

THE NEW YORK STATE TRAINING SCHOOL FOR GIRLS: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF ANNUAL REPORTS, 1904-1928

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INTRODUCTION

For approximately 70 years, the New York State Training School for Girls' Board of Managers, superintendents, and staff members routinely contributed to annual reports that were rich with narrative and statistical information, intriguing in their analysis of institutional operations and developments, and often illustrated with on-site photographs.

The format for these reports changed from time to time. Starting in 1905, New York State Training School for Girls reports appeared annually as legislative documents, each published in booklet form. In 1925, New York State government reorganized in New York and one consequence was the quality, appearance, and issuance of regular reports from various social service, mental health, and criminal justice agencies and institutions. The last of these handsome annual reports was published in 1929. Thereafter, annual reports were issued in typed or mimeographed form.

The annual reports through 1928 contained the observations of the Board of Managers, the Superintendent, and other staff members or committees, including those managing aftercare, education, medical, and other departments. These reports also contained extensive statistical information, including the number of, and reasons for, girls being received into, or discharged out of,

the institution; age at admission; offenses and number of prior convictions; nativity and parentage; county of origin within New York State; biographical details such as education, occupation, home life, religion, and marital "condition"; parole statistics; time served before release; participation at various schools at the institution; articles made in sewing and dressmaking departments, number of girls treated for various medical conditions or diseases; and financial information.

The annual reports included accounts of Board member attendance or shifts in Board membership, as well as boilerplate, descriptive components, such as the names of cottages, the age and type of girls committed, or the source of funding that are repeated word for word from report to report.

Common sections of these reports describe the physical plant ("outfit"), the girls ("pupils"), and intervention techniques ("methods") such as classification, schools, health services, and parole.

The annotations in this bibliography are not complete descriptions of each report. The text inserted herein is reported, paraphrased or quoted mainly from Board of Managers or Superintendent narratives or their proposals for future funding. Left largely unaddressed are the considerable statistics provided in each report that will be attended to in other places over the course of the Prison Public Memory Project. The Board of Managers' narratives vary from report to report – some are short, others extensive. Some reports are organized differently from others. All reflect the managers' and superintendents' views and do not reflect all there is to reflect. Largely missing are the voices of the girls themselves, a record of scandalous or newsworthy events, the perspectives of Hudson community residents, or even descriptions of reforms and practices in other institutions across the state or nationally.

The New York State Training School for Girls annual reports represent what its Board of Managers and, later, its superintendents chose to emphasize for the reports' legislative and public audiences. While helpful in

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deciphering and establishing the history of the institution, they are not a complete record of what occurred or resulted during the life of the institution. Such a fuller account requires information contained in contemporary news articles, reports from official and non-official monitoring groups, and other assessments.

Board of Managers (1905). *First Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the New York State Training School for Girls at Hudson, N.Y., for the Year Ending September 30, 1904.* Albany, NY: Brandow Printing Company. 33 pages, no photographs.

The New York State Training School for Girls, located in Hudson, New York, opened in June 1904 on the site of the former House of Refuge for Women. Many older girls from the House of Refuge were transferred either to the Western House of Refuge at Albion or to the New York State Reformatory for Women at Bedford. Newly admitted girls, under 16 years of age, had previously been sent to the “girls’ department” at the House of Refuge on Randall’s Island in New York City or the State Industrial School in Rochester.

The Hudson training school was the only state institution for delinquent girls under 16. As this report noted, as would subsequent reports, “The institution is supported wholly by the State. There is no expense to any county, city, town or village for transportation, clothing, maintenance or education of girls committed to this institution.”

The Board of Managers described the training school in these terms, “(Its original) buildings include seven three-story brick cottages, each of which provides sleeping quarters, dining-room, sitting-room, laundry, kitchen and sanitary bath and toilet accommodations for an average of 26 inmates. These cottages are named Van Rensselaer, Livingston, Clinton, Van Buren, Schuyler, Willard and Dix. Each girl has a separate bedroom. The cottages are sufficiently scattered over the grounds to make it practical to separate the different groups to any extent that may be desired. So far as living purposes go, each cottage is practically independent, and the aim is to produce, as far as practicable, the process, methods and spirit of an ordinary home.”

An immediate problem for the school was that New York State did not provide funds to support the transfer of

girls over 16 to Albion or Bedford. The school’s “cottage plan” required “complete segregation” between young and older girls, and the Board of Managers found that both the cottage design and “skillful management on the part of the Superintendent” alleviated this problem for the time being. However, further legislative action was necessary so that “this institution may become in fact what its designers intend and its name indicates.”

The Board understood that morale at the institution was difficult to assess at this early time in the school’s history, as were “necessary” changes “in disciplinary and educational methods.” But it was noted that newly admitted girls seemed to fare well.

“The Superintendent reports,” it was noted, “that it is already apparent that the habits of the younger girls are not so fixed; that they are more amenable to lighter forms of discipline; that they are more curious, hence, more easily interested and pleased; that they talk less of getting their freedom; that they are more active and less ready to settle down to steady habits of work; that they are all backward in school; that they are able to concentrate attention for only a short period of time; that they do not know how to dust, sweep, wash, cook or stew; that they must be taught the common decencies of life.”

The training school’s program included common schools with two teachers and “eight grades of work, sewing schools, laundry and cooking school.” The girls were also provided “ample employment” with singing and physical culture, “necessary” homework, and outdoor work in the flower and vegetable gardens. Religious beliefs received “absolutely no discrimination.” As the Board reported, “It goes without saying that the State does not maintain a sectarian institution.”

In its report, the Board of Managers made requests of the state legislature, including coal pockets with a driveway, an electric annunciator system, fire escapes, French steel ranges for the kitchen, contact beds for the sewage disposal plant, and “fruit trees, shade trees, ornamental trees and shrubs.” The Board also requested a new wire fence to surround the school. “Visitors comment upon the unsightly appearance of the present old wooden fence, which is in constant need of repair. Instead of spending more money upon this, it seems appropriate time, in view of the change in the character of the institution, to change

the style of the fence, and to include more ground for recreation and cultivation.”

Otherwise, Stuyvesant Hall, the main administration building, was being renovated, including the addition of a new hospital wing. The office of steward was abolished. Recreation yards were being prepared. A plan to reduce the number of guards from five to three was working well. Guards remained necessary, the Board noted, because “the proximity of the grounds to the City of Hudson and the tracks of the railroads seems to make it impossible for us to dispense wholly with this service, and in the case of fire or other casualty a community of women must have some men to call upon.”

Board of Managers (1906). *Second Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the New York State Training School for Girls at Hudson, N.Y., for the Year Ending September 30, 1905.* Albany, NY: Brandow Printing Company. 29 pages, no photographs.

As of September 1905, 236 girls – and 7 infants - were in residence at the School. Sixty-eight of these girls were older than 16 and should have been transferred to either the New York Reformatory for Women at Bedford Hills or the Western House of Refuge for Women at Albion. However, the state of New York, which funds training school operations in their entirety, had not established the means for this to occur.

Crowding affected the institution in several ways. Both Albion and Bedford were crowded (that is, they confined more girls or women than they were designed to hold), thus preventing transfers from Hudson, which was rapidly filling its bedspace. Younger girls were therefore being housed with older girls, which was a problem of its own. The report argued that “there should be complete segregation of the younger and less confirmed offenders, especially children who are merely abandoned or destitute, from the older and more hardened violators of the law.” Also, “three distinct classes of girls” (third grade girls, second grade girls out of quarantine, and new girls in quarantine) were being held in Stuyvesant cottage, the largest on the grounds. Management did not wish this to continue and hoped for “the opening and equipping as a cottage of the old hospital building.”

