Americanized. To an extent, this new

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4. Christopher Lasch, The New Radicalism in America, pp.141-143

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"permissiveness" was simply emotional abandonment at worst, and indifference, confusion, or the inability to cope with what they did not understand at best.

Parents and children were not only severed from each other culturally, but generationally as well; this is commonly referred to today as the"generation gap." The emphasis on the "new," the young, and rapid change, and the tendency to discard what is older was also a necessary part of this social transformation. The changing nature of childhood legitimated this process, providing a mechanism for internalizing new norms and values and compensating for what had been lost in the process of uprooting and assimilation. At the same time, it prevented traditional patterns of socialization from operating. Indeed, the very process of sharing as a family was altered as forms of discipline and control, role expectations and interactions made the area of parenting and child rearing more ambiguous and conflicting.

Furthermore, institutions like schools and settlements were substituted for the family. They developed and promoted new modes of child rearing and new attitudes toward children which were intended to facilitate the process of assimilation. To a large extent, therefore, the family became anachronistic. Not only was the home marginal to assimilation, it was an impediment to the process of social transformation and the preparation of children for their roles in industrial society.

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The development of new institutions and the restructuring of old ones was an attempt to compensate for cultural discontinuity in the family and the breakdown of traditional patterns; it was also an attempt to ease the process of assimilation by reshaping social consciousness. But in addition it provoked conflicts between old and new cultural patterns and attitudes. Ultimately the same dynamic which shook the structure of the family in the process of assimilation provided a new basis for determining what could be expected from children and what children, at least ideally, could expect in return from society.

The two different sources of behavioral norms and expectations impinging upon children - American traditions and values and those of their parents' native country - at times conflicted and these conflicts had to be resolved. Survival as an Eastern European Jew or Sicilian peasant could only occur where one did not have to change. The environment in public schools, playgrounds, or the street demanded conformity to yet another set of values and norms, often bewildering, contradictory and inconsistent. Yet, if one did not adhere to them the price was ostracism (as a "greenhorn") for the process of assimilation was swift and crude. Children were spun out of the orbit of family and home into a more autonomous and cosmopolitan yet conflicting and ambiguous experience. The control once exercised by

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community and family was taken over by institutions like the school. Patterns of behavior familiar to parents (and part of what they could teach their children) were no longer acceptable as "American" and were discarded.

> Educators and social reformers saw that the family, especially the immigrant family, was an obstacle to what they conceived of as social progress, in other words, to homogenization and "Americanization." The family preserved separatist religious traditions that tended to retard the growth of the political community and the state. Therefore, they sought to remove children from the influence of their families (which were also blamed for exploiting their labor) and to place them under the benign influence of the state and the school... The result of their activity was to weaken parents' confidence in their own judgment still further than it had already been weakened and to make parents dependent on a great variety of outside experts...At the same time the removal of education, medical care and other aspects of child-care from the home means that most parents have had little practical experience in their own childhood, of taking care of children, nursing the sick, or housekeeping. Naturally the child, as soon as he learns how to interpret his parents' gestures and language, begins to exploit all their uncertainties. 5

Social training in institutions and on the street, although necessary to the process of assimilation, often violated traditions and beliefs. Thus torn from roots in family and community and compelled to adapt to new ways, children (as well as their parents) experienced pressures from both sides to conform. Because having an American identity was usually a prerequisite to social and economic advancement the choice was not difficult. But it did not mean that per-

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5. Christopher Lasch, "The Waning of Private Life," Salmagundi, No.36 (Winter, 1977) p.7

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sonal disorganization and insecurity were any less. Whatever ties were retained were based on nostalgic social memory, born not of experience as much as the need to create and sustain identity.[6]

The changing nature of intra-family relationships, and the deterioration of the family itself was reflected in common references to the "too rapid assimilation" of children, the result of the inability of parents to adapt or speak English as well as their children.

> When the father needs the child to act as an interpreter, the child comes to think "he knows it all and filial piety - the thing we consider most sacred - falls to the ground...One of the first things an immigrant child learns is that his father and mother are "behind the times." [7]

Reformers who noted this problem seldom confronted their own ambiguity towards immigrant parents. They believed that different methods were needed to assimilate parents and children, that children could be taught by example and precept more easily and more successfully than their immigrant parents. Children could learn to salute the flag, sing patriotic songs and pledge allegiance; but an adult "will not sympathize with things American until he has overcome his natural prejudices against his new environment."[8]

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6. The situation was, of course, different for native born children of native parents who had no foreign culture which they had to overcome, abandon or integrate.

7. Address by Dr. Paul Abelson, American Social Science Association, v.44 (1906)

8. Ibid.

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John Dewey also noted this problem when he remarked:

> ...in some respects the children are too rapidly, I will not say Americanized, but too rapidly denationalized. They lose the positive and conservative value of their own native traditions, their own native music, art and literature. [9]

Although reformers recognized that they were creating distances between immigrant parents and their children, they insisted the process was inevitable and emphasized the role of the child as guide.

> The parents remain foreign; the children become American. There is thus created an almost unbridgeable gulf between the two...let us build a bridge between the Americanized child and its foreign parent, so that the parent can cross the bridge to join the child on the American side...They (immigrants) must be made to realize that in forsaking the land of their birth, they were also forsaking the customs and the traditions of that land; and they must be made to realize an obligation, in adopting a new country, to adopt the language and customs of that country. [10]

David Blaustein, Director of the Educational Alliance, noted the strains placed on the family by such cultural conflicts:

> He (the Russian Jew) also argues that the school system which makes the child apparently more progressive than the immigrant parent, widens the gap between child and parent, inasmuch as the child considers himself superior to his parent. He says that industrial conditions in America that make it possible for even a child to earn money undermines the authority of the parent over the child and loosens family ties. The child becomes independent since he pays his own board and is thus a boarder and not dependent on the family. [11]

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9. John Dewey. "The School as Social Center," National Education Association Proceedings (1902)

10. Julia Richman, "The Immigrant Child," National Education Association Proceedings (1905)

11. David Blaustein, "The People of the East Side before Emigration and After Immigration," University Settlement Studies, v.1-3 (1905-1907)

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In addition to the problem of the pace of assimilation, or perhaps as a corollary to it, reformers noted that competitiveness was encouraged in children, particularly Jewish children. One educator complained that "Hebrew immigrants were too ambitious to become distinguished and wealthy." He was concerned about the large number of Jewish students who "walk off with all the prizes, leaving the Sons of the Revolution and the descendants of New Englanders without anything in the shape of honors and distinction."[12]

Others felt that competitiveness and aggressiveness among Jewish children reflected the ambitions of their parents. One wrote that Jewish parents pushed their children too much when they required them to study music and take Hebrew lessons after school.

> Why sacrifice them on the alter of our ambition? Must we get all the medals and scholarships? Doctors will tell you about students with shattered nerves, brain fever. Most of them wear glasses.[13]

Attaining the attributes of a more sophisticated life through and for their children, moving from "greenhorn" to "American," was expressed in their ability to give their children music lessons. Yet, some thought that this put too much pressure on the children.

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12. Abelson, op.cit.

