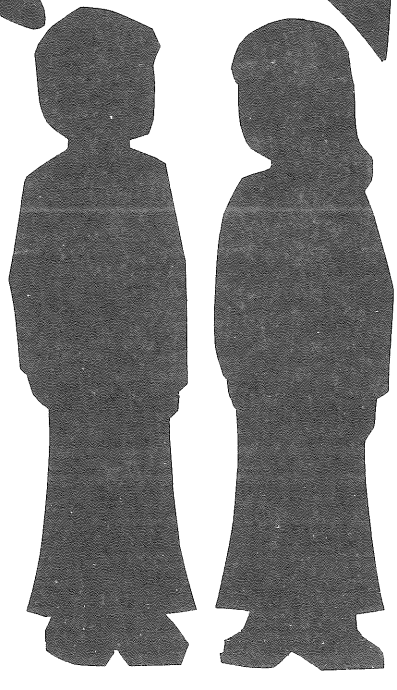
A History of THE MINNESOTA HOME SCHOOL

1911-1976



Joan McDonald

A HISTORY

OF

THE MINNESOTA HOME SCHOOL

1911-1976

by
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INTRODUCTION

Histories of institutions are sometimes suspected of being written less to serve the truth than the institution's public relations program. It's not that the truth is thought to be deliberately distorted, but that the triumphs are emphasized and the defeats ignored.

No such liberties are taken in this narrative. In the long run, an objective approach serves an institution best, for it is from our mistakes that we learn.

The past 65 years at the Minnesota Home School are recorded here as faithfully as possible, taking the good with the bad as they come.

It is only then fair that the writer admit to a blunder or two of her own in the course of preparing this manuscript.

This history began as an academic paper for college credit, weightily strung with statistics and footnotes, but short on the kind of anecdotal material that gives a story lightness and bounce.

There was only one answer to the problem: abandon the musty reference books and yellowed clippings and take to the field, interviewing people who were a living part of the Home School or remembered its early days and personalities. The process of interviewing is an exhilerating one, but it is an open-ended exercise with infinite possibilities. Every person interviewed would suggest at least one other person the author just <u>had</u> to see, and so it went, on and off, for two years.

The day comes in any project, however, when a halt must be arbitrarily called to the preparation phase and the work itself begun. Apologies are humbly made and extended to any worthy person not represented in this story, with the hope that the omission can be rectified in some future effort.

As indicated earlier, this research entailed the agony of defeat as well as the thrill of victory. Much of the travel for the interviews was done in a game little Pinto which, in the course of faithfully discharging its duties, was (1) rammed by a bigger car, with damages of $1,000; (2) skidded into a ditch on an icy day, with towing charges of $10; and (3) inadvertantly left in a no-parking zone, with fine of $5.

There were many funny mishaps, as well, such as the day the whole family went along on an interview that took us to a lakeside cottage. The children got along fine, but my husband managed to capsize the boat he was rowing and plunged into the lake, clothes, shoes, and all (he survived). Then there was the time the whole family was invited to the home of an interviewee in the Twin Cities area. Due to a mix-up, we showed up a day early, much to our embarrassment. We returned the next evening and had a good laugh about the whole thing.

But these mishaps were minor ones, and the interviews that grew out of the incidents hopefully breathe life into the narrative. The speakers do not always agree with one another, but such is the nature of corrections philosophy, which has always been a storm center of controversy. It would be presumptuous of the writer to attempt to settle the disputes, so each speaker is given his/her say, and you the reader, shall be the judge.

To further lighten the load, such scholarly impediments as footnotes and extended bibliography have been eliminated. The end product, the author hopes, will be found entertaining as well as informative.

Joan McDonald

PROLOGUE

To the casual visitor, it might be a private college campus in the Old South--a long greensward sweeping to an antebellum mansion on a hill. Fraternity and sorority houses lining a winding drive. A quarter mile of lilac bushes that burst into blossoms of perfumed purple every May, and riding stables, and the whole setting reflected in a shimmering jewel of a lake.

But this is not a college campus. Its physical beauty belies its real purpose; it is a correctional institution for juveniles--the Minnesota Home School, located in the rural town of Sauk Centre in central Minnesota.

The contrasts here are more than just physical.

For 65 years it has been a prison without walls or bars to thousands of young girls, and in more recent years, boys as well. It is a place of confinement, yet it has been a liberating influence on the lives of many of its students. For others, no such rehabilitation occurred, and the history of the Home School is written around a continuing search for programs to help its alumni become functioning, contributing, members of society.

Like a great pendulum, this effort through the years has taken many swings between "harsh" and"lenient", its motions influenced by the corrections philosophy in vogue, the successes or failures of various innovations, and the personality of the administration in power.

Of all the administrators who have served through the years, none imposed her personality on the school more vividly than the first: Fannie French Morse...

CHAPTER I

DEVELOPING A "HOME SENSE"

What was she like? "A fierce egotist," says one person who knew her. "An amazing person," says another. "Her greatest goal was the glorification of Fannie French Morse," adds a third tartly. But no one denies she was a dynamo.

On June 22, 1911, this dynamo named Fannie French Morse swept into Sauk Centre with sixty-three girls from the female department of the Minnesota State Training School for Boys and Girls at Red Wing. A reception center and four "cottages", each housing a maximum of twenty girls in single rooms, had been erected on the 163.71 acres donated by Sauk Centre for the new institution, which was at first called the Minnesota Training School for Girls.

There had long been concern among Minnesotans over sending delinquent girls to the same institution as boys. The editor of the St. Paul Daily Press had, in 1868, spoken out against it; in 1904, the proceedings of the Conference of Charities and Corrections rejected the concepts as it had done in 1894, 1903, and 1905. This conference had the support of the state's clubwomen, to whom much credit must go for their persistence in the cause. They saw the 1901 legislature empower the Board of Control to make arrangements for a girls' institution--and Goodhue County raise a technicality which prevented the plan's being carried out. The clubwomen investigated twenty some institutions and influenced Governor John A. Johnson to do likewise. The governor reported his observations to the 1907 legislature, along with a request for the immediate establishment of a school for girls in Minnesota along the lines of those he'd seen. The legislature did pass the necessary legislation, but as various communities were interested in their trade areas, it was not until February 21, 1908, that the decision was made in favor of Sauk Centre.

The state architect was in final stages of building the state prison and under fire from various groups, so it was not until June of 1910 that the first contract was let for the building of a girls' school. During that two-year period, however, the Board of Control appointed Mrs. Morse as superintendent--she was at that time associated with the Massachusetts Girls' School at Lancaster. She started her work in Minnesota August 1, 1910, as head of the female department at the Red Wing school.

Several views of the complex, sometimes contradictory personality of Fannie French Morse are provided by people who knew her.

"Sure, I remember Fanny Morse," says Ben DuBois, 90, a lifetime resident of Sauk Centre. "She was a fierce egotist but she wanted the same things for the girls as Pa did so they got along like a house on fire. I can still see them flying over that prairie in his buggy."

"Pa" was Mr. DuBois' father, Dr. Julian A. DuBois - physician, founder of one of Sauk Centre's two banks, agrarian liberal. He is generally regarded in Sauk Centre as the owner of the persuasive tongue that resulted in the legislature's selection of Sauk Centre for the institution. He is venerated to this day by Sauk Centre's elderly residents, who attribute to him all the finest qualities of the rural doctor of his era. He was the first Home School doctor.

Mrs. Julian F. DuBois Jr., daughter-in-law of the first Home School doctor, wife of the second, and mother of the third, offers another perspective of the Fannie Morse character.

"We attended several dinners at Morse Hall," she recalls. "They were extremely elaborate, as Mrs. Morse's ideas of entertaining were on the same scale as her house. But I did witness one incident concerning her that absolutely horrified me.

"For some reason we were at Brookdale, which was then the cottage in which all the girls with new babies lived. The doctor had to see a girl there, and then we were going on to a gathering at Morse Hall. Mrs. Morse was with us and we (her mother-in-law and herself) went in to see a brand new baby and its mother. Mrs. Morse looked disdainfully at the mother and the baby and said, 'Ugly little thing, just like its mother.' She said that right in front of the girl! The poor little thing wasn't pretty but nobody looks her best right after delivery. Later I told the doctor about Mrs. Morse's comment - he had been in another room at the time it was made. He said incredulously, 'Oh, you must have misunderstood her!' But Mother DuBois had heard the same words I had, and said so.

"Mrs. Morse was breaking new ground with the Home School, of course, and to a visitor her achievements looked very impressive. But, after the Brookdale incident, I gathered that whatever motivated her, it wasn't compassion for the girls themselves."

Miss Olga Houghton, a Sauk Centre native who taught typing and business methods at the Home School from 1946 to 1972, says:

> I was a little girl but I remember her! She was so different from anyone else I'd ever seen - so elegant! She actually had a surrey "with the fringe on top" and she never drove herself. Sometimes her son, he had just one arm, drove for her and sometimes one of the men at the school, but she sat so straight and proud, always!

Frank Costello, who retired in 1973 after 45 years service to the Home School, says:

"I was a little boy but I sure remember her. My dad was a cement contractor but in those days you couldn't work at it in the winter.

He was a friend of the Home School farm manager, Horatio Harrington --Fannie brought him out from Massachusetts with her. I think his wife was some relation to Fannie. I just loved Fannie's horses--she had a matched pair of chestnuts and one of blacks with white stockings. They were her own, they didn't belong to the state."

Mrs. Morse brought more than her son and Harrington from Massachusetts to Minnesota--she brought the nucleus of her staff. They were the first five housemothers and one of them was her sister. She also brought some very decided ideas.