The Board of Managers asked New York State for four new

cottages. Otherwise it would become necessary to make commitments “to private local institutions at the expense of localities.” The report noted opposing perspectives that found “it imprudent and unwise to remit more than three hundred young girls to one management.”

The Board of Managers desired more officers per cottage and more teachers per student. Notably, it observed “a disorganized condition” in the schools, so oversight was shifted to the assistant superintendent, a trained educator, leaving the following program:

“The book school is being reorganized on improved lines, and the general schedule is to be arranged so that at the end of 18 months at the training school, every girl will have had two terms each of laundry work, sewing, cooking and housework, and a continuous course in the book school through the whole period. After the 18 months a girl, while still having regular book work, will pursue advanced courses in cooking and dressmaking, and afterward be given special training in some other manual work for which she shows aptitude.”

Guiding this program of study and application is the following set of beliefs: “The mental training of book work is inestimable, as nothing else gives so much practice in concentration, accuracy, and independent thinking. The practical and moral value of the handwork is evident.”

The Board expressed satisfaction with newly admitted girls under 16 years of age. “The Superintendent (Dr. Hortense V. Bruce) advises us, and our observations are entirely in accord therewith, that the spirit of the young girls coming in under the new law is in general excellent. Most of them readily respond, physically, mentally, and morally, to the orderly life of the school. As they are at an impressionable age and free from distraction, they are easily led to accept their duties in the industrial and book schools. This work becomes a pleasurable outlet for their energies. To many of them on arrival cleanliness is a stranger, and it is not easy to reconcile them to the rules in this respect. In the matter of classification, about one in ten lasses to the lowest grade, and only a half dozen of these are consistently recalcitrant.”

The Board further observed that discipline is easier to achieve with younger than older girls. “Although the impulse to run away overcomes them more readily than it did the older girls, it is, nevertheless, true that they hold

less fixedly in mind the idea of getting their freedom and show a contentedness with their daily life after the period of quarantine is over.”

The younger girls’ daily life would soon be invigorated with new, nearly completed recreation grounds, 475 feet long and 125 feet wide, for four tennis courts, two basketball courts, and four croquet courts. The training school already had sufficient equipment for tether tennis, badminton, skittles, volley ball, swings, and other exercises.

No deaths or epidemics occurred during the year. State Board of Charities inspectors made helpful visits. During the year, the girls heard vocal and instrumental musical recitations, performed in plays and pantomimes, and celebrated the Fourth of July with dancing and games. A “new experiment in gardening” appeared successful and ladder fire-escapes were installed in each of the seven cottages.

Board of Managers (1907). *Third Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the New York State Training School for Girls at Hudson, N.Y., for the Year Ending September 30, 1906.* Albany, NY: J.B. Lyon Company. 26 pages, 9 b/w photographs.

At the end of this year, the school’s population was “exactly commensurate with the capacity.” A “surprising increase” in the number of girls under 16 years of age committed to the school required “the use of every possible room in the institution” and created problems for the institution’s classification and segregation practices. At the time, the school held 371 residents, including 311 girls under 16, one girl over 16, nine infants, and 50 resident officers.

The Board of Managers made three decisions to address the pressing matter of crowding. First, the old hospital building was adapted for use as housing for the girls. According to the Board, “The structure is unfit, the building is cold and damp; but it seemed on the whole necessary and wise to open it. The building had been abandoned for about two years, but the girls cleaned it and it has been furnished and is now the home of 18 of the girls.”

Second, older “under 16” girls were released “earlier than their deportment ordinarily would have justified.” (All but one of the remaining House of Refuge over-16 girls had been transferred out during the year.) And third, “the

Board decided, after careful consideration, that we would not overcrowd the institution, and that we would not receive a girl unless she could be made comfortable and receive the training that we have notified the people of the state our girls shall have.”

Still, the Board of Managers noted “a considerable waiting list” of girls and argued, as in the past, for two new cottages, and possibly a third. The state legislature had already appropriated funds for the two cottages, but the Board found this “insufficient.” The large Stuyvesant building had a capacity for 95 girls, but “it is impossible to maintain discipline in it” and could not be considered part of the cottage system. The Board’s argument for the feasibility of such expansion included a reminder that “there are 86 acres of land owned by the State within the present site of this institution, of which about 20 acres are now utilized.”

The Board of Managers proposed the construction of a third new cottage for use with “third grade girls,” those at the lowest classification in terms of conduct. The Board noted, “We desire a cottage located apart from the others for this class, the location most desirable being on the northeastern portion of the grounds, the cottage to accommodate at least 35 inmates. The idea is that in case the population of the institution should reach 500, there will be on an average 35 third-grade girls among that population. It should have a school room and also a laundry of such size that the girls of this building could do more than their own laundry work, for example, than of the hospital. The removal of the most disorderly girls from the center of the grounds is imperative for the welfare of the school. It would undoubtedly benefit the class of girls themselves by removing from them the temptation to make themselves conspicuous by their bad conduct.”

The Board also proposed funds for “a new high wire fence” for protection of the cottages and gardens from “loiterers” from Hudson, the railroad tracks, and deer and other wildlife.

Despite these population and other pressures, the Board stated its “pleasure to report the underlying spirit that animates the girls is in the main distinctly friendly and helpful. Evidences of this may be seen in the fact that they not only have cheerfully performed the daily routine of household duties, including cooking, laundering and chamber work. But they have papered and painted the

interior of some of the cottages and the Administration Building, renovated the school rooms by cleaning and painting the walls and putting on decorative borders, scraping, cleaning, and varnishing the desks, filling cracks in the floors and oiling and polishing them. They practically make and maintain the vegetable and flower gardens, and the beautiful and spacious lawns are always as well kept as on a private estate.”

On other matters, the Board noted a special class on basketry, “success in the new experiment in gardening,” completion of the new recreational grounds, use of the gymnasium in sporting tournaments, and, once again, no deaths or evidence of an epidemic.

Board of Managers (1908). *Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the New York State Training School for Girls at Hudson, N.Y., for the Year Ending September 30, 1907.* Albany, NY: J.B. Lyon Company. 41 pages, 13 b/w photographs.

At the end of this year, the Hudson school had 312 girls and 6 infants. In a lengthier-than-usual 17-page narrative, the Board of Managers described the facility’s physical infrastructure, the superintendent’s responsibilities, and the purpose and operation of programmatic components of the institution, including discipline, instruction, employment, and training.

The report was clearly concerned with inadequacies in the facility’s infrastructure. In 1906 and 1907, the state legislature authorized the construction of a total of three new cottages. Moreover, the state’s Building Improvement Commission approved “a complete scheme for an institution accommodating 500.” In addition to the original cottages described in earlier reports, this report noted seven large and seven small buildings on the grounds.

“The seven include: (1) The chapel where union services are held every Sunday afternoon, conducted in turn by ministers of various faiths; where religious instruction classes are carried on every Friday afternoon, for which the girls are divided into groups according to the faiths which they profess, a suitable teacher from outside being provided for each group; where gymnastic classes and active games are in progress in the basement every afternoon after school hours; and where all the pupils meet in large singing classes four times a week. (2) The inadequate administration

building where the steward and bookkeepers, the parole agent and the marshall, the superintendent and her assistant, have their offices and living rooms and where the physician and several teachers eat and sleep. (3) A large clumsy building originally intended as a prison, now used at one end as a cottage for three grades of girls and at the other for a hospital. (4) A school building much too small, which houses in seven rooms six grades of book school classes and a laundry, a cooking and a dressmaking class. (5) A rambling wooden building, formerly the hospital, now used at great inconvenience as a dormitory for the overflow of girls. (6) A three-story cottage where the babies born on the estate live with their mothers and two matrons. (7) An old wooden stable. The smaller buildings include a disciplinary building, which is badly planned and not sound-proof, a store-house, ice-house, etc.”