13. Dr. Michael Cohen in Jewish Daily Forward, (Jan.20,1911) quoted in Irving Howe, World of Our Fathers, p.261

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> There is no question but that a piano in the front room is preferable to a boarder. It gives spiritual pleasure to exhausted workers. But in most cases the piano is not for pleasure but to make martyrs of little children and make them mentally ill. A little girl comes home, does her homework and then is forced to practice under the supervision of her well-meaning father. He is never pleased with her progress and feels he is paying fifty cents a lesson for nothing. The session ends with his yelling and her crying. These children have not a single free minute for themselves. They have no time to play.[14]

For many parents, the ability of their children to play an instrument was an indication of a higher status which was often denied them in European ghettos, as well as their own displaced aspirations.

Within the family setting female children not only worked in the home and cared for younger children, but ran errands and did household chores. When parents were unable to care for children because they worked or were incapacitated the burden generally fell on the oldest girl. She was often referred to as a "little mother" and appropriately so, since she was a full-time baby sitter when she herself was a child.[15] Because of their ability to read and write English and their familiarity with American customs, children were cultural mediators and interpreters of language for parents.

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14. article in Jewish Daily Forward (July 6,1903) quoted in Irving Howe, World of Our Fathers, p.261

15. Since these occupations were not considered "work" in the sense that no wages were paid, the true position of women in the workforce cannot be accurately estimated.

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> who, in many cases remain all their lives aliens in a strange land, among a strange people whose language they do not understand. There is something pathetically incongruous in the tender solicitude with which these young ones watch over their parents, endeavoring to shield them from the strange things all about.[16]

> Serving as interpreters for their parents establishes an unnatural relation between parent and child. The parent becomes dependent upon the child and the child feels himself superior to the parent. Not having known the fatherland, the child does not respect his father's ideas and habits, and the parental influence is thereby weakened. The child thinks himself an American and his father, a foreigner, consequently, in accordance with certain standards of patriotism, he respects himself and entertains more or less contempt for his father's habits and manners.[17]

Sources of cultural conflict for Jews were compounded by their religious observances. In order to keep their jobs, many were forced to work on Saturdays and religious holidays. This led to conflicts in the family and the breakdown of traditional Jewish life - and resulted in increasing alienation between children and parents.

> The father, with bewildered sorrow, sees the child steadily becoming estranged from him, not merely in education and in the ordinary things of American life, but even in the observance of rites and laws peculiar to his race through countless centuries. [18]

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16. Edith Davids, "The Kindergarten of the Streets," Everybody's Magazine, v.9, p.74

See also: W.I.Hull, "Children of the Other Half," Arena v.17 (1896-1897), p.1044

17. J.B.Reynolds, "Report of the Headworker," University Settlement Bulletin (1900), p.13

18. New York Tribune, September 30, 1900

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As one observor concluded,

> It is as if the patriarchal home-life of the Jew having once been broken up, the whole boy was going bad at a rate there was no checking. 19

The street itself was also viewed as an obstacle to parent-child relations, for it symbolized, as well as realistically represented, a world open to children rather than to their parents, and one which stressed independence.

> Different standards of measurement arise to alienate him from his parents. He is surrounded by the new, follows its dictates and runs into its licenses. His greater familiarity with the ways of the street, the store, the city, the language and law make him interpreter in the home, a position that develops self-importance and minimizes parental authority. But should his argument be overruled his parent quickly sinks in his estimation as one who is still subservient to old world ways and is not abreast of the times. On the other hand the pitfall for the parent is equally dangerous in that if the mother accepts the lad's statement when he is deceiving her, she again falls in his estimation. In either case the result is that her counsel, when it is offered, is discounted. Long before the adolescent period when almost every boy has a trying enlargement of the ego, the street lad becomes unduly self-important and self-reliant and in the home tantalizing irrepressible. 20

Immigrant parents endured dual pressures: economic hardships and cultural distance from their children. While

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19. Jacob Riis, "The Making of Thieves in New York," Century v.49 (November, 1894)

20. Bernard Newman, "The Home of the Street Urchin," National Municipal Review (October, 1915) p.589
See also: Frederick King, "Influences in Street Life," University Settlement Bulletin (1900) pp.29-32
The problem was also recognized by Randolph Bourne (Youth and Life): "The two generations misunderstood each other as they never did before. This fact is a basic one to any comprehension of the situation." (p.34)

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the children of immigrants had the opportunity to attend school and learn about American culture, their parents did not have these options. This placed an additional burden on the family. Lillian Betts observed an Italian family this way:

> Italians - men and women, especially the women - seem to hold an impersonal relation to life, to their surroundings. They will sit and sew trousers hours at a time, and never seem to carry any responsibility beyond that. Children quarrel, and cry, babies cry, and they hardly lift their eyes. Stitch, stitch, stitch, in a half lethargy that seems due to hopelessness, they cease to struggle...The children after they learn English, lose their sympathy with the home. They speak two languages, the parents but one. The world rarely presents a more pathetic sight than an Italian mother watching her American children in a dispute, the cause or progress of which is beyond her mind, or to see her, as they grow older, sinking consciously into the background of the family life. As they cast off one after another of the habits of her dear home country she often grows bitter against the Americans, whom she holds responsible for their degeneracy. Your sympathy does not lessen when you find that she has children and grandchildren born in this country, for she is too frequently an alien to her family in her old age. 21

Thus, within the family, relationships changed as gaps between parents and children widened. It was an odd rendition of the observation that the child is often the father to the man. In addition to their economic role, the social roles of children changed, giving them a more independent status within the family. Such generational and cultural conflicts are difficult to assess. Nevertheless, it is clear that these

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21. Lillian Betts, "The Italian Peasants in a New Law Tenement," Harpers Bazar, v.38 (1904)
Lillian Brandt, "A Transplanted Birthright," Survey v.12 (January, 1904) also noted the tendency among Italian children to "despise the ways of their fathers."

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external conditions encouraged divisions within families and tended to magnify and distort the role of children - crucial to the process of assimilation.

Betts' poignant portrait of Italian families, isolated in tenement ghettos, elaborated at a very personal level her insight that "the two civilizations were always at war." She met people who had never ventured more than a few blocks from their homes and spoke no English, although they had lived in this country for a decade. In one family the eldest boy was 13 ("a most enthusiastic American") and wanted to go to school. Instead, his father drew up a notarized statement that the boy was 15 so he could obtain working papers. The boy preferred to attend school, however, and after copying down the regulations concerning child labor, gave them to his father. After school this boy worked at a shoe shine stand where he earned 35¢ per day. He had never been more than 5 blocks from his home. Betts succinctly captured the parameters of his existence in this way: "He removed his hat and shoes when he went to bed in winter; in summer he took off his coat." The boy shared a folding bed with his brother and 2 sisters; three other rooms in the apartment were sublet to a family with 3 children. The women worked together finishing trousers and earned 45¢ per day. "The children carried the work back and forth and settled the accounts and did the errands."[22]

22. Lillian Betts, "The Italian in New York," University Settlement Studies v.1-3 (1905-1907)

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Other families took in single boarders; they owned their own mattresses, which they rolled up during the day. The family was thus in a constant state of disruption and transition. Periodic unemployment strained family relationships; families moved frequently, often several times a year. If work was seasonal, as it often was for unskilled labor, husbands and wives alternated, or worked feverishly to compensate for unemployment. In addition, their lives were continually scrutinized by Attendance Officers, Factory and Tenement House Inspectors, Health Officials, teachers and social workers.

Children were also expected to make sacrifices for the family. In one example, when a baby was born, the youngest girl (14 years old), who had been working for 2 years, had to quit her job and postpone her marriage plans because she was needed at home. Eventually, she was allowed to marry, using as a dowry the nearly $400 she had been able to accumulate during the time she had worked.[23] She and her husband lived with the family in one of the 3 rooms shared by 11 others, 5 of whom worked in the same apartment during the day.