One of her first acts was to persuade the state to change the name of the institution from "Training" to "Home" School. This was the core of her philosophy regarding the girls under her charge--each cottage was a home where everyone cooperated in cleaning, cooking, gardening, and other household tasks. The purpose of the reception center was to enable the staff to study each incoming girl and decide in which cottage she would best fit. There have been many varied criteria used since Mrs. Morse's day as to where the given student should be housed, but in the early years it was generally one cottage for the very young girls, one for those nearing adulthood, and the others on the basis of mutual tastes and comparable intelligence. Each cottage was also an ungraded elementary school.

In her biennial report to the State Board of Control, dated July 31, 1914, Mrs. Morse said:

"Nearly every girl comes to us a victim of a lack in the home, our average girl being devoid of 'home sense' as is many a citizen of 'community sense'! Society's greatest need today is the home. Paramount to every other, then, is that the motive of the training in an institution for delinquent girls should be toward a development of the home sense. In our girls' school the home is always made the perspective point. Its instruction is persistent and an intensified effort to grow in the girl this home sense, a consciousness of the possibilities of a home; a desire for it; and this desire created, how to fulfill it. The home as a factor in the building of women, and the school, as an organization, is constantly emphasized...

"First of all is the treatment of the girl as a normal human being; exacting of her personal responsibility, giving her the necessary freedom to grow and demonstrate that responsibility. There can be no responsibility without moral exercise, no choice of conduct without freedom of action. Our school is a community with its family homes, its farm, its central interests. The voice and conduct of every girl determines more or less the standard of the community. She is a citizen in the community and subject to its control and opinion. Every girl lends a hand to the material making and upkeep of the community, and, in that, enters into a sense of possession and personal pride.

"And so every effort is bent to the growing of the home sense. This developed, how is it met? First of all the home and homemaking

must be made possible to the girl, and to the average girl who will marry the wage earning husband, it must be made possible within small means. The small means must cover not only the decent, but the attractive home; to appeal it must attract. Whether in food values in the kitchen, fabrics in the sewing room, or in the department of home decorative arts, our whole domestic training is resolving itself into a training in home economics.

"Our thought is to get much from little, using the commonest materials which lie closest about us and which, because so common and so near, are commonly ignored. It is a revelation to the girl to find the creative within herself; a revelation that plainest food materials can furnish such variety and dishes so appetizing; that 25 cents invested in coarse crash, embroidery cotton and crochet hook can from point of beauty, durability, economy, and laundry care, put to shame the ordinary table cloth costing four times as much; that 50 cents or 75 cents invested in carefully chosen cotton material, suitably designed and daintily put together, can illustrate a fine art in dress; that cheapest stuffs combined with hand decoration and study in color scheme in hangings and upholstery can change her plain little room into a nook that attracts, even though the polished floor boasts only a rug braided from old clothes rescued from the scrub-rag bags; above all, it is a revelation to her that the commonest labor best done becomes an art, that it's how a thing is done that determines not only its value, but the position of the doer. In all departments the ordinary household duties are glorified. The value of attractive dress is emphasized as not only legitimate but a personal responsibility. Every cottage has its fashion book, and many a bride has felt no more pleasure or pride in her trousseau than some of our girls in the 'going out clothes'.

"...Possibly the method which most characterizes our work is our wage earning system. Besides its educational values it has proven our chief source of discipline. Every girl, on her commitment to the school, is for a month in dependency. At the expiration of that time she takes her place as a member of the family and a citizen of our community. Her own room she must care for, her own personal needs, sewing, laundry and personal care she must meet. Aside from these she is assigned special family duties. For these duties she is paid according to amount and skill. Since she finds her training in doing, the wage is small. The same competition which enters into employment outside, is recognized in our system. We have our own legal tender; no other money is accredited. Girls are paid for their service and fined for family or social offense. At the end of each week each girl presents her bill for services rendered during the week; from this is deducted any fines for misconduct, for inferior labor, for destruction of property, such as breakage of dishes or similar destruction. She is fined for any trespass against property rights. A deduction is made, and then she is paid the balance. From this she must support herself, clothing herself from the store, paying for luxuries or services rendered in the family or community.

"Every week the girls shop in our little store connected with the institution. Each can buy according to her means. She must practice close economy and for the first time she learns that even institution clothes cost money and are well worth buying and caring for. A girl's shoes last longer if she earns them. If she cannot afford the prettier piece of dress goods she must buy the less attractive, if no trimmings she must go without. It is not human nature for a girl to long put up with such conditions if she can right them. If she cannot make her own clothes she must pay another for making them, if she is not willing to attend to her own laundry she must pay another for its care. If she cannot pay for a ticket to a school entertainment she must stay at home..there is a debtors' table on which no desserts or sweets appear. There is hardly a phase of community life this system fails to touch. It is educational because it teaches accounting, each girl having to keep her debits and credits and balance accounts. It teaches economics since it teaches values and arts of expenditures. Since those who are doing best and putting forth the greatest effort have the most money, thereby affording better dresses and more privileges, it creates social distinction and a social competition which is legitimate and wholesome. No girl can leave the institution until she has not only supported herself but has a bank account which will insure her a good 'going-out outfit', and since fines follow misconduct, conduct really determines the time of the girl's going from the school. It has taken time and care to work out this system but the results have well warranted the attempt."

Mrs. Morse's first report to the Board of Control, in July of 1912, covered barely thirteen months, the first months of the school. Hence, her reports of 1914 (quoted in part above), 1918 and 1920 show how her theories were working out in fact. The results were impressive--of the 133 girls dismissed from the school between 1912 and 1914, 24 were returned. Of those 24, only 13 returned for serious offenses and the remaining 11 for visits or on account of illness.

The honeymoon with the town of Sauk Centre continued. Many girls were employed for housework in the town, one had been a clerk in the office of the school superintendent, one a salesgirl in a department store. Some of the girls attended the Sauk Centre schools and many attended lectures and debates in town, matinees at the opera house, and a number of them married and settled in Sauk Centre.

"I remember when the girls went to school in Sauk Centre, " says Frank Costello. "Some of them lived at the Home School and walked in each day, carrying their lunches. But a group actually lived in town--the Home School bought a large house from a local man--on North Main where Keenan's Resort is now--and turned it into a cottage. It was called the Inn. I guess having the girls live right in town was too much for the townsfolk, for it lasted only a few years. Then the building was carefully cut in two and hauled out to the Home School grounds. After they started a regular school at the Home School, the Inn was used for teachers to live in for a while. It was torn down in 1973."

Ben DuBois chuckles as he recalls the local attitude toward the Home School girls in the public school. "It was one of the many projects my father combined with Fannie Morse to get started, sending the girls in to school," he says. "I remember how dead set against it Laurel Kells (then a prominent Sauk Centre attorney) was. When they finally squashed it the reasons given were that the innocent girls at Sauk Centre might be contaminated by association with Home School girls and that people who owned homes in the vicinity of the Inn said their property values were decreasing. I think that last was a factor --nothing like a kick in the pocketbook, whether it's real or imagined, to upset people--but as for the first, well, I think they were more worried about the local boys than the girls. And one year a Home School girl won most of the top honors in her graduating class. That didn't set too well, either."

Between 1912 and 1914, the number of girls at the Home School rose from 126 to 139 with another 172 placed but still in the care of the Home School. Of these, 67 were self-supporting, 48 returned to their parents' homes, 6 discharged because of age, 6 discharged to be married, 8 placed in Bethany Home and 2 transferred to other institutions. Those committed ranged in age from one 9-year-old to sixty-six 16-year-olds. There were forty from Hennepin County, thirty from Ramsey, and thirty-seven from St. Louis County. The other 22 counties represented had from one to four girls each. The causes for commitment were delinquency (15), forgery (1), fornication (5), habitually running away (3), held as a witness by federal court (1), incorrigibility-immoral conduct (53), incorrigibility-lewdness (13), incorrigibility-stubborn, disobedient (16), larceny (14), obtaining money under false pretenses (3), prostitution (3), refusing to stay at home (1), truancy (5), vagrancy (4), voluntary intoxication (1), and wayward (7).

Of the total 145, 125 were born in the United States and 86 of these in Minnesota and another 18 in Wisconsin. The foreign-born included one each from Austria, Denmark, Italy, Norway, Rumania, and Sweden; 3 from Finland and Russia; and 8 unknown. The Catholics numbered 59, Jewish 4, none or unknown religion 5. Of the 77 Protestants, 10 were Baptists; 2 were Christian Science; 2 were Congregational; 3 were Episcopalian; 29 were Lutheran; 14 were Methodist; 7 were Presbyterian; 10 were denomination unknown.

Ten of the 145 were orphans; 4 came from homes where there had been a divorce and they lived with their mothers and stepfathers; 6 had divorced parents with no stepfathers or stepmothers; 8 had deceased fathers and lived with their mothers and stepfathers; 15 had deceased mothers and lived with only fathers; 7 had deceased mothers and lived with fathers and stepmothers; 60 came from homes where the parents lived together; 16 from homes where the parents were separated; and in 6 cases the parental relations were unknown.

Even the parents' nativity was part of the record. Of the 96 girls whose parents shared a birthplace, 19 were American born;

13 in Germany; 9 in Sweden; 6 in Poland and Finland; 5 each in Ireland and France; 4 in Austria; 3 each were Danish, English, French-Canadian, Italian, Russian-Jews, 2 were French-American, German-American, and Scotch-English. One each had parents born in the U.S. of African parentage; Canadian; Dutch; Greek; Norwegian; and one American Indian. This last is worth noting, as the percentage of Indian girls was to rise so greatly later.

The girls had great freedom out-of-doors, as all did farm work and worked in the gardens. Their duties included planting shrubbery and trees, mowing lawns and caring for flower beds and driveways. Mrs. Morse believed that close touch with growing things was a humanizing influence and that this was more important than the actual money saved by having the girls do the work. The girls also had many picnics and walks, each cottage had its own baseball team, and they had boating, fishing, and swimming on Sauk Lake, part of which adjoins the Home School grounds.