The report also delved into the school’s methods concerning oversight, educational classes, health care, religious instruction, and parole.

Board of Managers (1909). *Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the New York State Training School for Girls at Hudson, N.Y., for the Year Ending September 30, 1908.* Albany, NY: J.B. Lyon Company. 57 pages, 12 b/w photographs, 3 maps.

In November, girls at the school had an exhibit at the State Conference of Charities and Correction, which was held in Albany, and were visited by Gov. Charles Evans Hughes and his wife. About the latter, the Board of Managers observed, “Sympathetic visitors who express intelligent and appreciative interest are very helpful to the officers who are often depressed and discouraged by the problems which daily confront them, by the lack of favorable conditions and the monotony of the work. Confined within the school, they cannot get a proper perspective of the whole great scope of the work and therefore they need the encouragement and criticism which thinking people can bring them in order to keep the work at a high standard.”

The report appreciated the “faithful and efficient services” of many of the institution’s staff members. However, it also noted significant restlessness among staff members, especially assistant matrons and men. Two-thirds of the men, for example, were only within their first year of employment at the institution. A significant number of employees were “incompetent” or “intemperate.” The

report observed that “the men either had no training for their positions or no ambition concerning their work. The women were not fitted by training, experience or temperament to perform the duties that belong to their positions.”

Other reasons given for this restlessness include monotony, long hours, and lack of recreation. “Only persons who like the work for its own sake or are peculiarly adapted temperamentally can endure the life and give good service for a period of years. It is part of our plan, now, to provide further resources for rest and refreshment within the institution.”

In this report, the Board of Managers suggested qualifications for women working with girls. “They should be strong, intelligent, sympathetic, quiet, tactful, just, broad-minded, charitable, open to suggestion, having judgment and a sense of responsibility toward the State and for the welfare of their charges – at least possessed of these qualities in sufficient degree to give promise of further development under the opportunities of the work. They should be able to teach the various branches of house-keeping and they should realize that this is indeed a training school in every sense and that it is a privilege to help to remedy the deficiencies which have hitherto cramped the lives of many of the girls.”

Other highlighted events during the year included stereopticon lectures, practical talks, concerts, a visit to nearby Mt. Merino, cottage picnics, and high grade girls’ officer-accompanied trips into Hudson.

Board of Managers (1910). *Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the New York State Training School for Girls at Hudson, N.Y., for the Year Ending September 30, 1909.* Albany, NY: J.B. Lyon Company. 76 pages, 13 b/w photographs, 2 maps.

In 1906, the state legislature appropriated funding for two new cottages and their completion was expected before January 1910. Meanwhile (August 1909), a new 36-bed cottage was named for Jacqueline Shaw Lowell. Lowell Cottage housed girls who had previously been held at “the old “Prison’ building” in Stuyvesant at the lowest or third grade level. The Board of Managers noted “the advantage of the cottage over the congregated system.” However, the Board of Managers was also “pained to see that among the

second grade girls who had taken their places in Stuyvesant, there have been growing the same mannerisms and spirit that were so objectionable in the third grade girls when they were confined there.” As the report continued, “The big building, utterly unattractive, with barred windows, damp, gloomy, without proper dining rooms and recreation rooms, seems to promote unpleasant traits in the girls and they are soon stamped with the characteristics that make them recognizable as ‘Stuyvesant’ girls.”

When construction of the new cottages was done, the school would have a capacity for 381 girls. These new cottages, plus the Lowell Cottage and a nursery cottage would form three sides of a quadrangle. In this report, the Board of Managers asked for two more cottages to complete the fourth side of the quadrangle.

Who are the girls at Hudson? According to this report, “The girls come from the city and from the country, from homes of drunken parents, from homes of degradation and squalor and vice, from motherless homes or from poor homes where the mother must go out to work, from homes of careless, indifferent, neglectful parents, from homes of the foreign born who do not know how to meet the problems of American life, from homes where there has been simply a lack of judgment or from no home but the street. They are all unknown material and their histories, formative influence, mental, moral and physical conditions, temperaments, natures and capacities must all be learned in order that the school may provide for individual needs.”

As the reports continued, “Some girls come ignorant of letters, or manners, of morals, of the decencies of life, of truth, of honor; some not ignorant but defiant and without hope because they have done wrong; some with false knowledge about their physical natures, developed beyond their years by a harmful environment; some with no habits of self-control, accustomed to gaining their ends by exhibitions of violent passion; some with deficient mentality; and some who have been forced by circumstances into situations in which they were in danger of becoming depraved.”

What was the work of officers at the school? “The problem,” the Board of Managers stated, “is to know and understand each girl, to find out what must be given to her and what must be taken from her, to destroy the false notions and

ideas, the wrong habits and tendencies, by teaching simply, clearly, strongly, continually, by life, by words, by books, by work, by play, by every look and act, the principles that control right living, by inculcating such habits of work and giving such training that she will be in some measure prepared to be self-supporting and to maintain the standard of living which she will gain in the school.”

Concerning “mentally deficient” girls, the Board of Managers sounded an alarm: “Each year some feeble-minded girls are committed, who are of that class which is not easily recognized by those unfamiliar with the mentally deficient. These girls are as irresponsible as those who are plainly idiots, and should be given permanent custodial care. It is a waste of energy and of the money of the State for us to work upon the theory that these girls can be educated so that they can safely live outside an institution. It is they who form a large proportion of our ‘failures.’ But the harm is greater to the poor irresponsible girl and to the community than to the institution, which fails only in being unable to provide the capacity to learn.

Existing law at the time favored the return of these girls to their counties of commitment when it was deemed they could no longer benefit from the school’s discipline. Apparently, however, committing magistrates were often believed “to discredit the conclusions reached by the officers of this school concerning the mentality of these girls.”

“In our opinion,” the report concluded, “the retention of these girls could be only for the purpose of giving them custodial care; we understand that our funds are allowed for the purpose of educating, not such girls, but those who are mentally capable of being benefited. For us to keep the deficient is only to duplicate, and at greater cost, the work of the custodial asylums which the State has provided for the care of the feeble-minded. The retention of these girls is detrimental to those who are proper subjects for training here, because the reason for leniency in the discipline of the deficient cannot be explained to them. Each deficient girl prevents at least one intelligent girl, possibly two, from receiving education at the school, for the deficient cannot be paroled, while the intelligent might be, thus giving place to another.”

Classification, the report states, is “the first step toward the proper treatment of a girl.” Classification allows the school

to understand girls’ character and conduct, health, mental characteristics, temperament, disposition, and inclinations. Thus, “like natures” can be separated into groups “for ease of handling and for securing more special consideration of each than would be possible with a group of entirely dissimilar natures.”

Such classification requires “constant study” for its implementation and maintenance over the course of a girl’s stay at, and departure from, the institution. Classification emphasizes “the difference between what is worthwhile and what is not” in terms of behavior and character. Accordingly, girls are divided into three classes: Girls arrive in the second grade (wearing a white ribbon) but “unusual conduct” can result in demotion into first grade (red ribbon) or elevation into third (blue ribbon). For housing purposes, first grade girls are within one cottage, whereas second- and third-grade girls are a mixed population (“the presence of the high grade girls in the cottage encourages the other girls and helps to keep up the moral tone”).

“Classification keeps the backward and mentally deficient by themselves; and study for the purpose of classification and treatment has further made apparent the wisdom of separating from the others girls who have had to be returned from parole and those who must be called the incorrigible and the irresponsible.”