> Each child, but the youngest in the family, had been put in some institution as soon as weaned and remained there until 12 or 13, when it was brought home to help swell the family income. Recently the father of this family bought a 3-story tenement.[24]

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23. Lillian Betts, "The Italian in New York," op.cit. "Often a mother and daughter will create the same fund and engage in business independent of the father, but with his approval and under his direction and advice."

24. Ibid.

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Betts concluded that the family as a whole derived satisfaction from the feeling that they all had contributed to this effort. No explanation was given for sending young children away, nor were the institutions identified. They might have been Catholic boarding schools, or similar institutions. How the family was able to accumulate enough money to buy property was also unexplained. The fact that they invested in property at the expense of education seems to be somewhat typical among certain groups.[25]

Most reformers who decried the weakening of the family attributed this to cultural discontinuity and dislocation. One reformer spoke of the family as the "birthplace of religion," in which parents were the "first priest" and children and the household its "first congregation."[26] Despite such references there was a distinct tendency to disregard immigrant parents and focus on their children. Using a Biblical parallel, immigrant parents were compared to Hebrew slaves who were led by Moses out of Egypt and had to wander for 40 years until that enslaved generation died out. Only their children born in freedom would be allowed to enter the "Promised Land." Such conceptions reinforced the emphasis on children and provided the foundations for a new perspective of childhood.

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25. See: Stephen Thernstrom, Poverty and Progress (NY: Atheneum, 1972) and Virginia Yans McLaughlin, Family and Community (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977) (especially pp. 175-179)

26. Graham Taylor, "Religion in Social Action: Survival and Revival of Neighborship," Survey, v.28 (April-Sept., 1912)

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The effects of urban life and industrialization upon families and children who had previously lived in small communities where everyone knew each other was often traumatic. The new industrial society destroyed older configurations, mixing large numbers of different people as "strangers in a strange land."

> Seasonal or intermittent occupations, temporary jobs, commercial depressions, occasional unemployment and a general sense of the lack of permanency in the tenure of their industrial positions, pull settled families up by the roots and seldom leave them long enough in one place to take root again. Our manual workers are more and more transient. Many among them are forced to become tramping families. More and more men leave their families for a whole season of work...or go back and forth from foreign lands...Instead of having friends in common, they form individual friendships which other members of the family do not share. Americanized children often grow up to be ashamed of their foreign-born parents. The education of the second-generation becomes the tragedy of the self-sacrificing first generation. Parents become more dependent upon even their little children to interpret to them the strange language and strange ways of the strange land, than the children are dependent upon their parents...Thus people lose their sense of belonging to anything or anybody, to the neighborhood, the craft, fellowship, the church membership, to citizenship, and at last to the family circle itself. [27]

In order to resolve problems of social and cultural transformation, reformers relied on institutions (schools, settlements, local government and church organizations)

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27. Ibid., pp.226-227
See also: Virginia Yans McLaughlin, Family and Community. In the case of Italian families, the problem was complicated by the fact that about 38% of the unskilled workers who came to the U.S. (the bulk of those came from southern Italy) returned to Italy (although many came back to America again).

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where children were involved in a new process of socialization. Such intervention drew the family from its traditional privacy into the public domain, despite the resentment this often engendered in parents.

> The school, with its provisions for instruction and play, is the public annex added to every private house. The public park, playground, and recreation center are extensions of every family's backyard or walled-in inner court. The juvenile court and its probation officers, the parental school for truants and the reform school for delinquents are the state-appointed helpers to parents, to aid them in the discipline of their children, or to take the parents' place when they fail. 28

This subtly described the secular assault upon the family. The position of parents had diminished and become merely a part of a much larger group of adults, agencies, institutions, and officials that influenced and exercised control over children. This new configuration developed as a means of assimilation, emphasizing the right of individuals and agencies to intervene in the family, in order to prepare children for their future roles in society.

While reformers generally agreed that the State had inherent rights to protect children at home and work and to provide recreation and educational facilities, they did not agree on the methods and goals. Many viewed the continuing problem of child labor in terms of parents, especially

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28. See: Umberto Colette, "The Italian Immigrant," National Conference of Social Work, Proceedings, v.39 (1912)

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immigrant parents, who lived off the work of their children.

> The fact that his child is often deprived of school, learns no regular trade and is distorted in mind and stunted in growth, does not appeal to many foreign born and some American parents, seeing as they do only the gain of the day. 29

Those who condemned the "criminal" irresponsibility of parents often emphasized the conflict between immigrant and American standards of education and living with at best only passing reference to the economic conditions that forced parents to send their children to work. In addition, an identification was made between "foreign" and practices such as child labor. Therefore, attacking the symptom rather than the source of structural inequality shifted the burden of responsibility to parents who often had little alternative.

> So the parents drop out and the children make the adaption and remain, and you get the curious result of the parent of the household being more or less dependent on the earnings of the child. You will hear a child say, "My mother can't say nothing to me; I pay the rent"; or "I can do what I please because I bring home the biggest wages." All this tends to break down the normal relation between parents and children. 30

It was true that child labor not only competed with adult labor and thus depressed wages, but tended to subvert traditional roles and relationships within the family. But

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29. Myron Adams, "Municipal Regulations of Street Trades," National Conference of Social Workers, Proceedings, v.31 (1904)

30. Jane Addams, "Child Labor and Pauperism," National Conference of Social Workers, Proceedings, v.30 (1903)
See also, Christopher Lasch, The New Radicalism in America Chapter 5.

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what alternatives were available to families which were dependent on the labor of their children? Nor was there a necessary correlation between a loss of authority on the part of parents and the fact that children contributed to family income. The attack on parents served as a wedge between parents and children and legitimized the right of reformers to intervene. Some suggested drastic solutions:

> parents have no right to bring children into the world to become a burden and a menace to society in the form of beggars and criminals. It is society's privilege - nay its duty - early to remove children from their parents under such circumstances, and train them for life. The social surgeon must not allow sentiment to influence the movements of his knife, but he must cut straight and deep if the welfare of society demands it...Delinquents, then, ought to include not only those who have no parents or other friends to care for them, but also all children whose parents, though living, fail to do for them what society can reasonably expect them to do.[31]

Reformers hoped that the problems associated with Americanization would be resolved in the second generation.

> There is a natural intelligence, a certain manner acquired through observation, but no standard of intellectual life. Their very intelligence makes such families conscious of their shortcomings, and it is this consciousness that leads to the aggressiveness of manners that is so offensive, so often mistakenly called the American manner. It is the manner that is due to awakened consciousness which in the next generation will know when to wear evening dress, if not how.[32]

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31. Byron Matthews, "The Duty of the State to Dependent Children," NCSW Proceedings v.25 (1898) This notion was also reflected in the juvenile court which held parents responsible for the behavior of their children.

32. Lillian Betts, The Leaven in a Great City (NY:Dodd,Mead and Co.,1902), p.286

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The success of Americanization measured by the adoption of forms of social etiquette, the absence of child labor, or the indulgence of ones children suggested not only the transformation of values, but the changing conceptualization of childhood itself. As children were placed in the position of cultural mediators between their parents and the society, as the special needs of children were emphasized and complemented by the emergence of institutional supports, and as children were increasingly relegated to a more separate, dependent and marginal milieu, the nature and role of immigrant and working class families changed. That restructuring of families was often traumatic and can be observed, in part, in terms of the large number of desertions .