The schooling in the six ungraded schools (cottages) was slanted toward training for home life and citizenship. Few textbooks were used. In language, the work was teaching a girl to express a thought briefly, clearly and in simple words; to write a letter well; to stand well; if asked a question to answer without self-consciousness or hesitation; to avoid slang and add as many simple parts of speech and new words to her vocabulary as possible, and to know those simple parts of speech and their constructions. History and geography lessons were designed to give the girl a general background. Simple fractions and long divisions were the most complex mathematical studies, with emphasis on what most closely applied to kitchen and home management - telling time, changing money, buying and selling, keeping accounts and knowing how to measure length, weight, quantity, and time. Nature study was combined with gardening and poultry raising, and, as Mrs. Morse's report explained, a great deal of emphasis was placed on home economics and home decorative art.

A first-hand picture of Home School life in those early days is provided by Mrs. G. H. (Flossie) Vandesteeg, who started at the Home School under Fannie Morse in 1918, when she was 20. In Mrs. Vandesteeg's words:

"Fannie Morse was an amazing person. Her husband had been a college professor in Massachusetts--after his death, for a while, she took in roomers.

"Her son, Edwin, who came here with her, had been born with only one arm. He went back later to work in Framingham, Massachusetts, and was an assistant to U.S. Attorney General Cummings.

"Very few women in Sauk Centre were in business in 1918, and Mrs. Morse did like to make a bit of a splash, and the men in the community liked her. Once the members of the school board in Sauk Centre went

out to the Home School and stayed longer than they had planned originally. There was only one phone to serve Morse Hall then and all the cottages - the phone calls all went through the office. Anyway, one board member's wife finally called and asked if her husband would like to have her send out his pajamas!

"Mrs. Morse had the most amazing false teeth I have ever seen. She had a complete upper plate, solid gold covered with some white substance, and they locked into her jawbone with a golden key. The teeth themselves were terrifically heavy.

"I taught at Pioneer Cottage, which had a housemother and a housekeeping teacher. So I taught from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. and from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Each cottage had about twenty-five girls and there was no night watchman.

"The girls who milked the cows lived at Pioneer then--many had to be taught how to milk. I was there a month when the steward (equivalent of today's business manager) quit, and I took that job. I was there altogether for about a year...then I went into parole work.

"The atmosphere at the Home School while I was there was awfully good. There were good vibrations between the girls and the staff. The girls were very competent in needlework ... they did academic work in the daytime and made rugs or crocheted at night. Each cottage had its own ball team and they really went to town in their games! Phone calls could be made from one cottage to another but all calls off the grounds had to go through the switchboard at Morse Hall.

"Mrs. Morse literally controlled the Board of Control in those days--she could hire and fire at will. When I went on parole work, as a community visitor, it was often my job to bring a girl back to the Home School, and while I was still at the Home School I had to help hunt for any girl who ran.

"While I was steward, we stretched the budget by doing such jobs as drying clothes ourselves. Many of the girls worked in town on Saturday, at clerking or housework. The school was accredited by the state in vocational as well as academic areas. Home nursing was taught, for example, as was swimming for which certificates were given.

"I resigned in 1922 to complete my law work. I understand that when Fannie left, she went to a similar school in the District of Columbia."

By July of 1918, many of Mrs. Morse's goals had been realized. The end of the girls' attendance at the Sauk Centre schools was a disappointment but in 1916 a hostel had been built in St. Paul which was proving most successful. Community House would today be called a halfway house - it was a home for paroled or released girls whose own homes were not suitable. The girls lived there and worked in offices, depart-

ment stores, and factories; some attended business school in day or evening classes. Agents there could observe and assist the girls. Many were married from there, as indeed some were married from the Home School itself. Brookdale Farm at Sauk Centre had been purchased, and still more land rented. World War I put new and different pressures on the Home School as it temporarily meant what Mrs. Morse called a "grinding economy, a rigor of labor". Instead of twenty acres of garden, fifty were planted; larger amounts of field crops were planted; poultry and pig raising increased. In addition to the canning, pickling and preserving in each cottage, always a part of each girl's routine, a canning center was established where hundreds of quarts of every garden vegetable, in tin, were stored.

Many foods were also dried on crude forms of the girls' making. Barrels of cucumbers and sauerkraut were salted, as was fish from the lake. With the rented land, over 900 acres were in use, 535 acres under plow. The girls did many jobs formerly done by men serving in the Army. A cottage was established at Brookdale Farm especially for the pregnant girls. The war bringing, as it did, social unrest and delinquency, the institution was greatly overcrowded. In the eleven family cottages designed to accomodate a total of 220 girls, nearly 300 girls were housed.

Education at the Home School had also been modified. In addition to the ungraded schools in seven cottages, the Mary Lyon Cottage or School Cottage was created for the girls who had shown by conduct, ability and interest that they deserved more academic training. In that cottage the housework was arranged so it did not conflict with school attendance.

The third type of school laid greatest emphasis on handwork, basketry, rugmaking, book repairing, quilt making, crochet work, caning of chair seats and the making of holiday cards, invitations and programs. The handicraft school was designed for the girls who showed little interest in regular school work but were eager to work with their hands.

In the statistical section of the report, some new categories were added and some new classifications within categories. Additional causes for commitment included bigamy (1), incest (1), and common prostitute (3). New categories included the complaintant--police or court officials, parents, truant officers, etc.; previous appearances in court--never, once, twice, or several; previous institutions--orphanages, maternity homes, tubercular sanatoriums. Commitments by age ranged from one 8-year-old to fifty-one who were 17. The grade completed in school at time of commitment ranged from 3rd to no schooling. Employment of girls previous to commitment was also noted - 69 not at all, 3 for board and room, 50 in housework, 30 in stores as clerks or cash girls, 34 in hotels and restaurants, 3 in vaudeville and carnivals, 25 in mills and factories, 9 in laundries, 9 in telephone companies, 1 in manicuring, 3 in hospitals, 2 in banks, 2 in printing companies, 1 in the Salvation Army.

Housing conditions prior to commitment were noted, ranging from 49 good through 51 fairly good; 106 bad, crowded, dirty; 22 no homes; and 16 unknown. Relatives in other institutions were noted - prisons, reformatories, epileptic colony, and schools for blind, for deaf and dumb, for feeble-minded.

One of the staff members of the day, Inez Patterson, offers a less than glowing recollection of the Home School at this time:

"I first went to the Home School in 1919, right after the war. I had been teaching in Fargo but so many of us then wanted to do something we felt was related to war work.. One of my co-teachers in Fargo had taught at the Home School and told me about it, so I applied for a summer position - which was gardening.

"Fannie French Morse went through life making decisions on the basis of what glorified her reputation. She demanded funds from the legislature, literally, and didn't account for them. So visitors would come and rave, 'How lovely--each girl has a rug in her room.' They weren't told that the money that bought those rugs would have bought those poor girls some decent underwear, which they needed a lot more than they did rugs!

"I did enjoy working with the youngsters, though, so when I was asked to stay on and teach in the fall I did--even though I found parts of the program superficial. I taught in a cottage where the girls' intelligence ranged from mentally retarded to bright high school level. In town there was a tiny cottage for the grade-schoolers attending the Sauk Centre school and a larger one (the Inn) for those going to high school. Unfortunately, that was a short-lived program."

In the 1920 report of the Home School to the Board of Control, the capacity of the institution was recorded as 295 and the number of girls at the institution as 328. By this time the Home School owned 447 acres and leased 600 acres more. A large residence about a mile and a half from the main buildings was purchased and four other cottages built beyond it. This little colony was named Fairview--the purchased residence was the nursery for babies born to Home School girls.

"A fellow who made a lot of money fast built that place," Ben DuBois says. "It was going to be his summer home and all the side of the house facing the lake was windows. First summer he was there the weeds grew up in the lake; made him so mad he wanted to sell out." That wall of windows was admirably suited for a nursery--some Sauk Centerites used to refer to it as "the incubator".

On August 2, 1921, the quarterly conference of the executive officers of state institutions with the state Board of Control was held at the Home School. The Honorable J.A.O. Preus, Governor of Minnesota, gave an address in which he said, "...no person in America

has done more to break down the cruel tradition of the reformative institution than has Mrs. Fannie French Morse, the superintendent of this splendid school. Her work here has won the admiration of all the people of our land who are informed and interested in the education and the giving of an opportunity to those who have had little or none, and to whom the state therefore should extend particular aid and goodwill. While the state may do little and the public less to thank her for her endeavors, the gratitude and love and prayers of hundreds who under her intelligent and Christian guidance have been given an opportunity in life will always follow her, a monument to her work, wisdom and character."

The governor's tribute, warm as it was, must pale beside that of the principal speaker that day, Judge Mary Bartelme of Chicago, who was a nationally known figure in corrections. She was frequently quoted in textbooks of the day dealing with juvenile offenses. She told of a Dr. Van Waters, who was considered a very high authority on the delinquent, being asked by a wealthy Chicago woman to visit state training schools across the country and see what seemed best for the rehabilitation of the girl. The wealthy woman underwrote the expenses of the survey. Judge Bartelme said, "After Dr. Van Waters had completed her visits...I asked her...'If you could fashion schools of the country that are caring for delinquent girls after any one school, which one would you select?' And she said, 'There is a little school in New Jersey that is just starting out that is doing very good work, but I would select Sauk Centre of Minnesota. It is way beyond anything I have seen in its progressive ideas, in its right attitude toward the girl.'"

Judge Bartelme went on to tell how, eight years earlier, she had visited Sauk Centre for the first time: "I was very enthusiastic about the school and about Mrs. Morse. On the way home I thought, 'What can I do to steal Mrs. Morse?' Just like a common thief, you see, I was thinking of the needs of Illinois...I went to Springfield to see the governor and told him what I wanted. He said, 'Don't you think there is a woman big enough in Illinois to undertake that work?' I said, 'If there is I haven't found her. If you know of one, we should be very glad to have an Illinois woman.' When another governor came into office and we had a board something like your Board of Control I again appealed to the governor and the board; and members of the board actually came up here to Sauk Centre. When the board returned they called me up and asked, 'Isn't there some way by which we could get something of the kind in Illinois? Could we not get Mrs. Morse to come here?'..."