Classification quickly resulted in racial segregation, however. “In pursuance of the principles guiding us in classification,” the report affirmed, “we have concluded that it is for the welfare of both races to have the colored and white girls live in separate cottages. The colored girl was flattered by the notice of the white girl and would do wrong to please her. With the white girl, the attraction seemed to be of a perverted nature. The change, although a revolution in the history of the institution, caused but little excitement or resentment. Two cottages were assigned to the colored girls and the same grading as maintained elsewhere, except that second and third grade girls have to live in one cottage.”

“In order to make this segregation,” the Board noted, “we had to give up the cottage for the backward and mentally deficient, but the girls who had been so classified were kept together by placing them on one of the floors of Stuyvesant.”

This report then describes cottage work, schooling, the school library, the laundry school, a model sewing school, the practical or plain sewing school, and a dressmaking class. The report also describes vocal music classes, gardening work, physical culture, religious instruction, and paroles.

In terms of health-related matters, the report found no epidemics or deaths over the year, but there was an increase in the commitment of pregnant girls. Of the latter, the report observed, "This is a source of regret for the influence of such cases on the other girls is seldom of benefit and often is positively bad. The babies naturally receive more or less attention and this not only softens for the immature and thoughtless girl the true aspect of her situation, but may arouse in her a very regrettable vanity. Moreover, the mothers sometimes are given special food or they may need to be excused from heavy work and these favors incline their indiscriminating sisters to be envious."

About these girls, the Board noted, "The mothers, themselves often mere children in years, rarely exhibit any sense of shame or regret and they seldom show any deep affection for their children. This is, perhaps, hardly to be wondered at, considering their youth, but it is certainly difficult, since they necessarily mingle with the other girls, to impress the latter with a proper feeling for legitimacy."

The report concludes with brief description of dental care, the need for a consulting psychologist, the work of superintendence, the staff and amusements, including the year's exhibit at the State Fair and a Christmas play based on Louisa May Alcott's "Little Women."

Also included is the text of Board member Annie Winsor Allen's address, "Former Failures and Present Success in the Institutional Training of Delinquent Girls," to the New York State Conference of Charities and Correction, held at the State Chamber, State Capitol, Albany, New York, November 16-18, 1909.

Board of Managers (1911). *Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the New York State Training School for Girls at Hudson, N.Y., for the Year Ending September 30, 1910.* Albany, NY: J.B. Lyon Company. 70 pages, 14 b/w photographs, 1 map.

Two two-story cottages opened in January and February 1910. Roosevelt was the first occupied, with girls from Stuyvesant (the old prison). Roosevelt's matron came with the Stuyvesant girls and she was impressed with the girls' progress, even after only two months. She wrote a daily report, published in this report, entitled "The Effect of Our New Home Upon My Girls." Bleak confinement in the old prison caused angry, disagreeable, gloomy, impertinent, and irritable responses from the girls, who became cheerful and congenial in their new home. The matron commented, "They seemed to realize what the State had done for them and were ready to redeem themselves." Girls new to the old Stuyvesant quarters quickly took on the objectionable mannerisms common among those who lived there. "The big building, utterly unattractive, with barred windows, damp and gloomy, without proper dining-rooms, seems to promote unpleasant traits in the girls and they are soon stamped with the characteristics that make them recognizable as 'Stuyvesant girls.' So we have come more and more to feel that it is as impossible to develop good, wholesome characters in dark, damp prison rooms as it is to grow beautiful plants in dark, damp cellars."

A conduit for new steam, water and electric lines has been constructed for all but the newly proposed cottages; a new powerhouse, coal-pocket and trunk conduit is being constructed.

The report describes the school's three-tiered classification system, including its "ribbon girls," along with the day-to-day work of the school's matrons, teachers, and parole agents.

"It takes time, education, tact, patience and good judgment on the part of the parole agent and of the woman to whom the girl is paroled, to help the girl get adjusted in the new life so that she may be as happy and as useful as she is capable of being. When a girl returns to her own home there is often need of a very wise and tactful outside friend, who can be a frequent visitor and a confidant of the girl, for the difficulties of adjustment are apt to be greatest here. During the time spent in the Training School with the new interests and ideals acquired, a glamour is frequently thrown over the old home life. This is often dispelled on the girl's return to her home by existing poverty and sordidness, and the girl is given a distinct shock which is often followed by a feeling of utter discouragement. Here,

again, a tactful parole agent has a great opportunity.”

Three women, including one new this year, conducted parole work for the school. These women could not cover the whole state adequately, but were assisted by different societies, organizations, and individuals across the state. The report gives brief case histories of five girl parolees.

Board of Managers (1912). *Eighth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the New York State Training School for Girls at Hudson, N.Y., for the Year Ending September 30, 1911.* Albany, NY: The Argus Company. 67 pages, 15 b/w photographs.

New hot water central heating and electric lighting systems were installed in June 1911 for six cottages. In addition, the state legislature approved appropriations for a school house and two new cottages, thus completing the quadrangle begun in 1908.

The Board of Managers marveled at the contrast between these new cottages and the old prison building still in use. “It is impossible to develop good, wholesome characters in dark, damp, cell-like rooms. To house the girls in this building is expensive to the State because it takes so much longer to bring a girl up to the level where she may again be tried as a self-supporting, respectable member of society. In this building, a girl cannot be given the same ideals of home and home life that can be given to a girl privileged to enjoy her training in a cottage; moreover, the construction of the building makes impossible a practical training in housework.”

The construction of new buildings gave Board members pause, however: “The moral standards of many workmen are so low that they cannot be kept from trying to communicate with the girls or attracting their attention in unpleasant ways. If any girl responds to their advances, or one herself makes advances, the word is carried outside that the girls are bold and shameless, and the impression is spread that the task of reforming such girls is hopeless. This affects our work outside of the School, adding to the difficulty of removing from the public mind the idea that it is a stigma to be enrolled as a pupil in the Training School. If there must be a stigma, it is one that should be shared by all responsible persons, who allow conditions to exist that make it possible for a young girl ignorantly to commit acts that make it necessary for her to be placed in a special

school in order that she may there learn what she has not been taught when free in a community which is often more ready to condemn than to help.”

However, the Board seemed to feel that the construction men were given little attention and “practically all of the girls went about the grounds in a manner more self-respecting and unconscious than is frequently observed on the public streets.”

The report emphasized the importance of parole. “The value of parole as a part of the system of training is a firmly established fact,” the Board of Managers observed. “It is while on parole in a carefully selected and approved home that a girl is brought into right relations with the outside world. In the institution for many months, long enough to forget wrong standards, and under pressure to eradicate old ideas and habits and to establish new ones, life has a different aspect from what it has under the ordinary conditions in which our girls will live. But the problems of the outside world await them and it is of utmost importance that when these come anew to the girls, it will be when they are under wise guidance. Therefore, with the parole system, we seek to place them where with kindly watchfulness and care they will use to advantage the knowledge and training they have acquired in the School and grow into normal sensible women.”

Girls on parole are sent to carefully selected homes, which parole agents have visited. They receive wages, open bank accounts, and learn “the value of time, money or property.” Parole agent supervision is flexible: “If, in a few weeks, in spite of all our care, the girl does not fit into (a) particular home, an immediate change is made.” With success, parole agent visits slackened so as not to stress conditions, public notice, and relationships in the homes of those caring for paroled girls. This year, paroled girls were the first of those committed to the School’s guardianship until the age of 21.

In May 1911, Dr. Hortense V. Bruce returned to her duties as Superintendent after a year’s absence in Europe where she recuperated and studied; Kathryn I. Hewitt had been serving in her place.