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Families in Crisis: Deserted Families

An illuminating approach to the problem of assessing the impact of assimilation and adaptation on the family as it struggled to adjust to the new industrial society is through an analysis of family desertions. Precise and accurate data on desertions is unavailable. Moreover, the statistics that do exist may not reflect the dimensions of the problem for various reasons. In some cases, desertion was mutually agreed upon; the remaining parent simply shouldered the burdens of the family alone, or with the help of relatives, neighbors and friends. In other cases, the deserter maintained contact with the family; if this arrangement was acceptable, no report would be made to an agency. What remains in terms of available statistics is scattered and fragmented, or, as in the case of the files of the National Desertion Bureau, as yet unexamined.[33]

33. The files of the NDB are located at YIVO. These files are a consolidation of the files of the United Hebrew Charities and other agencies which handled desertions (merged in 1911). They contain approximately 25,000 cases in 17,000 files (occuping 720 linear feet) and cover a span of years that extends into the 1950's. The files of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society and the Joint Distribution Committee, which are also at YIVO, cover the post World War I period. These files are difficult to use in their present condition since they are uncatalogued and the coding system has been lost.

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The problem of desertion among Jewish families was acknowledged in the late 1880's by the United Hebrew Charities of New York. A decade later, as the problem became more acute and visible, the Educational Alliance, the UHC and other organizations began to discuss ways to solve the problem. A Legal Aid Bureau of the Educational Alliance (founded in 1899) sought to help deserted families, but the resources were inadequate to meet the need. In 1900, a Commission on Desertion established by the National Conference of Jewish Charities recommended that a desertion bureau be created. Two years later, UHC published a study of desertions which gave a clearer picture of the causes and extent of the problem. In 1905 UHC established a Committee for the Protection of Deserted Wives and Children; in 1908 the Educational Alliance opened a Desertion Bureau as well. In 1910 the Jewish Daily Forward began to publicize the stories of deserted families through a special "Deserters Bureau Column." Finally, in 1911, the National Conference of Jewish Charities established the National Desertion Bureau to coordinate the efforts of 150 Jewish communal organizations.[34] The NDB was staffed largely by lawyers rather than social workers, indicating perhaps the thrust of its activities. These institutional efforts were part of a broad effort by upper class German Jews to assist their Russian/Polish "cousins" and were not without class and ethnic tensions.

34. In 1959 the NDB changed its name to the Family Location Service; in the 1960's it was absorbed into the Jewish Family Service.

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The extent of desertion is difficult to determine, but it would appear from the available statistics that it was widespread (unfortunately, statistics do not exist for earlier periods with which one could make comparisons). In nearly 44% of the divorces granted in the United States between 1887 and 1906, desertion or abandonment was the grounds for proceeding, and in nearly 39% of these cases it was the sole cause given. Cruelty was listed in only 18.5% of the cases.[35] Divorce rates were higher in cities than in rural areas (though less than in Europe). The difference depended upon the number of Roman Catholic and perhaps Jewish families involved, since divorce is forbidden in the Catholic Church and is difficult to obtain (at least by women) in Judaism. The records of the UHC in New York for 1903 and 1904 reveal that 1,052 applications (about 10% of all those who applied to the agency) were from women who had been deserted. Between October 15, 1905 and May 1, 1906, the Committee on Desertions of the NCJC reported that it handled 591 cases of desertion. In more

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35. Earle E. Eubank, A Study of Family Desertion (Chicago: Dept. of Public Welfare, 1916)
Nearly one-third of the divorces granted between 1887 and 1906 were to couples who had been married 5 years or less; 12.1% were to couples married 2 years or less; 45.9% of the deserters were married 5 years or less; 22.5% were married 2 years or less; 13.5% were married less than one year.

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than half of the cases the husbands could not be found; less than 10% of the cases were taken to court and a little more than 10% were settled out of court.[36] From June 1,1912 to June 1, 1915, the NDB handled 3,286 cases of desertion (nearly 75% of which resulted in the location of the spouse).[37] The New York Charity Organization Society reported that in 1916-17, 30.6% of the cases involving desertion were American, 20.2% were Italian, 11.2% were Black, 9.7% were Irish, 6.2% were German, 3.3% were Polish, and 2.8% were Russian.[38]

A composite profile of deserters revealed that about half of the men were skilled laborers, and 10% were in a special occupation. Half earned about $4 to $11 per week; the other half earned over $12 per week. About 60% were employed when they deserted. These were generally younger men, with an average of less than 3 children per family. About half left because of intemperance; one-quarter left because of licentiousness or other"moral defect"; in general desertion did not appear to be the result of economic hard-

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36. Irving Howe, World of Our Fathers, p.179

37. Earle Eubank, op.cit.

38. Joanna Colcord, Broken Homes(NY:Russell Sage Foundation, 1919). The low figures for Poles and Russians indicates that they were probably using other agencies. According to Eubank, in Cook County (Illinois) desertions among Jewish applicants for welfare ran 21%; Negro, 21%; Italian, 7%; American, 15%, Russian, 12%; Polish, 11.4%; Irish, 16%; German, 12.4%

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ship, according to this study, but an unwillingness of men to assume the responsibilities of their families. As a result of this high desertion rate, 25% of the children in institutions in New York City had been placed there because of the desertion of a parent.[39] In general, most deserters were wage-earners, an occupational category which is highly vulnerable to economic depressions; this may explain its high representation in these figures. In a study by the NCJC, the most frequent causes of desertion were cited as "incompatibility of temper," "lack of employment," and "another woman."[40]

Contrary to the fact that wage-earners represented a high proportion of deserters, most professionals working in the field concluded that desertion was not related to poverty or "industrial conditions." Most studies showed that desertion then (as now) was a "poor man's divorce." Moreover, the relatively high rate of return of deserters (about half) indicates that desertion may have actually been a form of temporary separation. There is, of course, no indication whether "desertion" was a planned strategy within the family to obtain public or private assistance. One must assume that

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39. Zilpha Smith, Deserted Wives and Deserting Husbands (Boston: Ellis, 1901)

40. National Conference of Jewish Charities, Family Desertion (Cleveland, 1912).

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the stigma of receiving charity would prevent all but the most venal or desperate families from resorting to this tactic. Moreover, although many deserters were working, there is no reason to dismiss the fact that conditions or the nature of work contributed significantly to tensions within the family.

In fact, a number of contemporary scholars have pointed to changes within the family itself as a source instability and insecurity.

> When families become the center of social organization their intimacy can become suffocating, their demands unbearable, and the expectations too high to be easily realizable. Divorce then becomes the safety valve that makes the system work. Those who are frustrated or oppressed can escape their families, and those who fail at what is regarded as the most important human activity can gain a second chance. [41]

Another scholar focused on the "intensive family" which developed as a "bulwark against the industrial city."

> ...the family itself served as a refuge from the city at large, rather than a means of adaption to it, the smaller family lent itself easily to an internal intensity, a lack of privacy within the house. [42]

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41. William O'Neill, Divorce in the Progressive Era (NY: Franklin Watts, 1973) p.6
Divorces increased from 3% to 4% of marriages from 1890 to 1900; 4%-4.5% from 1900 to 1910; 4.5% to 7.7% from 1910 to 1920 (p.20)

42. Richard Sennett, Families Against the City(NY:Random House, 1970) p.197

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Another interpretation focuses on economic factors in the breakdown of the family.