At the same meeting the Bishop of St. Cloud, the Rev. J. F. Busch, and Mrs. J. L. Washburn of the Board of Women Visitors both expressed their dismay that the citizens of Sauk Centre had ended the program of the Home School girls in the Sauk Centre schools.

The Home School at this point included among its buildings an administration building which was also the superintendent's residence,

a receiving cottage and hospital, sixteen cottages for girls, chapel, and adequate farm buildings to house the large dairy herd. A school building and two further cottages were under construction.

A year later, on July 15, 1922, Mrs. Morse retired as superintendent of the Home School. She was succeeded by Dr. Lena Beach, who stayed until February of 1925. Mrs. Beach's administration was not particularly noteworthy, and the record of her term is minimal.

CHAPTER II

A HARSHER TREND

A survey of the next thirty years shows an increasingly harsh and rigid relationship between staff and girls.

Mary L. Stewart succeeded Dr. Beach, and remained until June 15, 1932. Frank Costello says, "She was the wife of an attorney and I don't know if he or his outlook had soured her but she was the most suspicious person I ever met in my life. She loved to pounce on people, hiding until she saw what she thought was laziness or ignoring a rule. She even had a hammock put up on the Morse Hall lawn so she could watch for someone to slip up. I just ignored her. A couple of times she complained to John Olson, who had replaced Mr. Harrington, and he'd tell her he was certainly going to give me a talking to. Then he'd tell me all about it and we'd have a good laugh."

While the atmosphere had changed, the structure of the Home School remained outwardly the same. The officers in the cottages held various titles over the years - head housemother and assistant housemother, upstairs housemother and downstairs housemother, matron and housekeeper. The head housemother was to plan all the activities for the girls and take charge upstairs, and the assistant to supervise the menus, cooking and laundry.

Some of the methods of the day were controversial. Inez Patterson, who returned to the Home School in 1929, gives her assessment:

"I had one terrific obstacle to overcome before I could take the assistant superintendent position. I was terrified of the dark. Ever since my childhood I would go to any lengths to avoid being outdoors alone at night. I couldn't possibly carry out the responsibilities of that job with that handicap and at the end of three months I had conquered it.

"I became superintendent in 1932 and resigned June 19, 1940. A lot of the discipline and rationing measures we used then people would find horrifying today.

"We doled out toothpaste or toothpowder instead of letting each girl keep her own because, like all adolescents, they had a terrific craving for sweets and would have eaten it if they had had their own. Sugar was hard to come by, which was why we served desserts to the girls only on Sundays.

"Meat was purchased by a state central meat department, which was as hard on the staff as it was on the girls.

"Many of the girls were pregnant. We had them wax hardwood floors, on their hands and knees with parrafin and a cloth wrapped brick, which was a healthy pre-natal exercise. Dr. DuBois (Julian F. DuBois, Sr.)

said it strengthened the same muscles that exercises given to all expectant mothers did.

"I don't know why people were horrified that the girls marched to the chapel by cottage. The whole principle of the cottage-style institution is to create a 'family' in each cottage. And families walk to church together.

"Cropping hair on runaways and icy baths for disciplining were standard procedure in working with adolescent delinquent girls at that time.

"Every girl who came to that institution needed love, and we did our best to provide it. We provided what we could in the way of Christmas gifts and other treats and finally managed to persuade the legislature to let us get shoes for the girls that weren't ankle-high! And we did our best to place them, when they left, in a home where they would be influenced by high standards, treated with kindness and permitted to continue their educations as well as do housework.

A different perspective is offered by Mrs. Herman Jacobson of rural Sauk Centre:

"I worked, on and off, as a relief officer for the housemothers between 1930 and 1935. I actually worked more at first, under Mrs. Stewart--I had a Home School girl in my home to help and I'd quit working to have a baby and then go back to work again when the baby was old enough. My husband was farming for the Home School and we lived in town. When Miss Patterson became superintendent, though, she didn't approve of married women working outside their homes for any length of time. It was interesting, though, because as relief officer I worked in all the cottages at one time or another.

"The black girls were segregated at Brookdale Farm. Mr. and Mrs. Huber were in charge and they never had a relief. When they wanted to go somewhere they put all the girls in the farm wagon and brought them along. It was very different at the other cottages. Many of the housemothers were well-to-do Twin Cities widows, whose husbands had been doctors and attorneys. They accepted maid service as their due and were very rigid with the girls."

The procedure in the cottages had been established by Mrs. Morse and remained the same. Each girl, after being assigned to a cottage, went through the following sequence of duties: one month on care of own room and personal sewing; one month of the former plus cleaning halls; one month cleaning girls' bathroom; one month cleaning stairs; one month cleaning living room of cottage; one month cleaning the lower hall; and two months of officers' room service, which meant doing the officers' laundry and taking care of their rooms. When this had been satisfactorily completed, the girl was transferred to

the kitchen and dining room. There she worked at the first sink for a month; as junior waitress for a month; as junior cook for a month; as senior cook for two months and as senior waitress for two months.

"Only Pioneer Cottage, the security cottage, locked the girls in their rooms," says Mrs. Jacobson, "but there was certainly not a homelike atmosphere in the other cottages, either. The officers and the girls all ate in the same dining room, with the officers at their own table. No talking was allowed. What bothered me was that the girls' menu was always different from the officers'. It may not have been better, as the food was always well cooked and abundant, but it seemed both unkind and impractical. By unkind I was thinking especially of dessert--the officers had it at every meal and the girls usually only on Sundays. By impractical I was thinking of the kitchen where two cooks were working on the officers' meal and two on the students'. If both menus included boiled potatoes, the potatoes were still prepared by two different girls and cooked in separate kettles."

Dr. Julian A. DuBois was succeeded after his death by his son, Dr. Julian F. DuBois, as Home School physician. The infirmary and delivery room were in the same building that housed the reception center. This was named Higby Hall (today it is Sinclair Lewis Hall) after the legendary woman who reputedly delivered an impassioned plea to the Minnesota legislature for a separate school for delinquent girls and died moments later of a heart attack.

"When a girl came to the reception center the first thing we had to do was take her to the bathroom, spread papers on the floor and have her strip to see if she had lice," Mrs. Jacobson says. "Then the doctor gave her a general checkup, checked for venereal disease and took blood samples for various tests. The girl remained at the reception center until she'd taken various mental tests and been interviewed by the superintendent or her assistant to determine in what cottage to place her.

"The girls were still required at this time to make their own clothes. They even made their own bras and bloomers from unbleached muslin. They wore tan cotton stockings, and their shoes were brown oxfords provided by the state. The youngest girl I came in contact with was a nine-year-old; she and her mother worked as a team of prostitutes. The girls could only have visitors once a month--and then they met in a room at Morse Hall where a staff member sat with them and listened. The girls were never taken off grounds and could exchange letters only with specified people, at long intervals, and the letters were read by the housemother--both outgoing and incoming mail."

Pioneer Cottage (since renamed Sullivan, for Helen Keller's teacher) was not a part of the Home School during Mrs. Morse's day. It was turned into a discipline cottage with several rooms equipped for maximum security after 1922. This was part of the whole shift away from rehabilitation as Mrs. Morse had seen it. In 1922 the Community

House in the Twin Cities was closed; in 1922 shopping and attending the theater in Sauk Centre were abolished, home visits were curtailed, and correspondence limited.

In Pioneer, the girls were required to wear what they called "Pioneer dresses"--shapeless sacks of blue denim. They could be put on a bread-and-water diet for three days,followed by bread and milk for a week before being returned to the regular diet. This type of punishment was usually reserved for parole violators and runaways. They could also be slapped, plunged into tubs of ice water, or have their paroles delayed.

"When I worked at Pioneer," Mrs. Jacobson said, "the day started with unlocking one girl's room, letting her go to the bathroom, and locking her back into her room before unlocking the next girl's room. Each room had a bed, a chair and a chamber pot and that was all. When they were confined to their rooms, that morning trip to the bathroom was the only time they left their rooms all day. At night they had to place their shoes outside their doors when the housemother locked them in."

During the period Mrs. Jacobson worked at the Home School, the policy of segregating the black girls was abolished, as well as the cold tub treatment at Pioneer. But the girls at Pioneer were still not permitted any recreation or even attendance at chapel. But all the girls were attended by Dr. DuBois and, after 1932, by a part-time Sauk Centre dentist as well. While housework was still the most emphasized area, the girls could be trained as beauticians, in typing and office practice and in music. A full-time registered nurse was part of the Home School staff.

"I never learned to cook until I worked at the Home School," Mrs. Jacobson admits. "Luckily the first cottage I worked at was as a matron for three months and the head cook was wonderful. I learned how to cook from her. And, oh, the canning! There were stoves in the basement for laundry, but the canning was done in the kitchens. All summer long, it seemed. At three o'clock on a hot day everyone would be in a state of exhaustion and then four or five bushels of corn or something would be dumped on your porch and it had to be canned that day! The laundry work always started at five in the morning--there were ten washtubs in each basement. On Mondays the girls did their clothes and bedding, on Tuesday the clothes and bedding of the officers, and on Wednesdays, the linens used in the dining room."

Olga Houghton worked as a relief officer summers, when she was still teaching during the school year at Annandale. Her experience picks up at approximately the point where Mrs. Jacobson's ends. The officers still were on twenty-four hours a day duty, with one day off a week from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. and once a month a two-day break, from 6 a.m. one day to 9 p.m. the next.