Former residents continued to visit the school. “So many of the girls either visit the School or express a desire to do so, because it is the only real home they have known

or for the same reasons that actuate graduates of other schools in returning for a visit, that the officers have recognized that our efficiency would be increased and our influence prolonged if we had a small building or tents for establishing a summer camp where such girls could be welcomed as guests. It is hardly proper, in view of more pressing needs to ask the State to make such provision, but it has been suggested to us that if the need were known some one interested in the welfare of girls might make a gift for this purpose.”

Board of Managers (1913). *Ninth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the New York State Training School for Girls at Hudson, N.Y., for the Year Ending September 30, 1912.* Albany, NY: J.B. Lyon Company. 68 pages, 8 b/w photographs, 1 map.

The School consisted of eight three-story and two two-story brick cottages, plus six large buildings and seven smaller ones, including the chapel, the administration building, a House of Refuge for Women building for use as a hospital, a school building, an eye clinic, a “poorly planned” disciplinary building, an ice house and a wooden stable.

The Board of Managers, expressing grave concerns about these facilities, noted, “The contrast in the environment of the two classes of buildings – the new cottages and the old prison building – continues evident. We find it impossible to develop good home-makers with wholesome characteristics among the girls living in the latter. It is an undertaking which results in an extravagant expenditure of money, and the building is a menace to life. If we had our way, this building would be razed now and before the erection of new buildings next it.”

Feeble-minded girls continue to concern board members. “Each year some plainly feeble-minded girls are committed, and more of the border line cases which are not easily recognized. So much has been written and said upon this subject in the last two or three years, that there is now apparent a more widespread understanding of these cases and the return of these girls under law to their respective counties, while not welcomed, is better understood. Further knowledge, however, is sadly needed. These girls form the large percentage of our ‘failures,’ keep filled the ranks of the prostitutes, bring more of their own kind into the world, help to fill our institutions, are held in abhorrence by their

sisters, who do not understand their deficient mentality, and fill places which might be occupied by girls who would respond to the training we give. These girls are as irresponsible as those who are plainly idiots, and should be given permanent custodial care. It is a waste of energy and of the money of the State for us to work upon the theory that these girls can be educated so that they can safely live outside of an institution.”

“The officers of this School never return one of these girls to the county officials without realizing anew the sadness of the situation for the girl and the lack of foresight on the part of the State. As there is no place to which such a girl may properly be committed, the authorities usually can do nothing but let her go free, unable to protect herself, a prey to evil men and a menace to society. Even if such girls are kept in the Training School as long as the law allows, the result is the same in the end. In a few months it is recognized that they need institutional care and some are given it for another three years through commitments to the State reformatories for women.”

In and around the cottages, work is carried out through matrons, officers, and teachers. “The work of the cottage matron,” for example, “is as important as that of any officer in the School, for, by prolonged and close association, she comes to know the girls thoroughly, and her influence is strong. The girls in their cottage life are more natural than in the schools; there is necessarily less restraint and they are not so much on their good behavior. Consequently, the matron sees them in all their moods, good, bad and indifferent, and has opportunity to help them in situations similar to those which will be met after leaving the School.”

The report also raises concerns about staff wellbeing. Unfavorable conditions at Hudson include long hours, an insufficient number of staff, insufficient rest and relaxation, and no visiting room “in which the officers may get away from the general institutional atmosphere.” Desirable women are deterred from entering service at Hudson because of these conditions. “Surely the School whose aim is to prepare its pupils for that normal social condition – true home life – with opportunity for individual development, should not require of its officers that they practically eliminate both friends and relatives from their scheme of existence.”

Board of Managers (1914). *Tenth Annual Report of*

the Board of Managers of the New York State Training School for Girls at Hudson, N.Y., for the Year Ending September 30, 1913. Albany, NY: J.B. Lyon Company. 75 pages, no photographs.

Twelve cottages were in use, each with 26 girls and three officers. Four cottages are two stories high, making supervision simpler, but the rest are three stories in height. Appropriations were made for the demolition of Stuyvesant, the old prison building, and construction was started on two cottages and a school house, which would be completed in 1914. With these changes, the school's capacity would be 500 girls. As the report notes, "Five hundred girls at the School is about as large a number as the Superintendent can know individually and supervise at one time." The number of girls on parole from the School is also nearing 500 for the first time.

A 1911 change in State Charities Law allowed the Board of Managers to parole pregnant girls or nursing mothers until the child was two years old, at which time "the mother must be returned to the School for further training."

"In previous reports," the Board of Managers noted, "we have explained that the presence of infants in an institution of this character is undesirable. Loving care and attention are their due, but the girls of Training School age are not discriminating, and it has been difficult or well-nigh impossible to impress them with the true meaning of illegitimacy. To most of them the babies have been playthings, and, from that standpoint and from the fact that the mothers necessarily receive special privileges, child-bearing seems rather desirable than otherwise."

Feeble-minded girls were still a problem for board members. "There are at this School," the Board wrote, "girls who need permanent custodial care, and have no one to care for them but the State. The State institutions for such cases are full. With the assistance of the Bureau of Analysis and Investigation and the State Board of Charities, we have continued this year the systematic and careful mental examination of girls. For this, the Binet-Simon test is used. From our records and these tests, we are able to differentiate the merely backward from the feeble-minded. This is not only of interest and benefit to the School as well as to all who are interested in the same problems elsewhere, but furnishes scientific reasons, which cannot be gainsaid, for returning feeble-minded girls who have been mistakenly

committed to us."

Also, a trachoma epidemic between June 1912 and February 1913 resulted in classes being interrupted, girls being quarantined, and the destruction of all books in the School's library because of possible infection. Diphtheria, mumps, and scarlet fever were all present during the year, although none spread seriously. A physician from nearby Hudson provided medical services as no Resident Physician was in place for most of the year. Hudson City Hospital provided maternity care and surgical work.

Board of Managers (1915). Eleventh Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the New York State Training School for Girls at Hudson, N.Y., for the Year Ending September 30, 1914. Albany, NY: J.B. Lyon Company. 66 pages, 9 b/w photographs.

Sections of this report mirror previous annual reports on the overall facility and its grounds, the "pupils" at the school, the work of women marshals, the state and treatment of feeble-minded girls, classification and segregation ("the colored girls are segregated only in home life, no distinction being made in any other department"), and life in the cottages. A problem with school attendance is not girls' interest in schooling, the report states, but sufficient space for them in the school, which now has two assistant superintendents (assistant physician and supervising matron and dietitian). As the Board stated in previous reports, "This School needs women (staff) temperamentally fit, who will enter the life in the spirit of having really found a vocation. Purely as an economic matter, then, in order to preserve the health and energy of its trained workers, the surroundings should be cheerful and there should be time for rest and recreation." Moreover, "We need women who are strong, intelligent, sympathetic, quiet, tactful, just, broadminded, charitable, open to suggestion, having judgment and a sense of responsibility toward the State and for the welfare of its wards – at least possessed of these qualities in a sufficient degree to give promise of further development under the opportunities of the work. We want women able to teach the various branches of housekeeping, who will realize that this is indeed a training school in every sense and that it is a privilege to help remedy the deficiencies which have hitherto cramped the lives of many of the girls."