> In the first place, the tighter packing of urbanization destroys the conditions under which it is possible to carry on the old life. The urban rings close around the worker and around the farmer driven from the land, and confine them within circumstances that preclude the former self-provisioning practices of the home...Thus the more social life becomes a dense and close network of interlocked activities in which people are totally interdependent, the more atomized they become and the more their contacts with one another separate them instead of bringing them closer...As the social and family life of the community are weakened, new branches of production are brought into being to fill the resulting gap; and as new services and commodities provide substitutes for human relations in the form of market relations, social and family life are further weakened. 43

Nearly all scholars (then and now) have focused on the city itself as a source of dislocation and a primary contributor to family breakdown. A major study carried on prior to the First World War indicated four reasons for desertion which were directly related to the urban environment. First, the "absence of primary group attachments" and participation in a community. Generally, for immigrants and urban poor, living in the city meant renting an apartment, and therefore implied a lack of permanence (although not necessarily). The study assumed that ownership of private property exercised a conservative influence not applicable to renters. Moreover, although congestion and overcrowding did

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43. Harry Braverman, Labor and Monopoly Capital op.cit, pp. 275-279, 282

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offer some forms of intimacy between families and groups (as in "YooHoo, Mrs. Goldberg") there was a good deal of geographic mobility and it was not unusual for families to move frequently. Consequently, one's ties with the street, community, and friends might be disrupted. Second, the city also provided a kind of anonymity which was a product of one's "lack of attachment" to where one lived, and the lack of informal restraints exercised in smaller community relationships.

> lost to view in the throng of anonymous unrelated and indifferent human beings which graze his elbows, the individual tends to give freer rein to an expression of his desires. Greater freedom is afforded to do as he pleases because there are fewer people to care what he does.[44]

Third, the erosion of the economic basis of family unity which resulted from the shift of the function of the family as a productive unit to the factory, public agencies and institutions, recreational and social areas as the main areas of activity. Fourth was the general "spirit of discontent" exhibited in lawlessness, crime and industrial conflict.

It is significant that despite the observations of contemporaries concerning the growing generational and cultural conflict within families, this area of family

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44. Earle Eubank, op.cit., pp.9-14

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relationships was not explored in relation to desertion. It is impossible to determine the extent to which problems of assimilation led to quarrels and misunderstandings. Nevertheless, interpersonal problems which occurred as a result of assimilation must surely have placed additional burdens on family relationships already strained by overcrowding and poverty.

> There is no story more tragic in the annals of life in Chicago than the break between the American boy of foreign parantage and his tenement home. The boy learns to discount his parents' ignorance and they misunderstand and half fear his strange new world wisdom. The boy, becoming impatient of their restraint, runs away, sleeps out a night or two, maintains himself by selling papers, likes the license and excitement of the street life, and his home knows him no more.[45]

Another typical story was told of "Simon Ginsburg" who sold brooms. Unable to make ends meet, he lamented, "All is wrong side up...The children are fathers to their fathers; the fathers, children to their children." Simon's 13 year old daughter knew more than he did, or so he believed.

> What could Simon do if his daughter ran the streets, stayed from home, wandered into mysterious ice-cream parlors with strange young men, and laughed to scorn teachers and truant officers. [46]

Seeing himself as a failure, unable to control his children, let alone understand them, Simon deserted his family.

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45. Myron Adams, quoted in Leonard Benedict, Waifs of the Slums and their Way Out (NY: F.H.Revell and Co, 1902)

46. Walter Weyl, "The Deserter," Survey, v.21 (1908-1909); and Lillian Brandt, 574 Deserters and the Families (1905)

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Aside from the melodrama of the story, it is likely that generational and cultural conflicts made it more difficult for parents to understand their children. This does not explain, however, why parents could not cope with this situation, and why they viewed desertion as a solution - even a temporary one. The father's inability to control his children was not related to his economic difficulties or the fact that he had to work long hours.

Psychologically, the process which Americanizers called "civilizing" was, to immigrants, often a wrenching process of uprooting and self-denial. An example of this at an individual level (and also played out in families which may explain why parents deserted) was described by Philip Davis. He arrived in the U.S. at the age of 15 (in 1890) with a prayer book, phylacteries, a "four-corners" (tsitsis) and forelocks (payis) - quite clearly an orthodox Jew. He lived with his older brother who apparently had already abandoned his religious practices; when Philip asked his brother if Jews prayed, he was told:

> "At home," he said, "Jews are idlers. Here in America they are hard busy workers. They have no time to pray."

Young Philip was astounded. The sacredness with which Jews had transmitted their worship and customs was violated. Yet, he too was affected by his new environment.

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> From the moment I entered the shop my religious interest began to decline. In a year it was practically nil...My whole life suffered the same decline. From the moment I entered the shop until five years thereafter it was actually a blank. I recall nothing which filled its moments from day to day, or from year to year. Immediately upon entering the sweatshop I seemed to have plunged into a struggle so intense that it absorbed all my energy and simply incapacitated me for any other normal human activity...All I now remember about this period of my life is that it was one of intense labor, sleep and forgetfulness. 47

This sense of being totally overwhelmed, especially by work, coincided with the sense and actuality of being separated from traditions and roots. It created a psychological denial of part of his existence which caused a mild amnesia. If such situations were reproduced typically throughout immigrant communities, the effect was disastrous. For Davis, who became a skilled worker and later an organizer for the ILGWU, the outcome seems to have been positive. But at what price? What about others with less resources, and more responsibilities? Were such cultural traumas at the root of desertions and family crises? Immigrant and working class families, exposed to constant stress from Americanization and economic crises, were rendered more vulnerable to the processes of cultural and generational conflict.

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47. Philip Davis, "Making Americans out of Russian Jews," Outlook, v.80 (July, 1905) pp.631-637

see also Abraham Cahan, Yekl: A Tale of the New York Ghetto (1896)

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Conclusion

As the function of immigrant and working class families was transformed from production to consumption and child-rearing exclusively, new conceptions of childhood emerged. Childhood was associated with special characteristics and needs. New mechanisms and institutions of socialization were developed outside of and in competition with the family. Increasing attention was paid to children, the period of childhood was lengthened, and children were appealed to as assimilators of their parents. As parents and children bore the burdens of unequal adaptation to new conditions and struggled to overcome cultural discontinuities, more intensive and isolated forms of family relationships arose. Traditional functions of the family, as transmitters of culture and socialization, were assumed elsewhere. As a basis for allocating roles and educating children the family was no longer adequate. Moreover, work, once inextricably linked with the family, was located outside the home. As workers in a family production unit or as independent workers, children made significant contributions to family incomes. Increasingly in the modern

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period children had no economic value. Their activities consisted of performances on auditorium stages, on playgrounds and in school. Their dependence was emphasized because, until the point of emancipation from the family - i.e. economic self-sufficiency - children had nothing actual to exchange within the family.