"Because of the emphasis on cooking, sewing and gardening," she recalls, "one of the big events each year for the girls was their own fair. They exhibited samples of fine hand sewing, jars of preserves, and fresh garden produce. There used to be a lot of rivalry between housemothers over petty things. I remember one housemother taking the prize for some canned fruit year after year, and then one of the girls in her cottage letting slip the fact that it was the same jar the woman was submitting, over and over again! Every Sunday afternoon, year round, the girls had chapel in the school auditorium (the chapel on the grounds was too small to hold all the students, and was usually reserved for Mass for the Catholic girls). Anyway, all the girls had to wear white dresses to chapel and it was a point of pride with the housemothers to have their girls in the whitest,most stiffly starched dresses of all. There were two cottages whose housemothers were held in contempt by the others because, they claimed, the girls from those two cottages didn't starch their dresses and they were more ecru than white. The only time the girls wore those dresses, except for chapel, was as a uniform when they were waitresses to the officers' table in their cottages."

Audrey Saxton gave her view of the Home School in the '30's as follows:

"I went to the Home School as a social worker in 1935, the Depression at its worst. My husband had been severely wounded in World War I and was in a Veterans' Hospital until his death at the start of World War II. I received a $75 a month salary plus room and board --I sent $25 to each of my two children who were working their way through college and had $25 left to cover my expenses.

"I interviewed each new girl who came to the Home School and tried, though it was impossible, to see each girl every three months. I went to the various cottages 'to play' in the evenings.

"I remember one big, red-haired girl--she wasn't a sex delinquent but she was unfettered. Miss Patterson told me to observe when she was given the ice-bath punishment at Pioneer. The tub had legs, the old-fashioned kind, and the girl had her legs under the tub and was hanging on to the edge of the tub to keep from being dunked. The housemother beat on her hands with a heavy broom handle until she broke the girl's grip. I was sickened by the sight but afterward the girl told me not to mind so much--it wasn't <u>that</u> bad!

"I got to know all the housemothers, of course, since I visited all the cottages. Miss Hubbard at Minnesota Cottage was the dearest, sweetest woman I ever met. At Harland Cottage Miss Schaefer sat outside the girls' toilet giving each one three, but no more, squares of toilet paper. The slower girls were sent to Harland and the very young ones to Lind.

"Each cottage did its own cooking then and kneading bread dough was a pretty good form of therapy for the disturbed--much like hitting

pillows today. The girls also had to polish the floors until they were like glass--my first year I had quite a serious fall on a glassy floor!

"The first place I was shown when I went to the Home School was Pioneer. There was a wonderful housemother there at that time whom the girls really loved--they called her Gran.

"All outgoing and incoming mail had to be read by either the housemother or a social worker," Mrs. Saxton recalls. "One girl's mother wrote to her in German, which the girl herself couldn't read, and I had to translate for her.

"For five or six years after she left I had letters from a girl who had been sent to the Home School for theft. She was about sixteen when she came to the Home School. She had a stepfather and a number of half-brothers and she was terrified of men. She did eventually marry but her husband was inducted in the service and sent overseas before she realized she was pregnant. She began stealing again and was sent back to the Home School.

"On the more cheerful side, one of our girls was released from the Home School, returned to her home town and graduated from high school and married the high school principal. He took a job in another state after they were married." Mrs. Saxton continued:

"I remember one funny incident. Twin girls, fifteen or sixteen, prostitutes, were sent to the Home School. The St. Paul police were anxious to get any information we might be able to get from them on their 'protectors' and men associated with other prostitutes in St. Paul. Miss Patterson suggested that I interview one sister and she would talk to the other.

"I got floods of information from the twin I interviewed, but Miss Patterson's wouldn't answer any questions. Later, after she'd been assigned to a cottage, I talked to the girl Miss Patterson had interviewed and got confirmation of everything her sister had told me. Miss Patterson then asked the girl, 'Why did you tell Mrs. Saxton the answers to questions you wouldn't give me?' The girl gasped, 'Oh, but I couldn't tell you those things, Miss Patterson--you're a LADY!'

Another incisive view of Home School life in the Depression years is supplied by Marva Maxwell Moos, who was employed there from the summer of 1936 to 1939:

"At that time girls were there as young as nine years old and they were kept there until they were legally old enough to stand trial and go to Shakopee (a correctional institution for women).

"I knew one nine-year-old from International Falls who was very surprised when she learned that not all women were prostitutes. There was a prostitution ring that stretched from Minneapolis to Hurley, Wisconsin. So many of these girls truly did not know right from wrong."

Mrs. Moos was twenty years old when she joined the staff and had gone through college in three years and three summer sessions. She had majored in English and journalism and had taken some criminology courses. An opening occurred at the Home School when a teacher who had helped with the school paper announced she was leaving.

"The superintendent of the Home School knew the president of St. Cloud State very well and he recommended me," Mrs. Moos said. "I was the first person anywhere near my age to have been hired to teach. It was a very different life."

Mrs. Moos, who lived at the Inn on the Home School grounds, taught English and journalism.

"I wrote a pageant on which the kids gave a great performance," she recalls. "Lee Abbott, a physical education teacher, and Saxy (Audrey Saxton) helped direct the pageant and the needlework teacher made the costumes.

"One English class I taught really dealt with essentials--how to take down a phone message, how to give a grocery order, how to spell words like 'yeast'. This led to questions like, 'When you wash dishes, which ones do you do first?'"

Even telling time became an English as well as a math exercise.

She also taught regular junior high English, and some of the students were very bright.

"They were willing to talk and write a great deal about their lack of family life," she said. "This condition did not seem to apply to the Indians, who had strong family feelings. When it was time to harvest wild rice, most of our Indian girls ran away, but were willing to come back after the rice was gathered. The Indian girls didn't say much but were very articulate on paper."

She was dating Phil, now her husband, while she was on the staff.

"The most incredible prudery existed," she said. "Phil had made a ceramic horse for me and in place of a brand he had marked one flank 'love, P'. I couldn't have that horse in my classroom unless the brand was covered up. Evenings, Florence Vogel came in from town to play the piano and the girls sang. Most were popular songs of the period, like 'Red Sails In The Sunset'. You were always aware of feelings of joy or sadness in the girls' group singing and dancing. They participated; very few just watched, and all seemed sensitive to art and music.

"I believe separate cooking for girls and staff was required in each cottage as a way to keep the girls occupied. The food was good, especially with the big gardens. Many girls came with skin infections that cleared up very fast when they got a decent diet.

"The girls' clothes were all made from the same pattern and were very plain. I had worked at a department store for 22½ cents an hour before getting the Home School job. After I talked to the store they arranged for us to have their odds and ends of lace and other trim. It was an incentive to each girl to make her dress as carefully as possible because only those that were well-made could have any lace or other trim on them.

"When I had a date and dressed up on Friday nights the girls always wanted to see me before I left. They'd ask what material my dress was made of, or what the shade of color was called. They were so hungry for normal, frivolous details that I began to dress up much more for classes, too." Mrs. Moos continued:

"Pettit Cottage had the youngest children and they offered and received great affection from the housemothers. In some of the cottages, though, there were many big girls, some so big they scared the housemothers.

"Many of the girls were very fearful when they first came to the Home School, but once their trust had been won, they were good students. I taught there for two years and heard from some of those girls five years later. It was touching to receive so much gratitude just for teaching. I was very much opposed to the girls being put in solitary confinement in the punishment cottage. I learned much about raising my own children from watching and observing results at the Home School."

Katherine Hattendorf was Miss Patterson's assistant, and succeeded her as superintendent when Miss Patterson resigned in 1940. She resigned in 1945 and was succeeded by Ruth Martin.

CHAPTER III

TOWARD A MORE RELAXED PROGRAM

, 1907 the Minnesota legislature had passed an act authorizing the ate Board of Control to appoint the superintendent and other off ers of the Home School, to define their duties and fix their compensation, and to make the rules and regulations for the government of the school. The sole provision was that all the officers of the school be women. The same act created a five-member advisory board, known as the Board of Women Visitors to the State Industrial School for Girls, to investigate the institution at least semi-annually and to report their findings as to the physical condition of the school and the treatment of the inmates to the Board of Control. The governor was authorized by the legislature to appoint the members of the board, but the board itself was abolished in 1929. The school, however, remained under the Board of Control until 1939 when the Division of Public Institutions replaced the Board of Control. Ten years later the Division of Public Institutions lost control of the school to the Youth Conservation Commission.

One of the first moves of the YCC was to fire Ruth Martin in May, 1950, on the grounds that she was too rigid. She was succeeded by Emerald A. Harper, superintendent from May 1, 1950 to January 19, 1951, when she also was fired by the YCC on the grounds that she was not strict enough--i.e., couldn't administer the school with sufficient control.

Henrietta (Hank) Miller Kessler was hired as the school's first recreation director in 1951. "There was a lot of political finagling going on," she says. "I had graduated from the University of Minnesota in the spring of '51 and in the fall I was hired by the YCC for this job. One of my college friends was working for the YCC and let them know about my having majored in recreation. The awful thing is that they didn't tell Miss Harper anything about it! I think they were embarrassed about firing a second superintendent so soon after the last one and were just trying to humiliate her into resigning. Two YCC workers drove me up to the Home School with my bags and baggage (I lived in South St. Paul) and took me into Miss Harper's office and said, 'This is Henrietta Miller--she's your new recreation director.' It was so obvious that this was the first she'd heard about it; it was horribly embarrassing for both of us."

Miss Houghton found, when she began teaching in 1946, that her typing and office practice students seemed to have the same ability as those she taught in Annandale. There were things she didn't like about the school, though.