Board of Managers (1916). Twelfth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the New York State Training

***School for Girls at Hudson, N.Y., for the Year Ending September 30, 1915.* Albany, NY: J.B. Lyon Company. 90 pages, 5 b/w photographs.**

In October 1915, as reported in this year's report to the state legislature, a 53-acre estate with a large residence, tenant houses, barns and gardens will merge with the school's current 117 acres. Another sign of growth is that the school now had 14 cottages "each of which provides a complete home, with sleeping rooms for a family averaging 26 girls and three officers." The two new cottages (Mott and Stowe) opened this year bring the school's capacity to 366. A large general hospital, which would increase capacity to 400, is under construction "with plenty of sun parlors, observation rooms, providing general dispensary, operating, treatment and clinic rooms for both out-patient and in-patient departments." A smaller hospital is being built for "the isolation of contagious diseases."

"We are wholly opposed to overcrowding," the Board of Managers states, "as it is poor economy and gives an institution a custodial, rather than educational, nature." In this context, the school continued pushing for a capacity for 500 girls.

All staff positions except one (Assistant Physician) were filled this year: "The usual shortage of good cottage officers has persisted throughout the year. Nevertheless, the good team-work of the staff has surmounted many tests and the results of the year call for commendation. Many desirable women dread becoming institutionalized by the necessary routine of so large a place, and therefore, hesitate to take up the work."

Board of Managers (1917). *Thirteenth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the New York State Training School for Girls at Hudson, N.Y., for the Year Ending September 30, 1916.* Albany, NY: J.B. Lyon Company. 51 pages, no photographs.

In a short narrative, the Board of Managers notes that "there has been little change at the School since last year." The bulk of this report consists of statistical reports, each without commentary, from the school's superintendent, physician, steward, and treasurer.

Notably, the report emphasized a mental health matter: "If a girl, after being committed to the School, proves mentally incapable of being benefited by the instruction

of the School, the board of managers is required to return her to the sheriff of the county from which she came. The sheriff is then required to take her to the court from which she was committed and the court, if possible, commits her to some other institution. (The reading of the law is: 'to be by such magistrate resented for the offense for which she was committed to such institution and dealt with in all respects as though she had not been so committed.') But if there is no suitable institution, the court has no choice but to discharge her. This is a serious evil, since it means that feeble-minded or mentally unbalanced girls (psychopathic but not technically adjudged insane) are thus from time to time returned to a vicious life in the community. It thus becomes clear that this State needs to make special provision for the custodial care of feeble-minded delinquent girls and for the hospital care of incipient cases of mental derangement in girls who are not yet technically insane. The numbers of both these types among delinquents seem to have increased with the growing complexity of modern life."

An appendix offered a 14-page book, sewing, cooking, music and handicraft school syllabi covering preparatory, departmental, special and advanced school subjects such as English, history, math, nature study, and physiology and hygiene. Also described is girls' membership (after "one month's good record") in Children of the Republic Clubs that "foster patriotism and teach the rudiments of parliamentary usage" and a Ribbon Girl Military Club which involves girls in drills "marching once each week."

Board of Managers (1918). *Fourteenth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the New York State Training School for Girls at Hudson, N.Y., for the Year Ending September 30, 1917.* Albany, NY: J.B. Lyon Company. 37 pages, no photographs.

The Board of Managers reported, as it had the previous year, that "there has been little change at the School during the last year." Similarly, board members saw fit to insert comment about the same mental health-related matter as in previous years' reports.

Board of Managers (1919). *Fifteenth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the New York State Training School for Girls at Hudson, N.Y., for the Year Ending September 30, 1918.* Albany, NY: J.B. Lyon Company. 37 pages, no photographs.

Few changes occurred this year as “the School runs on very much as recorded in other years.” Only slight problems were observed: “In spite of difficulties in obtaining and retaining physicians, nurses and housemothers,” this report noted, “the principles of restorative and developmental care are so well established here that potentially good citizens and willing workers are being returned to society. Twenty-one of our girls out on parole have made satisfactory marriages during the year.”

According to the Board of Managers, “The public generally, and officials specifically, seem to be awakening to the justice of giving custodial care to defectives, as well as to the need for the same, so that in returning to the counties, “those mentally incapable of substantial benefit’ from instruction here, we have less fear of their being thrown back upon a community which does not comprehend their need for protection.”

A general hospital opened at the School, providing medical and dental services. The New York State Medical Association’s Pediatric Session held a meeting at the facility “given by the best specialists in the country” that focused on problems particular to the institution. Glenwood property cottages were repaired and provided rental housing for male employees. Stewart Hall received new architectural tiles. Staff and girls alike were engaged in Red Cross and military service activities related to World War I.

Additional funds were requested for painting and repairing cottages, installing a fence along the McIntyre property on Worth Avenue, adding two-story porches to seven cottages, and constructing a new 43-bed cottage for girls about ready for parole to receive pre-release training.

Board of Managers (1920). *Sixteenth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the New York State Training School for Girls at Hudson, N.Y., for the Year Ending June 30, 1919* Albany, NY: J.B. Lyon Company. 45 pages, no photographs.

Little is reported concerning specific activities or events at the training school. Repeated are references to its legislative justification, general purpose, payment of expenditures, and an account of its buildings.

In this report, the Board of Managers described its fiscally

conservative approach: “Because we believe that no one should be maintained at State expense who is physically and mentally capable of self support and in order to arouse and foster a sense of self-reliance and a desire to contribute to the general good, we retain a girl as short a time as possible, usually two and one-half years, at the School, then parole her under careful supervision to some home where she can continue her development and training and take such schooling as is best suited to her mentality. As we think the State’s plan in organizing and supporting this school is to prevent the pupils, its wards, from again being a charge upon the tax-payers, we endeavor to give the pupils of the school what will be of most benefit to them, of most lasting good to themselves, to the communities in which they may live and to posterity.”

Board members expressed caution about “predestined failures,” who are deficient or psychopathic. It also warned of the need to educate society about the institution’s successes.

“The good results of the probation system of the State, the increase in preventive work by communities, churches and organizations of various kinds, are nowhere more evident than in an institution where only those whom the world has neither understood nor provided for are received. The school is receiving an increasingly less intelligent group of girls, but from the same sort of homes as previous years. The combination of home, school and community has been such that the girls have lacked opportunity for a ‘fair chance.’ We hope that another turn of the tide will send us girls whom we are best fitted to train to help themselves, while those similar to very many of our present group will be recognized sooner as custodial cases and be sent directly to the State schools for mental defectives.”

About the school’s actual training, the Board stressed motherhood over industry: “Trades are temporarily useful, good in this locality, useless in that. Given motor control, concentration, persistence, attention, fair sight and health, some intelligence, anyone can learn some trade that is established in the vicinity in which she happens to live. Most of the world has been learning trades and very few of the world are paid for by the State in twenty-four hour a day institutions. We know we are training for the most permanent good when we set the goal where there is the greatest as well as an eternal demand, the demand for good house-makers. Every spiritual, mental, and physical test,

care and training which we now give, or can hope to give, or is known to science, can help but little enough in fitting a girl for that profession which almost every pupil chooses for herself, that 'Ancient and Honorable Profession of Motherhood.'"

Board of Managers (1921). *Seventeenth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the New York State Training School for Girls at Hudson, N.Y., for the Year Ending June 30, 1920.* Albany, NY: J.B. Lyon Company. 65 pages, no photographs.

In this report, the Board of Managers repeated narratives from previous reports, although it noted a renewed request, placed on hold during last year as well as during the years of World War I, to expand the institution to 500 beds, as originally proposed in 1912 and continued for several years thereafter. Board members also requested the purchase of four bordering properties to safeguard current property and for future development.

Board of Managers (1922). *Eighteenth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the New York State Training School for Girls at Hudson, N.Y., for the Year Ending June 30, 1921.* Albany, NY: J.B. Lyon Company. 23 pages, no photographs.