Patterns of behavior and family dynamics rooted in shared experiences within an extended community became more restricted. As the new culture worked its way out of the old, it abandoned in its shell those essential forms of collective relationships which had provided meaning and structure. In its place was not autonomy and self-determination, but narcissistic subservience to one's image and a persistent hunger for what is genuine and enduring in sharing . The illusion of self-sufficiency was purchased at the price of interdependence; what was gained in individual material rewards was lost in a more isolated and less secure sense of self.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to know what was happening to all families, but only about those which were studied because they were in trouble. Although the information is inconclusive, it does indicate that immigrant and working class families, as well as bourgeois families, were in the process of reconstitution and, in many cases, fragmentation. This upheaval was at the core of the process

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of assimilation and adaptation to the demands of society. The struggle of parents to exercise influence and control over their children faced stiff resistance from those who advised them to "leave it to the experts/ professionals." The characterization of children as "little citizens" and the promises held out to them served as buffers against the failure of parent-child relationships and the acute and painful symptoms of social change.

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CONCLUSION

During the last two centuries modes of child-rearing in America have changed significantly from a reliance on corporal punishment, harsh discipline intended to break an unruly child's will and the exercise of arbitrary parental authority to more permissive, tolerant and subtle methods and attitudes. Modern approaches have sought to encourage independence, self-control, free expression and autonomy rather than authoritarian measures. This was especially characteristic of advice to parents at the turn of the century.

> There is now growing up a generation of young people who have never been whipped. They seem to be doing very well. There must of course be punishment. Even children who are naturally good need it, in order that they may be kept in that state of decent subordination which secures a quiet household. But the best punishment is that which takes the form of deprivation...The old way... was to make the lads and lassies behave as if they were 45; according to the new way, the mother behaves as if she were 15...She knows a thousand games, and is deeply interested in several others in which she does not personally play, such as baseball and football...She is the good angel of the domestic theatre, reads plays in manuscript and goes to all the shows; she makes the sun shine when it rains... [1]

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1. George Hodges, The Happy Family (NY: Crowell and Co, 1906) pp. 18 and 22

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In this we observe two themes: one which attempts to induce parents to participate in the growth and development of their children, and another which seeks to alter the methods of that interaction, from harsh external discipline to subtle example and self-restraint. In addition, the role of the mother becomes central and almost magical, a process which has been referred to as the "cult of domesticity." In part this reflected new conceptions of childhood which emphasized the "spontaneous" growth of children and their "free expression." But there were other goals as well.

> The primary object of discipline is to lead the child to self-control; which is entire and willing obedience to eternal law. And this self-control constitutes character. [2]

The notion that this represented a clash between the "old school" which sought to force the child to adapt to uniform and rigid standards, and the "new school" which sought to liberate the child's creativity was more rhetorical and a difference of style. Renewed interest in studying children's behavior did express a philosophy which admonished adults "to do, and learn and be that which his (the child's) stage of development demands." [3] But this never lost sight of the ultimate purpose of assimilating "little citizens" and preparing them as workers and consumers in industrial society.

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2. Auretta Roys Aldrich, Children; Their Models and Critics (1898) p.113

3. Louise Hogan, "Study of a Child," Harpers New Monthly Magazine, v.97 (1898)

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Reformers who viewed the task of society as that of transforming "little savages" into "little citizens" were influenced by a democratic egalitarian ideology based on the notion of "citizenship" - the basis for inclusion or exclusion in society and the basis for determining rights and obligations. The notion that children had rights in and of itself is a major component of their new role in society. But these "rights" did not involve choices on the part of children as much as they allowed professionals and reformers to intervene in the family.

> Every child has a divine right to be understood as an individual, to have his peculiarities discovered, respected, appreciated, and wisely and sympathetically dealt with. This individual quality is the most precious part of the capital with which he begins life... The attempts to make it conform to the conventional standard too often result in the destruction of self-hood. While too young to understand or help himself, the child is plundered of his most valuable possessions.[4]

The emphasis on the intrinsic worth of the child shifted attention from the immediate to the potential and justified the prolongation of schooling and the elimination of child labor, as well as the basis for new conceptions of childhood. Parents and teachers were admonished to "cultivate," nurture and protect;[5] the image of childhood was of natural honesty, innocence, and purity. "A child loves

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4. E.W.Bohannon, "A Study of Peculiar and Exceptional Children," Pedagogical Seminary v.4 (1895)

5. Mary Wood-Allen, Making the Best of Our Children (1909)
Martha Mosher, Child Culture in the Home (1898)

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beauty; not elegance, style nor...the artificial...the child and the genius meet upon the common ground of inte - grity."[6] Others suggested that children be guided "with only such direction as springs from an inward sense of right and wrong."[7] This emphasis on innate and instinctual qualities in children underscored the utilization of methods intended to achieve self-regulation and self-discipline.

Reformers idealized childhood out of any meaningful context, substituting the modern child for the simple, happy savage of the 18th century Romantics. Their faith in education as a remedy for social evils and as the embodiment of democracy placed the child in a role completely beyond his/her capacity to fulfill. Moreover, the idealization of children became a subterfuge or rationalization for retaining in prolonged dependence and immaturity those who would eventually assume positions of responsibility in society. In fact, this idealization may have been presented as a solution to the dilemma of adulthood by substituting an abstract notion of childhood focused not at the realization of maturity, but fixed at the level of innocence and dependence. Prolonged schooling increased dependency under

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6. Florence Hall Winterburn, From the Child's Standpoint (1899) p.14 15

7. Jacob Riis, in Neighborhood Settlement, Annual Report (1907)

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the guise of training for adulthood. This meant mastering a body of knowledge and becoming self-disciplined. But schools neglected wider ranges of social experience and in fact were ill-equipped or prepared to provide more relevant and creative forms of expression.

The social ramifications of cultural clash within immigrant families underlay a process of social transformation with which we are still confronted: the sense of discontinuity and alienation in society as a whole. Assimilation created disruptions which provided fertile ground for reformers who sought to mold norms and values of a new generation. The family was the arena in which the generational/cultural conflict was played out. Though often well-meaning, efforts to protect children and enhance their lives subverted traditional forms of parenting. In a larger sense, the transformation of childhood occurred within the context of a struggle within society itself, of which assimilation is only a part: the search for identity and values in an increasingly estranged and dehumanizing world.

The idealization and glorification of youth and childhood as symbols of innocence and purity, embodiments of hope in the future, and vehicles for assimilation, were not abstract; they implied new forms of childhood and child-rearing and new patterns of relationships within

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the family. Separating children from the workplace and influences of the family was critical to achieving the primary goals of Americanization: the adoption of bourgeois, WASP values, the abandonment of cultural traditions held by parents, in short, the creation of a uniformally proper citizen. Toward this end children were expected to become assimilated and in turn carry the new culture to their parents. All too often, however, these aims and the protective enclosures surrounding children meant denying them the opportunity to accept responsibilities essential to developing maturity and self-awareness. The postponement of commitment that this includes has profound implications for the nature of and the process by which one attains maturity.

Finally, as the nature of parenting was altered by the intrusion of institutions into the family, modern families have to deal with a more insidious and pervasive element: TV. Much has been written about the attempts by the media to create consumer consciousness related to the needs of industry rather than to promote real education and self-awareness. What has been less obvious in this regard is the extent to which TV, in form and content, has affected the nature of the family, and particularly family interactions.

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This study has explored changing functions and conceptions of childhood and the role of institutional intermediaries in the process of assimilation. The effect of the social changes that occurred are often difficult to determine. Like the course of an underground stream one knows only where it has changed the landscape along the way, ground out its own path and left subtle clues and traces of its actual dimensions; its beginning and end remain shrouded in mystery.