"When a girl ran away and they brought her back they cut her hair off," she says. "I always felt it was downright barbaric. It would almost have been better if they'd shaved their heads because they chopped the hair off so close to the scalp and yet raggedly. They

weren't marked like that for stealing or any other infractions at the Home School and certainly running away is a human instinct if ever there was one. I'll never forget one of my students, a bright girl, she had the most beautiful hair I ever saw. It had never been cut, was very thick and wavy and she wore it in braids pinned around her head like that Mrs. Olsen in the coffee commercial. Well, she tried to run away and was caught and when she came back to class, all cropped, I could have cried. It was brutal."

Because the Home School is an "open" institution (no walls) running away (or "runs" in Home School jargon) have always been a problem--and the greatest problem when the administration was most oppressive. Only in Pioneer Cottage were the girls locked in their rooms. The outside doors in other cottages were locked at 4 p.m. each day, when the girls finished school. Whenever a run occurred all the men employees of the school were sent out to look for the girl.

"Those shoes, you know, that they had to wear?" says Frank Costello. "Well, the bottom of the heel had a deep star pattern pressed into it, so if you saw the footprints with that star you knew you were heading in the right direction. I remember once, in the early '60's, we had a new psychologist on the staff--nice boy but still green. He went with me on a run. The girl had worked under me on the grounds and I knew a little of her background but I didn't tell Dick Samelian that. Anyway, I head out of town toward Long Prairie and a little ways out I drive the car into some brush and say to Dick, 'I'm going to hide in this ditch. You can wait in the car if you want to.' He says, 'No, I'll wait in the ditch, too. And pretty soon, darned if the girl doesn't come along the ditch, turn her head from side to side like a little hen pheasant. I stand up, turn my flashlight on my face so I won't scare her and says, 'Bev, it's me. Are you ready to go back now?' She gets in the car just as quiet and doesn't cause any trouble. Dick was so impressed, he said to me, 'Do you always hide in a ditch?' Actually, it was the first time I ever had but I told him 'Yes' and it was quite a while before he found out I was pulling his leg."

Miss Houghton recalls, "Even in the 50's the girls weren't permitted to have any contact at all with girls from other cottages. It was so pointless to forbid it, but that's the way it was. The girls who were on milking duty, when they put the paper caps on the glass bottles of milk, sometimes they'd put on two lids and on one of them they'd write a message inside to a friend in another cottage. Some of them were so clever it makes me chuckle to think of it. I remember once when there simply wasn't the amount of cream there should have been. It was quite a while before we learned that the girls were poaching eggs in the missing cream! I'll bet it was delicious, at that!"

Mrs. M. Leo Hedin taught at the Home School from 1954-56. "I had been raised in a small Minnesota and a small Colorado town," she says, "and had come to Sauk Centre to teach after I finished college. I married, quit teaching and had a child. When Katherine (her daughter)

was in school I wanted to resume teaching myself. The public school had no vacancy so I applied for a job at the Home School and got it. Those were the two most awful years of my life, I think. I had never had any contact with kids like the Home School girls and I just didn't know how to handle things. For one thing I taught six courses--five in English and one in biology. The school day was from eight to five and I was the advisor for the school paper and coached plays, too, so there were a lot of evenings out there.

"I remember the first play I directed. We were rehearsing in the gym and Miss Richard (principal of the Home School and also, briefly, acting superintendent) came in. She looked up at the stage and said, 'There are only seven girls up there!' I was surprised and said, 'Yes'. 'But,' she said, 'you have ten girls in the cast.' I still didn't get it and said, 'Yes'. 'Well,' she said, 'Where are the other three?' I said, 'They're backstage, waiting for their entrance cues.' Then she said, 'After I leave, you go back and bring them out here with you and don't you ever again let two or more girls out of your sight at the same time!' When I went backstage two of the girls were kissing and I didn't know what to say except, 'Come on out front with me.'

"Miss Richard was always after me for taking an aisle seat at programs. 'You should make a point of sitting with the girls--they need to feel you like them--instead of sitting with empty space on one side of you.' Well, I felt stifled if I had them all around me.

"I usually wore earrings and I've always had an absent-minded habit of taking off an earring and fiddling with it while I'm talking to a class. One day one of the girls told me that I should know that wearing a single earring was a lesbian signal! But what really finished me was one day near the end of my second school year out there. My classroom opened onto the gym and the girls used to dance during the noon hour to a record player there. A girl was missing from my one o'clock class and I looked out into the gym and saw she was dancing alone. I called to her but she couldn't hear me over the record player. So I walked up behind her and touched her on the shoulder. She spun around like lightning and hit me on the side of the head with her open palm, so hard I felt my neck snap. In the same motion she raked my cheek with her fingernails--I had four deep parallel scratches. She was genuinely sorry and I learned later that she came from an environment where, if anyone approached you from behind, you struck first and asked questions later. I could understand, intellectually, why she had done it but emotionally I was still appalled and scared. There was an opening in the public school that fall and I got it, but I think I would have starved before I taught at the Home School again."

Mrs. Kessler commented that, "The administration of the Home School had a monomania about lesbianism--they saw it everywhere. That was the reason, I'm positive, about the forbidden contact with the other cottages. We were always overcrowded in the spring--girls would be paroled in March, for example, but wanted to stay to finish

out the school year. So we'd have to put bunkbeds in some rooms and those housemothers would dither around--incredible. 'Oh, no, we can't put Betty in with Sue!' When I went to work at the Home School I had a room in one of the cottages. I drove the housemother bats anyway--things like that, which the girls were forbidden to do and she would have loved to forbid me, too. One night my old college roommate had come up to see me so she spent the night. The housemother went flying to the superintendent the next morning and gasped, 'Miss Miller had a guest in her room--all night!' The superintendent, it was Mrs. Smith, told me she could hardly keep a straight face. How many of us who went to college in the 40's and 50's didn't have roommates, for heaven's sake?"

As the first recreation director, Mrs. Kessler was no pet of the housemothers. "It just killed them to accept suggestions from a kid," she says. Miss Harper was succeeded as superintendent by Pearle Anderson who took the post only on a temporary basis--she was at the Home School from January 17, 1951 to January 4, 1952. She was succeeded by Betty Smith, probably the most successful administrator since Mrs. Morse.

"For one thing," Mrs. Kessler points out, "Morse Hall had a family in it at last. Betty's husband worked for a furniture store in Sauk Centre and when they came their daughter, Molly, was about five and their son, Mike, around three. The kids had the run of the grounds and Molly was so smart that she could call almost every girl by name. Up to that point the only Home School 'kids' had been Frank Costello's, Rudy Lano's (a Home School electrician), and a few others. When they'd come out for a talent show or a fair it was really a big treat for the girls.

"I put my foot in it with the housemothers when I first came. It was fall and I encouraged one cottage to put on a Halloween party for another cottage. Not only was I breaking the creed of no contact between cottages, but I was actually planning to let them be on the grounds after dark, when they should be locked in their cottages! I went to a different cottage each evening for recreation. I set up a council with two girls from each cottage to advise, and they'd let me know in advance what their cottage wanted on their next turn. One time it might be crafts, the next gymnastics. At that time they could play records and dance on Saturday nights. I got that changed so I could teach not only ballroom dancing, but square dancing and interpretive dance. I got a swimming program started--Frank Costello, bless him, took heavy equipment down and created a beautiful beach on Sauk Lake, built a retaining wall, roped off an area. When I wanted to teach skiing, he was the one who rigged up floodlights behind Morse Hall so we could ski after dark.

"The Tonn twins (Ben DuBois' granddaughters) were lifeguards at the beach in town. I got them to come out and teach lifesaving--that really started volunteer helpers at the Home School. About that time

we got volunteers who would bring the girls in to the churches of various denominations for services.

"Little by little we could take the girls off the grounds for things. Freeman Parsons (then owner and operator of Sauk Centre's only theatre) used to put on a special Christmas matinee for the girls and wouldn't charge anything. 'Just call it a Christmas present,' he would say. The Coddens owned the Coliseum (a local ballroom and roller rink) and the girls loved it when we would reserve it and take them out there to rollerskate. And even though we were right on Sauk Lake, we began to take them out to Fairy Lake once in a while for a picnic and swimming; but we had to be sure they didn't have anything to do with anyone else at the lake."

Amy Boobar was a social worker at the Home School from 1951 to 1962. She had a bachelor's degree from Hamline University and had done graduate work at the University of Minnesota. She began her career with the Methodist Church Women's Home Missionary Society, as a deaconess with no pay. But she gained valuable experience on the Ponca Indian Reservation in Oklahoma.

"I had been working in child welfare on the county level," she says, "but was offered the Home School job on the basis of my previous work with Indians. In 1951 a quarter of the Home School girls were Indian.

"The policy then was to keep a baby born at the Home School with its mother until it could be placed for adoption. And breast-feeding was required whenever it was physically possible--baby formulas not being regarded then as a satisfactory substitute.

"There were many girls sent to the Home School who shouldn't have been. The pregnant ones, for example. They weren't promiscuous or troublemakers but if their families couldn't afford to put them in private homes for unwed mothers and they didn't want their schoolmates to know, the Home School was the only alternative. Another category of girls who shouldn't have been sent here were the seriously mentally ill. I'm still haunted by Estelle. She was a borderline schizophrenic and a wonderful, wonderful dancer. She used to like to dance alone--it was beautiful and somehow frightening at the same time. We had a consulting psychiatrist then. He used to come once a month for a long weekend. He'd see the girls with problems, then meet with their social workers and housemothers. He saw Estelle dancing one night and said, 'I'm supposed to be used to this, but it makes me shiver all the same.'"

"I was one of three psychiatric social workers--each of us had about fifty girls. Mrs. Smith said to me one day, 'Surprise! You're the guidance supervisor!' I already had all the Indian girls and the most difficult other cases. I often worked until midnight and sometimes to 4 a.m., as I had to type up my reports and read case histories at night and some of them were forty pages long. At one time

we had sixty girls in the reception center for study, diagnosis and short-term treatment."