During the year, 188 girls were committed to the institution, along with 8 infants; 175 girls were discharged, along with 11 infants. After 21 years as Superintendent, however, Dr. Hortense V. Bruce resigned at a Board meeting on June 20, 1921. Her replacement, Mary Hinkley, was a member of the Board of Managers. Other than these staff changes, the Board noted that "nothing of greater moment occurred."

Board of Managers (1923). *Nineteenth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the New York State Training School for Girls at Hudson, N.Y., for the Year Ending June 30, 1922.* Albany, NY: J.B. Lyon Company. 29 pages, no photographs.

The School was "filled to capacity the entire year." However, the report observed that Superintendent Hinkley managed efficiently, even though "the buildings of the school are used by large numbers of untrained people," which results in many needed repairs of water lines, railroad siding, basement floors, and painted surfaces. A fence enclosing the property was also badly needed, the Board reminded the Legislature, which had been asked for appropriate funding

numerous times previously. Furthermore, the clothes and property of girls entering the school are not adequately stored. Among other things, board members felt it important to supply each incoming and departing girl with new clothing, a cost of about \$20 per year. "Those charged with the conduct and training in the school continually have in mind the training of the girls committed to the care of the school to become useful citizens in the State, and the making of a proper home, which is the basis for the development of real citizens of the State."

Board of Managers (1924). *Twentieth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the New York State Training School for Girls at Hudson, N.Y., for the Year Ending June 30, 1923.* Albany, NY: J.B. Lyon Company. 25 pages, no photographs.

Fanny French Morse assumed the responsibilities of Superintendent on July 15, 1923, soon after the resignation of Mary Hinkley. One consequence was "a change in the methods and conduct of the affairs in the institution." Many of the school's buildings were antiquated and inconvenient, lacking "a certain inspirational force." As the Board of Managers noted, "Housing conditions have great effect upon the moral uplift and development of the girls." Accordingly, some buildings were remodeled, redecorated, and rehabilitated.

"Above all," the report stressed, "a change has taken place in the methods bearing directly upon the human problem involved in the training of the girls committed to the school. In the final analysis, the purpose of the school is to develop the individual disadvantaged girl to assume her obligations to society and become a useful citizen...Heretofore, the girls in the institution have been considered in the group, and no particular attention paid to the possibilities of each girl as an individual."

Furthermore, "Practically all the girls in training were being developed along one line – domestic service. This course was unfair to the girl and did not take into consideration the individual possibilities of personal development... A system of repression had developed, which makes for destruction and is not in accord with present-day ideas for development..."

"A control over the girl was exercised, which left no chance for growth in self-control. The overhanging thought

always present was of the penal rather than the educational development of the disadvantaged girl; punishment rather than adjustment and opportunity. The girl in the institution was considered the exceptional and abnormal rather than the natural resultant from lack of advantage and privilege...

“To meet the present-day ideas for the training of the disadvantaged girl, the thought and purpose of the present administration is constructive; giving to the girl more of freedom; more of self-expression; privilege under supervision and obedience; occupation, not idleness; a program that shall insert into the life of the institution big, thrilling interests, interests which worked out under educational methods shall serve not only to prove a saving interest during the life of the girl in the institution, but which shall train her to a livelihood in her after-life in the community...

“There will be an attempt to find for every girl that interest which will prove to her a thrilling ambition. To this end, there is being planned supplementary to the department of the school of letters, a large program of occupational courses, practical, and within the scope of the ability of the girl...

“It is hoped that such a program will so intensify and elevate the training of the girl as to shorten her term in the institution; to get her sooner on a self-earning and self-supporting basis, thereby saving the State her maintenance and the girl her self-respect... Such a program means far more human understanding than the methods of suppression traditionally in institutional management.”

Several training school slogans are mentioned, including “Privilege under Obedience” and “Every Privilege to Represent an Added Force in Educational Values.”

Board of Managers (1925). *Twenty-First Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the New York State Training School for Girls at Hudson, N.Y., for the Year Ending June 30, 1924.* Albany, NY: J.B. Lyon Company. 24 pages, no photographs.

The Board of Managers observed that the school had been “far behind in its methods, and care of the disadvantaged and unfortunate,” but its purpose was now “taking a leading place in the adoption of modern and progressive ideas for

the training and education of the girls.” This would be true for after-care as well as for institutional care.

Superintendent Fanny French Morse affirmed the importance of mental, moral, and physical freedom. “Recognizing the fact that the purpose of the institution is the training to life, the readjustment back to citizenship has been a constant effort to bring into the life of the institution a movement parallel to that of the community outside the institution. Only through movements natural to life can one train to life. Believing that this disadvantaged, unadjusted, undeveloped girl must find her development, her growth, her adjustment through expression rather than repression, there has been an effort to make for her in the institution those contacts which make for self-expression. Believing that the final necessary force must be that of self-control, there has been emphasized this added freedom and privilege as a medium through which to gain that self-control. There has been stressed the girl as an individual, not the girl as a group or one of a group.”

New options at the Training School included an improved educational program (“To meet the dual need, that of discipline within the institution and a training to livelihood after the institution”) that included occupational courses, interrelationships between the institution and the community, and, for the first time, a three-day commencement ceremony.

Girls also entered into competitive contests in business and commercial skills, including typing. Other classes at Hudson included: music, dressmaking and design, cooking, beauty culture, hospital training, home decorative arts, rug-making, and millinery. Superintendent Morse observed, “A unique finding of our occupational course is the fact that the training in all these courses can be reached through meeting the immediate need of our everyday life within the institution. In other words, the necessities of our life form a medium through which to project all of this training. This accounts for the extraordinary degree to which they are found practical.”

No classes were held during summer for first time and recreational activities now included the involvement of college women. Included in this year’s report was Superintendent Morse’s paper, “The Farm as a Factor in Training Delinquent Girls.”

Board of Managers (1926). *Twenty-Second Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the New York State Training School for Girls at Hudson, N.Y., for the Year Ending June 30, 1925.* Albany, NY: J.B. Lyon Company. 21 pages, no photographs.

The Board of Managers opened this year's report with the acknowledgement that prior to Superintendent Fannie French Morse's arrival in July 1923 "the approach and methods in vogue for the care of the disadvantaged girl committed to the School had been antiquated and based upon the theory of repression." Furthermore, the Board asserted, "the idea of self-development and the inculcation of ideals in the minds and spirits of the girls has been entirely neglected and never developed. In the training of the girl today, repression has no part in the curriculum of the school, but devoted effort is made to develop in every girl under the control of the school an ideal and a desire to become a useful citizen in the community and fill an honorable place in society."

Board members did not believe these changes could occur overnight, however.

In Superintendent Morse's seven-page report, she recalled last year's efforts as "a revision so radical as to indicate a new conception in the purpose of this Institution." In particular, she observed, "Convincing beyond argument in that first year's report were the accomplishments cited under revised policies: discipline, that traditional bug-a-boo in the corrective Institution becoming secondary; behavior absorbed in doing; discontent and the spirit of confinement transformed into a personal interest in the welfare of the Institution; awakened ambition through an enlarged belief in her possibilities; and, more convincing than all else, the fact that the girl herself was gradually interpreting her stay in the Institution into opportunity rather than punishment." Morse suggested that 20 graduating girls wished to stay on to "avail themselves of the advantages of an extended course in study which some of our educational departments were becoming equipped to offer."

In a report to the Superintendent from the School's Director of Aftercare or Community, Bertha H. Frantz observed that the Parole or Community Department had been reorganized in the past year. Previously, parole agents made periodic visits, as convenient, to girls across the state,

which resulted in "the loss of much of the personal touch between the School and its outside activities." Now, agents worked locally in five districts statewide putting them "in intimate touch with the girls" in communities within these districts.