There are no direct and simple equations of notions, visions, or terminology. One can only rely on inference with the hope that one is as accurate and honest in interpretation as one would want to be, and as one's ability to understand the various factors permits. Whatever illusions, delusions, or misunderstandings have resulted, come from the century-wide gap between what reformers meant or intended, consciously or not, and the effort to make sense of that.

Finally, a persistent problem shadowed a critical view of reformers: what would others have done in their place? Given broad social and economic transformations over which they had little or no control, perhaps they did better than one might expect. It would appear that it is easier to write history than to make it.

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Appendix I : Black Children

There is, unfortunately, little information on black children during this period. This is the result of the fact that reformers did not concentrate their efforts or interests on black children, and because substantial black migration from the southern states did not begin until the onset of the First World War.[1] There are indications that the persistent problems associated with racism were visible then as they are now. According to Department of Health statistics in New York City, infant mortality among black children was nearly twice that of the rest of the population. In 1908, there were 1,973 black children born; 2,212 black children of all ages died died during this year. Reformers and health officials attributed the high death and disease rate among black children to improper hygiene and the fact

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1. For a study of the Colored Orphan Asylum, see: Carlton Maybee, "Charity in Travail," New York History, 1974 and the Annual Reports of that Institution
For a study of black school children, see: Frances Blascoer, Colored Children in New York City Schools (NY: Public Education Association of New York, 1915)

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that from 20 to 50% of black mothers worked.[2]

An examination of the records of the Children's Court of New York City (which included only Manhattan and the Bronx) from 1904 through 1906 revealed that nearly the same number of black and white children from the 10th and 11th Wards were arrested. There were, however, significant differences in some categories of arrests. Over 30% of black children arrested were for "improper guardianship"; 15% of white children arrested were for that reason. Over 12% of black children arrested were for "disorderly," and "ungovernable" behavior, compared with 6% of white children arrested. Over 4% of black girls arrested were for being "depraved"; 1% of white girls arrested were for that crime. These statistics suggest that lack of parental control was a more serious problem among black children than among white children.[3]

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2. Mary White Ovington, Half a Man, The Status of the Negro in New York (NY: Hill and Wang, 1964; reprint of 1911 edition) p. 33 Nearly all studies of black families deplored the fact that black mothers, as well as, or as substitutes for, black fathers, had to work. This meant that older children had to take care of younger ones in order to allow one or both parents to work. Indirectly, therefore, children were a vital part of black employment, since day care at home was essential to allow black parents to work.
There are no indications that black families engaged in tenement house work, which may have been the result of reluctance on the part of employers.
There is no indication of what is meant by the terms used.
Court records for this period have been destroyed, or are unavailable because of their confidential nature.

3. Ibid., pp.33-35

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On the other hand, no black children were arrested for "violations of the labor law," or "unlicensed peddling"; white children accounted for 3.% and 6.4% in these categories, respectively. Over 29% of black children were arrested for "mischief," compared with 43% of white children.[4]

The absence of arrests of black children for violations of the labor laws led one reformer to conclude:

> ...no little Negro boys plunge into the business world before their time. They have no keen commercial sense to lead them to undertake transactions on their own account, and they are not desired by purchasers of boy labor in the city.[5]

Assuming employers preferred to hire immigrants (either adults or children), or because immigrants were more available and had more skills, or due to prejudice, these statistics also indicate that employment opportunities were limited for black children and especially for their parents. Furthermore, assuming the category of "depravity" reflected prostitution (or some illicit sexual behavior), young black girls may have been forced to engage in this occupation out of economic necessity. The lower arrest record for various forms of "mischief" among black children may indicate that the presence of the police in black neighborhoods was not as prominent as it was in immigrant sections of the city.[6]

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4. Ibid.,p.36 ("craps, throwing stones, building bonfires, etc.")
5. Ibid., p.37
6. Ibid., p.36

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In Chicago, the Juvenile Protective Association found that young blacks were excluded from employment, particularly from skilled jobs because of racial prejudice on the part of employers.[7] As a result of such discrimination, young blacks turned to crime. Employment agencies often refused to send white girls to places where they might be forced or lured into becoming prostitutes. The study also observed that "most of the maids employed in houses of prostitution were colored girls."

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7. "The Superintendent of the Illinois Industrial School for Boys at St. Charles complains that it is not worth while to teach trades to the colored boys in his institution because it is so very difficult for a skilled colored man to secure employment."
Louise Bowen, The Colored People of Chicago (Chicago: Juvenile Protective Association, 1913)

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Appendix II: Jewish Schools

Finding little to ease their uncertainty and fears when they arrived, immigrants clung to what was familiar. Family and friends, or social, religious and cultural institutions provided a sense of continuity and insulation during the process of transition. At the same time, however, attempts to preserve traditions were barriers to assimilation. The establishment of separate schools represented an essential dilemma. They were conservative and reflected resistance to demands to become American by adopting all the values and traditions of the new culture. They were also attempts to moderate the process of assimilation by compromising and attempting to accomodate partially to pressures to conform. They were, in addition, attempts by parents to exercise direct control over the education of their children in situations where that control was being undermined. In this context, children were placed in the position of being preservers of tradition, while Americanizers sought to inculcate the opposite goals. The predicament was not limited to any particular group. For Irish Catholics who arrived in the 1820's and 1830's, the maintenance of separate schools in what they perceived as a Protestant society was an important part of the preservation of their faith. Fears that Protestant child-care institutions

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sought (intentionally or not) to convert Catholic children encouraged Catholic opposition to public schooling and to agencies like the Children's Aid Society. Catholics therefore, formed their own schools and juvenile institutions, like the New York Protectory (for delinquents). It would appear that Irish families relied on parochial schools more heavily than Italians.

> ...Italians preferred public schools to parochial schools; a government report of 1908 showed that some 60,000 Italian children were in public schools, as against 8,000 in parochial schools (slightly more than half the city's Irish children were in public schools at the same time. [1]

The same condition existed in other areas and with other nationalities.

> Where parochial school attendance figures were available, Slavic attendance invariably ranked behind native-born and second-generation Irish children. In Milwaukee parochial schools in 1910, 15% of the children of native-born Catholics were in school and 10% of the second generation Irish. Only 2% of the Poles were attending, however, and no Slovaks. [2]

Parochial schools played an important part in the political and social mobility of Irish Catholics, providing both class and ethnic solidarity, as well as fueling nativist sentiment.

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1. Diane Ravitch, The Great School Wars, p.179 (See also pp.33-76)

2. John Bodnar, "Immigration and Modernization," Journal of Social History, v.10,no.1 (Fall, 1976), p.48

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The establishment of Jewish schools - essential to the maintenance of both religious and cultural heritage - were limited largely to male children up to the age of 13 (Bar Mitzvah). These schools did not compete, in general, with public schools (as did Catholic parochial schools) and were utilized by a small segment of the population beyond the specific purpose of preparation for a specific religious rite de passage. As an example of the process and problem of assimilation, an examination of these schools is instructive.

There were several different kinds of Jewish religious schools: chederim, which were private and independent; Talmud Torahs, which were operated by synagogues or the community; and a variety of other schools which met special interests or needs. Attendance at chederim varied from all-day classes (called "Yeshivas") to those that met after public school, mainly for the purpose of Bar Mitzvah training. The overwhelming number of students attended the latter schools.

A study of these chederim made just before the turn of the century by a settlement worker at the University Settlement, enumerated 300 in a 25-block area of the Lower East Side - a number which did not vary for nearly a decade.