Miss Boobar and Mrs. Kessler both recall that in the early '50's the most compassionate housemothers were those at Pioneer. The contrast was so marked that girls who had been sent temporarily to Pioneer would break a rule to get back.

Both women agree with Frank Costello that many social workers, especially idealistic young ones, don't see the students as they really are. "You got to keep in mind," says Frank, "that the kids have two faces. I don't mean hypocrisy, I mean that they're smart. They know what responses the social workers want and they give such responses just to make 'em happy. But working with them, weeding gardens or clipping shrubs, they'd relax and be themselves. There used to be a rule that the men employees were never to speak to the girls. Now, I ask you, how are you going to supervise someone's work without talking to her? I broke rules over the years when my judgment told me it was the sensible thing to do."

Mrs. Smith left the Home School March 11, 1958, to assume superintendency of Framingham Reformatory for Women in Massachusetts. Mrs. Kessler went with her as recreation director there. The school principal at that time, Roy Palm, was named acting superintendent. He was paid the superintendent's salary until June 9, 1961, but was not named superintendent. During the period he was acting superintendent, in 1959, the Home School was moved from the jurisdiction of the Welfare Department to that of the Corrections Department.

An expose of almost the entire post-World War II period at the Home School is offered by LaVonne Berg, principal:

"I came in time to see the really dramatic changes at the Home School. I started teaching here in 1949--the Youth Commission Act was passed in 1947. Mrs. Martin was the last of the'old style' superintendents and she was here for the first year I was.

"During that first year they were still dunking the girls in tubs of ice water as punishment, but they finally had quit shaving the runaways' heads, slashing their shoe soles so their tracks could be picked up when they ran, and forbidding them to talk to each other.

"I was always being scolded for trying to change things, or doing the wrong things because I didn't know they were forbidden. The psychology of fear may not leave outward marks but its scars are there! The silence at meals really bothered me--all that heavy crockery and flatware, and no voices. It's a wonder the girls didn't all get ulcers; it certainly was a stressful way to consume food.

"The first principal here was Irene Richard. When she came the girls were forbidden to wear lipstick. Miss Richard used lipstick as

an incentive to encourage good grooming. The girls had to wear those ugly brown stockings from October 1 to May 1--that was the rule and nobody bothered to change it. All the girls had Girl Scout oxfords which they were supposed to wear all the time. It wasn't until the early '60's that the state quit issuing shoes. When the needlework teacher retired no one was hired to take her place, although the girls still did plain sewing, cooking, baking, canning, and gardening.

"The girls had a fair each year. Each cottage submitted its best fresh and canned foods, baked goods and needlework. People from town came out for it and there'd be a carnival for the kids.

"Miss Richard's programs were designed to cut out some of the silly stuff (like so many squares a day of toilet paper per girl) and put staff efforts into projects involving the students. Every holiday, no matter how obscure, we had a program. We had to find ways to involve the girls who had three left feet as well as natural dancers who were eager for it. The school had a chorus and each girl received an individual singing lesson, a half-hour long, every week, and the chorus practiced weekly. We also had interpretive dance, for which the girls made their own costumes. Hank Kessler worked skating into the program as a form of dance.

"At Christmas we had a candlelight service, Christmas tree, and a series of tableaux. And we had both eighth grade and twelfth grade graduation ceremonies.

"I became principal in 1966. Then we started having some of the girls themselves speak at graduation instead of bringing in a speaker. The girls had a newspaper, too--censored, of course--and usually giving only first name and initial of surname to protect privacy.

"We have had some very talented students here. The daydreamer doesn't fit into a public school structure, either, but she still had a lot to give. Many of the girls were not criminals, just kids for whom there was no place, which could make a truant out of anybody. If you expect young people to function, they do--and now we have much better opportunities to offer them.

"Chaos broke loose out here in 1950, but it was as much staff-caused trouble as it was the girls. When Emerald Harper took over, all discipline was dropped. And nothing was put in its place. The girls would take pot lids and run them along window bars at Sullivan (Pioneer) while they sang 'Harbor Lights'. We could hear the clatter clear over at the Inn.

"Many of the students sent here during those years were guilty of offenses that were only offenses because of their ages--if they'd been older they wouldn't have been regarded as offenses. Some of those offenses today, handled on the community level, don't carry any legal punishment until the second offense. It's a sad commentary on society

that some girls got satisfaction for their basic human needs here that were denied elsewhere.

"The youngest girl we had here since I came was eight--she had her ninth birthday while she was in the reception center. She and her little brother used to sneak into the houses of people whose obituary the girl had read in the newspaper. When the household was at the funeral she and her brother would break in and make off with money, jewelry, small clocks and radios--anything they could carry and sell. At the opposite end was a girl named Milly, tall and muscular, who was convicted of manslaughter. My roommate, Connie Engelstad, was the only staff member who could handle her.

"Connie taught dance, at which Milly was fantastic. We had interpretive dance--ballroom, ballet, modern. LeRoy Anderson was at the peak of his popularity then and his Typewriter Song' and 'Waltzing Cat' lent themselves wonderfully to this. The school offered the greatest opportunity for the girls to function and to learn."

The story of the Home School is really the story of its students, and one whom former art teacher Fran Bokinski recalls was a girl named Pat.

"She was older, one of the girls the staff termed 'hardened', recalled Fran, who was on the staff from September, 1959 to 1964. "She came into my class with a big chip on her shoulder--a 'you-think-you're-going-to-get-me-interested-in-something-here-but-you're wrong' attitude. Before very long she was reading everything about Gaugin she could get her hands on, looking for reproductions of his paintings in books and magazines, and had me obtain oil paints for her. She had a great deal of talent but was a very unhappy girl.

"She made my wedding cake--tier upon tier with tiny purple flowers to decorate it. 'Since I can't come to the wedding, I want to do something,' she said. Her housemother accused me of 'babying' her but she was a girl whose moods were either extremely high or extremely low. She got violently angry at another girl, broke a pop bottle and slashed the girl's face with it, and was sent to Shakopee. She'd been warned before that she probably would be sent to Shakopee if she got one more black mark on her record. It was almost as though she wanted to be sent there. She had been in and out of the Home School for years. She wrote to me from Shakopee..."

Mrs. Bokinski continued: "When I started at the Home School, Mr. Borgerding was the principal. He told me one reason I was hired was that I am an Indian and he hoped that some of the Indian girls who hadn't been reached by other staff people might open up to me. I think some of them did. I remember, though, how my roommate razzed me when I was supposed to teach the girls Indian beadwork and didn't know how to do it myself. I had to get a book to learn the fundamentals.

"It was heartbreaking to see some of the girls. Girls who had been sent to the Home School because they were prostitutes would be coloring with crayons in coloring books.

"The girls who had been at the Home School the longest were the ones with the greatest influence. To get any of the kids to participate you had to interest those girls first. We spent most of my first school year there making marionettes and we put on Alice In Wonderland with them in the spring. In the morning we had regular school. In the afternoon I'd have seventh and eighth grade through post-high school and vocational students, thirty at a time in a tiny classroom.

"Summers I was a lifeguard, went with the girls on overnight campouts, and taught arts and crafts, and swimming. Some of the girls were really talented in arts and crafts but we had so little money for supplies. I remember one girl who started out making miniature papier-mache figures and gradually worked up to huge figures. I bought her chicken wire for armature.

"The kids also sculpted plaster of paris over chicken wire. The drawback to pottery in my advanced art class was that the student was limited by the size of our small kiln. One girl had spent a lot of time making a clay figure but she hadn't worked all the air bubbles out and when she put it in the kiln it exploded. It didn't discourage her, though--she set right to work to make another one.

"At that time the Home School had a policy that no pregnant woman could continue work once her pregnancy began to show. So I had to quit quite a while before our first baby was born. The teacher they hired to replace me had a music minor so she was teaching music along with art. We lost our baby and the new teacher had to quit before the school year was over because of her pregnancy, so I went back to my old job. The problem was that now I had to teach music and I didn't know the first thing about it.

"I managed to get through the three remaining months of that school year, music and all--I was taking piano from Sister Joy at St. Paul's in town so I could teach something! Sometimes one of the other teachers who could play the piano would come to our music class and get me off the hook. One thing we did was have the kids do chalk drawings to music--they loved Copland's Billy The Kid and did some terrific drawings to it. One girl, I remember, used really violent oranges and magentas.

"Before I was married I lived at the Inn, which meant being called out to chase the girls who ran. The school wasn't accredited then so the girls had to take state board exams each spring. The first page was a form to be filled in. I can remember girls who were puzzled as to what to put down in the form. 'Father!' they'd say; 'Should I put down my father when I was born or the one who's living with my mother now or the one who was living with my mother when I was sent here?'

"A lot of the girls were there for truancy--it depended on the judge. They had had personality problems with someone at their school, which caused the truancy in the first place. It was amazing how many of them did 'A' work at the Home School--and they were as surprised as the teachers were. I taught English, my minor, as well as art and music.

"Since I moved from Sauk Centre I've taught in a public school, but if I go back to teaching in the future I'd really prefer a good juvenile institution to a mediocre public school. I know Mr. Hartford (who became superintendent in 1961) had no idea of the evenings we put in with the girls as well as our eight to five school day, and sometimes thought we weren't pulling our share of the load, but Mr. Borgerding always went to bat for us. You don't find public school principals doing that--they're under so much pressure from the parents."

CHAPTER IV

A NEW ERA IN TREATMENT

Robert J. Hartford, the first man superintendent of the school, took office on July 20, 1961. (His predecessor, Roy Palm, was acting superintendent from Mrs. Smith's departure in mid-July of 1958. While he was paid a superintendent's salary he was never appointed superintendent.)