"Our policy," Frantz observed, "has been to find some interested person who would act as 'Big Sister' for each girl who is on parole. This has proved most beneficial to the girl – as well as the Big Sister – but in some localities it has been difficult to find proper persons who would assume the responsibility and at the same time possessed of sufficient good judgment for the undertaking. Those who have been most successful have invariably asked for the privilege of 'sistering' several, instead of the one girl whom they first assumed the care of."

The School is diminishing its placement of girls into domestic service. "Our girls are constantly having new and interesting avenues of employment open to them which they are filling with unusual ability. Though our courses of training during the past year have been more varied, only a limited number of pupils have had time for a thorough training in any one course. With our new and extensive educational and occupational organization for the coming year, there should be no limit to the opportunities offered our capable girls."

Graduating girls have gone to Cooper Union for commercial art and the Gallagher Hospital in Washington, DC for nurse's training. Other girls are employed in factories, at beauty parlors, as interior decorators or with the telephone company in different towns. "Three of our colored girls are entering Southern Institutions of learning with the hope that they can eventually be of benefit to their race."

One problem noted: "We have been hampered in the placement of our girls in the industrial world by the shortage of available homes where they might live and receive the supervision which is needed by young people of today." However, an apartment suitable for eight girls was established in Brooklyn through a generous donation.

Board of Managers (1927). *Twenty-Third Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the New York State Training School for Girls at Hudson, N.Y., for the Year Ending June 30, 1926.* Albany, NY: J.B. Lyon Company. 17 pages, no photographs.

In their one-page report, the Board of Managers explained the central importance of farm activities, supporting the purchase of a neighboring “desirable” farm, and describing the promise and potential of the farm for the School and its girls. “Bringing the girls from the cities, who have never had contacts with nature, in harmony with the great outdoors, gives a thrill for new life.”

Department of Charities (1928). *Annual Report of the Superintendent of the New York State Training School for Girls at Hudson, N.Y., for the Year Ending June 30, 1927.* Albany, NY: J.B. Lyon Company. 32 pages, 8 b/w photographs.

In this Superintendent’s report, the first submitted to the New York State Department of Charities, Fannie French Morse reviewed her first four years as superintendent at Hudson.

Promoting the concept of less repression, not less direction, Superintendent Morse states that delinquent girls need education and protection, not merely custody and punishment. “An attempt at self-control must substitute that deadly control which stunts, not grows, that personal responsibility necessary to the safety of after life in the community. A degree of self-expression under direction; of privilege under new demands for behavior. A getting away from the traditional institutional group handling, to the individual; searching out the unknown aptitude of the individual girl; finding the appeal; training that aptitude, making it not only the impelling force which should hold the girl in the institution, but which developed should establish for her a means of support after leaving the institution.”

Superintendent Morse argued that Hudson should be “an institution teeming with possibilities for this girl-woman,” with freedom of expression, individualized training, and movement within the community. “The displacement of the key-carrier,” she stated, “has forced the better trained more intelligent helper.”

The education department has been entirely reshaped, ‘through an adjustment of the payroll,’ to include an educational director and 25 instructors for a program “so varied in its training, as to project for each girl that interest which shall attract and train her widely varying ability, and from which training she is going out to take her special

place in the commercial and industrial world.”

Parole and after-care has also been reorganized: the state has been divided into zones, each with a paid community worker. “Over these district helpers is a general director. This head director is located in the institution. Each district head is made responsible for the work of her district. To her is delegated the background study of the girl sent from that locality to the institution. She it is who must make for the institution its first contact with the family of the girl. She must know the court officer whose interest sent the girl to us. She must build contacts for the institution with the welfare organizations of that community. She it is who must study the social and economic opportunities which shall fit the special abilities of this girl going out to her from her training in the institution.”

For the general director of this department, “Nothing short of the social rehabilitation if this unadjusted girl is her responsibility.”

Superintendent Morse observed, “Right helpers make an institution. Right helpers can be secured and held only under right considerations.” Accordingly, employee housing has been improved at the same time as all but two cottages have been renovated (painted walls and woodwork, repaired and decorated furniture, window hangings and homemade rugs).

The administration building has been redone. The old chapel now has two stories, office space, filing rooms, living rooms and bathrooms for officers, and a social center for helpers. The old guard house has become housing for academic instructors. The school building was turned into a four-story occupational building with bread kitchen, hand laundry, dressmaking space and a furniture renovation and rugmaking shop.

As Superintendent Morse noted, “The occupations in this building have represented not only supply and maintenance of the institution, but the professional training to self-support of the girl who has elected one of these occupations as the education for her special ability.”

Overall, the School’s capacity for 380 girls was stretched to 446 “not because of a longer stay in the institution, but because of the larger number of commitments the courts are forcing upon us.” Two new cottages were requested for 75 girls. “The danger of a large institution lies not so much in its numbers as the right distribution of these

numbers. Today the crowded conditions do not insure a fit classification.”

Department of Charities (1929). *Annual Report of the Superintendent of the New York State Training School for Girls at Hudson, N.Y., for the Year Ending June 30, 1928.* Albany, NY: J.B. Lyon Company. 43 pages, 1 b/w photograph.

The Board of Managers observed that “modern ideas for the training of youth” have brought the consequence for the training school’s program that “repression was eliminated from the curriculum and the theory of self expression adopted.” Furthermore, this shift in practice, along with “after-care, supervision, and interest in the girl,” has resulted in “good results.”

Superintendent Fannie French Morse’s 9-page report begins with a concern about a three-year trend of population increases (from 422 to 448 girls just in this year alone; the facility’s rated capacity was 360).

“(N)othing (is) more important than right housing,” Superintendent Morse stated. “To bring together without proper segregation children of so plastic an age and of so wide a range in experience is scarcely short of criminal. There cannot be estimated in the life of an individual the advantage or disadvantage of right contacts during a period representing so close an association as does institutional life.”

Housing at the Training School, usually one girl per room, was determined by “moral classification,” including each girl’s background and record. “Such crowding as our present population presents in this institution is unfair to the child under its care, to the state making the investment for the child, and to the community which must later receive this child citizen.”

Also, such crowding affects “the personality” of cottage housemothers and helpers. As Superintendent Morse observed, “More often the newly arrived girl must be placed in the cottage where there is a vacant room rather than in the cottage where may be the housemother who by personality is fitted to handle this girl’s case.” A number of adjustments were instituted to make the proper fit for newly arrived girls, including “shuffling about” girls already doing well to another cottage, keeping girls in the

institution for shorter periods of time, or not accepting them in the first place.

Superintendent Morse recognized the success of the School’s education department, which she felt provided services superior to those in the community. “The girls are able to make this progress and standing for themselves on the institution because they are under a certain needed supervision which the institution, at this time, alone can give this girl who must for a period be under intensive supervision and care. To place these girls in the community is to place them, not in their own homes which have largely been the reason for their being with us, but in so-called ‘opportunity homes,’ from these homes to attend the public school.”

A March 1928 law established “parole club houses” for Hudson’s Parole or After Care Department. For several years, the School housed some self-supporting girls in a Brooklyn apartment (Pierrepont Girls Club), which has expanded to five floors. This setting allowed the School, especially with proper supervision, to locate not just domestic opportunities, but other professional employment.

Construction of two new cottages was delayed, despite the need for more housing. “The quality of our commitments remains about the same,” the Superintendent reported. “As the courts recognize the opportunities which this institution is developing for the disadvantaged girl there is noted a tendency on the part of the courts to send us girls of an earlier period of offense.”

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