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Of the nearly 9000 children that attended these schools, only about 4½% were girls.[3] According to a later study there were 80 chederim in the same area during the period from 1890 to 1893, which taught 1,822 children; there were also two Talmud Torahs which enrolled 100 and 680 children respectively.[4] The Baron de Hirsch Society estimated the Jewish population of the Lower East Side in 1890 at 135,000, more than a quarter of whom were children.[5] Thus it would

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3. Henry Moskowitz, "A Study of the East Side Cheder," Charities, v.3, no.4 (June, 1899).
It is curious why any girls at all were sent to these schools since their training was generally done at home or by relatives and friends. The additional expense for tuition meant that such schooling may have indicated that parents did not have time to train their daughters, or new attitudes towards female education, or simply the need for a form of day-care.
See also: Leo Honor, "Jewish Elementary Education in the United States, 1901-1950," American Jewish Historical Quarterly, September, 1952.

4. Lloyd Gartner, "The Jews of New York's East Side, 1890-1893," American Jewish Historical Quarterly, March, 1964

5. Moses Rischin, The Promised City, p.81
In 1900, the Federation of Churches and Christian Organizations in New York City estimated that there were 597,674 Jews in New York City. This figure rose to about 675,000 in 1903. About half of these Jews were foreign born. In Manhattan, Jews constituted 23.2% (381,934) of the population.

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appear that most Jewish children were not receiving a regular formal Jewish education, or received only enough to carry out minimal religious obligations.

> The estimated number of Jewish children of school age (6-16) was little more than a crude estimate. (Dr. Mordecai) Kaplan used the figure 170,000. The figure of three-quarters unschooled did not take into account children who at one time or another attended a religious school. Few children went to religious school beyond their 13th tear. The best statistics are those of Dushkin for the year 1916. For the ages 5 to 14 he arrived at a total Jewish population of 275,000. Of this total, 65,000 (23.5%) were receiving some kind of Jewish education. [6]

Dushkin further estimated that there were about 500 chederim in New York City at the beginning of the First World War, which would mean a substantial increase in a decade.[7] Kaplan's report for the New York Kahilla in 1909 revealed that

> of the approximately 51,954 children who received instruction, 27% (13,952) supplemented their public school session with daily attendance in 468 small improvised, private schools, the 'ignominous' hadarim. [8]

The chederim were small, often simply tucked into a corner of a shop loft, basement, or back room of a synagogue, and had an average attendance of about 20 pupils.[9] A later

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6. Arthur Goren, New York Jews and the Quest for Community (NY: Columbia University Press, 1970) p.272

7. Alexander Dushkin, Jewish Education in New York City (NY: Bureau of Jewish Education, 1918) pp.66-68

8. Goren, op.cit., p.88

9. Moskowitz, op.cit., p.91

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estimate revealed that

> there were 29 students attending the average heder, 98 the average congregational school, and 188 the average Sunday School. But 446 attended the average Talmud Torah, and if only the 8 largest were considered the figure rose to 881 per school. [10]

There were at this time only two Jewish day schools in the entire country.

Conditions in the chederim were not good. Ventilation was poor, the floors were dirty, the chairs and desks were crowded (if there were any at all); some were so poor that they could not afford gas and had to use candles for lighting. Tuition was about $1 per month for students beginning the alphabet and reading, and $1.50 per month for thise who had advanced to Chumash (Torah). Most of the children were boys between the ages of 5 and 13, that is, until Bar Mitzvah. Learning was carried on with emphasis on rote and frequent reliance on corporal punishment.

Moskowitz criticized these schools from an educational perspective.

> To the melomid (teacher) the only road to knowledge is the memory. No other faculty of the child is utilized... No attempt is made on the part of the melomid to translate the prayers, with the result that the pupil repeats a lot of Hebrew words which have no significance to him. [11]

Moskowitz reflected the growing emphasis on the rejection of rigid, formalized educational techniques, and the attempt

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10. Goren, op.cit., p.91
11. Moskowitz, op.cit.,

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to modernize schooling generally, a trend associated with Progressive educators.

This rather depressing portrait of chederim appears in literature, nut nowhere more poignantly than in Henry Roth's experience. A young boy, David, taken to cheder by his mother, compared the rabbi with his public school teachers. In contrast, the rabbi was untidy, strict and a source of fear. After an agreement between the rabbi and David's mother on the tuition (25¢ per week) and the daily attendance after school (from 3-6pm), David began his religious training somewhat less than enthusiastically.

> David regarded the rabbi with panicky eyes. He had seen boys slapped by teachers in school for disobedience, although he himself had never been struck. The thought of being flogged with that vicious scourge he had seen the rabbi produce sealed his lips. He even refused to answer when the next boy asked him whether he had any pictures to match. 12

Such experiences were part of the "coming of age" for Jewish boys and reflected their role as bridges between old and new cultures.

In addition to the more numerous chederim and rapidly expanding religious schools operated by synagogues, higher education developed as well. Religious training in yeshivot for those who wanted advanced work began in 1886 and continued throughout this period. Schools were also established by Jewish nationalists, Zionists and Socialists. By the first

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12. Henry Roth, Call It Sleep (NY:Avon Books, 1934) pp.213-214 see also Abraham Cahan, The Rise of David Levinsky (NY:Harper,1917)

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decade of the 20th century, Yiddish secular schools had been established by organizations like the Bund, Labor Zionists, Jewish National Workers Alliance and Workman's Circle.[13]

The United Hebrew Charities, formed in 1874, though primarily a relief agency, did offer special classes in domestic and sewing skills for girls as early as 1875. A few years later, the Hebrew Free School Association opened a Hebrew Technical School for girls. The HFSA was originally founded to counteract Christian missionaries among Jews and, in an effort to make education more relevant, emphasized secular rather than religious subjects. About half of the Jewish children on the Lower East Side who attended a religious school during the 1890's were enrolled at the HFSA. Most of the students were girls, not only because of the traditional notions among Orthodox Jews that boys and girls must be separated, and the common opposition to religious training for girls, but also because this school was not as formal and rigid as the chederim. In 1905, a National Hebrew School for Girls was started in Brooklyn which attempted to use more modern methods and incorporated both religious and nationalist education. After 1890, the Baron de Hirsch Fund

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13. Moses Rischin, The Promised City, pp.100-101; see also Timothy Smith, "Progressivism in American Education," Harvard Educational Review, v.31, no.2 (Spring, 1961)

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supported and supervised a Hebrew Technical Institute for about 150 boys, mostly of Russian parents, an evening technical school, and evening classes in English.[14] These schools represented attempts to adapt children to the special demands of Americanization and the new corporate industrial economy.

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14. The Baron de Hirsch Fund maintained 16 classes in New York City to prepare 500 children for public school; they ran 4 evening classes for working girls. Classes were nearly bi-lingual amd included a wide range of subjects, from Hebrew to vocational classes. Most parents were enthusiastic about these classes. "These immigrants insist that their children shall receive religious instruction without waiting until they can enter the ordinary Jewish schools." Meyer Isaacs, "The Baron de Hirsch Fund," Charities Review, v.1 (1891-2) p.36

Lawrence Cremin (The Transformation of the School) notes the opposition to trade schools by labor leaders like Samuel Gompers. See p.37

David Tyack (The One Best System) noted that the Hebrew Technical Institute studied the Declaration of Independence in English and Yiddish texts (p.242)

According to Deborah Moore, the HTI taught mostly skills; a large number of its graduates went into business as self-employed, rather than wage-workers.

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