Hartford was an advocate of open institutions. He was quoted in the Minneapolis Sunday Tribune ten days after he began his duties as saying, "These young girls all will be going back to open areas. It makes no sense to lock them up one day, then turn them loose in places like Minneapolis and St. Paul. Minnesota is well ahead of those states which still are satisfied with just a custodial type of arrangment. The behind-the-bars institutions tend to make juvenile delinquents grow up to adult offenders. These kids need a break. They need an opportunity to live in a good 'accepting' kind of environment with healthy outlets for physical and emotional energies. They need to receive treatment in order to gain insight into why they act the way they act, in the hope that they can change their behavior patterns."

At that time 217 girls were occupying the 11 cottages meant to hold 200 at the most. The single biggest problem bringing them to the institution was running away because of home and school pressures. Other common offenses were sexual delinquency, shoplifting, car theft, drunkenness and forgery. And most of the girls spent from six months to two years at the Home School.

Rehabilitation available at the Home School included junior and senior classes, medical and social work aid, recreation and religious programs. At that point only three of the nineteen members of the professional staff at the school were men--a situation Hartford was to change. He pointed out that many of the girls' problems centered on their relationship with their fathers or with men in general, and that having men on the staff in addition to himself, the school principal and one teacher would help give the girls a "mature and realistic outlook towards men".

Hartford had been superintendent less than seven months when Hennepin County Juvenile Judge Lindsay Arthur visited the Home School and horrified the entire state by his report in the Minneapolis papers of what he saw.

"If I hadn't gotten out of there when I did, I would have been sick," said Judge Arthur to a Minneapolis Tribune reporter, adding that the training facilities at the Home School were so poor that he would think twice before sending a girl there. "The girls are being taught to sew on four antique treadle-type machines," he said, "the kind that were obsolete years ago."

He stated that a class in cosmetology consisted of the girls washing each others' hair, that there were only two TV sets for all the girls, that the girls couldn't even ice skate because there weren't funds to buy skates. In the Minneapolis Star of February 14, 1962, Judge Arthur was quoted as saying the Home School "is a dead-end street" for girls and young women in trouble with the law. "It's more of a lock-up than a training school," he said, "there are 10 classrooms--not much for 130 girls. The only way you could tell which was the science room was by the sink. And you can't teach science with a sink."

A week later Hartford, in a Minneapolis Tribune article, frankly admitted the school was doing a poor job of rehabilitating delinquent girls. He pointed out the "woeful lack" of trained staff that could make the school more than just a lock-up, that there was very little active therapy, that while the academic education was good the classes were too big and vocational training was "really weak". At that time the school had forty-six housemothers, eight teachers, two part-time religious counselors, one nurse, one part-time doctor, one part-time psychologist, and four social workers. Funds to engage a psychiatrist as counselor a day or two a month were available, but there was no psychiatrist. Neither were there any group therapy sessions. Each social worker had a caseload of about seventy girls, which meant an average of fifteen minutes a week with each girl. The buildings ranged in age from thirty-five to fifty years. And Hartford pointed out that Judge Arthur was wrong, in part, about the sewing machines--the school owned six modern electric ones at that time and had ten more on order.

State Commissioner of Corrections Will Turnbladh had also risen to Hartford's defense in the columns of the Minneapolis newspapers, calling Hartford "one of the country's outstanding people in his field. Given some budgetary support this man will take the program a long way. And he's had to cope with the budgetary problems stemming from the school's being without a superintendent for nearly four years."

Jay Edgerton of the Minneapolis Star editorial page staff on February 15, 1962, wrote an article in which he questioned whether the Home School should be put to a different use. He quoted Turnbladh as saying that only thirteen cents of every dollar spent at the Home School went for treatment--the rest used in a strictly "cold storage" operation; that more treatment officers, psychologists,psychiatric social workers and a part-time psychiatrist were needed; that at least $50,000 more a year would be needed to give the school an effective rehabilitation program.

"I think that in the long view the state may have to find other uses for the Sauk Centre institution and relocate the girls' school closer to the Twin Cities," Turnbladh said. He pointed out that even with the additional $50,000 appropriation there would be a problem in attracting a professional staff, as professionals in correction and rehabilitation work want to live closer to a metropolitan center than Sauk Centre and to draw on the resources of the University of Minnesota

and other Twin Cities facilities.

He pointed out that Sauk Centre housed "the real problem girls" of the state, ranging in age from fourteen to nineteen, many seriously mentally disturbed, many in the school because of sex escapades, many unwed mothers.

In a February 22, 1962, interview in the Sauk Centre Herald, Hartford pointed out that "the hard work, loyalty and devotion of the existing Home School staff would be hard to match. The staff does a good job. Few jobs are more demanding than those in an institution serving youths with severe behavior and psychological problems.

"The Home School is not doing a good job," he added, "not the kind of job we all want to see done, but it is not doing an entirely bad job, either. This is a good institution; it has the potential to be a great institution. With conviction and support this goal is reachable." He said that changes in the program were occurring at the time--new approaches to discipline, introduction of regular volunteers, and the gradual development of in-service training for the staff.

Among the staff members most responsible for bringing improvements to the Home School was Adele Schoofs, the only full-time school nurse from May, 1953 to August, 1973. Miss Schoofs responded with this:

"There were no records to speak of and no system dealing with the girls' health before I was appointed. The only policies were those that affected the institution as a whole. I worked all the time with Jude (Dr. Julian F. DuBois, Jr.) which was a great pleasure--I knew I could call him any time of the day or night and he'd never act as though I were imposing on him."

"I made up a form for a complete medical history when each girl came. If they had handicaps like epilepsy or diabetes we knew it from the start. I did my best to treat each girl as an individual.

"The girls, when they came, were generally in good health. I was surprised, as I expected to see rickets or other evidence of malnutrition. And the regular routine and meals at the Home School kept their health up.

"I was there eight hours a day. Every Tuesday Jude came out and saw all the new students who had been admitted since the previous Tuesday. He gave each a physical examination and we tested for VD, did mantoux for tuberculosis. I kept records of every visit, whether it was due to a headache or a sliver. Some Tuesdays he'd see twenty to thirty girls.

"Mrs. Smith was superintendent when I started here. I had been an industrial nurse in a Milwaukee plant of 1200 before coming here, and set up my records system here as the plant ones were.

"The school was still under the auspices of the Welfare rather than the Corrections Department when I started. When the change was made, though, it didn't touch my work or responsibilities.

"At one time we had a lot of eighteen and nineteen-year-olds, more sophisticated in crime and with more emotional problems. Frank Costello was invaluable--he was the only father figure many of those girls ever had. He and I both believed in being 'gentle but firm'.

"When the Home School had intake (before Lino Lakes was used to sort students out), what is now Lewis Hall and used to be Higby Hall was the reception center. My office was there, as was the dentist's. The infirmary was there and the pregnant girls were moved into it a month of so before their delivery date. It had a security room for the emotionally disturbed.

"Once when I started to take a routine blood sample the girl, who was new, said, 'If you touch me with that needle I'll slug you'. I just picked up the phone as though I were calling in reinforcements and she backed down. Two or three weeks later she came to me to apologize saying she realized I was doing it for her own good 'like my mother would'.

"I never lived on the grounds, although Mrs. Smith wanted me to. I think it was better for me as a nurse and as a person to leave the grounds at the end of the working day. It helped keep things in perspective.

"The babies? The girls who had babies were required to see them once, just so they knew whether or not the baby was healthy and okay. They were treated at St. Michael's Hospital just like any other maternity patient. If they required specialized care they were referred to the University Hospitals or wherever they could best be treated. Jude did the referring, of course. Other hospitalizations usually were due to tonsil and appendix operations and fractures. Once they were released from the hospital they were brought to the infirmary at the Home School. They had twenty-four hour supervision there; when my work day ended a competent housemother stayed at the infirmary. After Kenneth Schoen became superintendent a nurse was hired for my duties when I was on vacation or at meetings.

"In over twenty years I only had to deliver one baby. I delivered it, took baby and mother to the hospital, and thank God, the first person I saw at the hospital was Dr. DuBois!

"There were times when there were 250 or 260 girls at the school; now it never gets above 150. The infirmary would hold twenty, but

girls were there for health or security reasons, never for lack of space. When we had the reception center, which was later moved to Lino Lakes, girls would be kept in Higby for two weeks.

"The average age had gone down dramatically, too. It used to be sixteen to eighteen-year olds.

"The pregnant girls were checked monthly and got the same kind of care Jude gave his private patients. If a girl had high blood pressure or a similar problem she would go into the hospital for examination on a routine basis as soon as possible after admission to the Home School.

"The presiding judge would send written surgical permission signed by parents or guardians--so in an emergency we could get the parents' verbal agreement for specific surgery on the phone and have them send the written statement. I always sweated that out, though, and I carried heavy malpractice insurance! But a responsible person doesn't let surgery be delayed for a girl with a ruptured appendix just because a certain piece of paper hasn't come in the mail."

On March 10, 1962, Charles Withers reported in the Rochester Post-Bulletin that eight Rochester residents--educators, juvenile officers, welfare department workers and newsmen--had toured the Home School and come up with the unanimous question, "What's all the shouting about?" He said they found the Home School pleasant, neat and clean, with good food, well-lighted classrooms, discipline strict without being harsh, and more than adequate recreational opportunities. "It was simply incomprehensible to us what could possibly have made the judge (Arthur) 'sick'," Wither said. He did add, however, that there is undeniably a staffing problem at the school with the caseload too high.

Volunteer workers helped alleviate the staff shortage, and no volunteer was more dedicated to the Home School effort during the period than Fern Groethe of Long Prairie, Minnesota.

"I had always thought I'd like to be a social worker," Fern says. "I had thought I'd prefer working with boys, but the Home School was close to Long Prairie and I didn't have a degree. Now I think I'd choose to work with the girls--in many areas they are much more vulnerable than boys.

"I'd work with five of the most withdrawn girls at a time--an uneven number is better so they don't pair off and ignore you. I met with them once a week during the school year for six years.

"They didn't have any of the cute things for their rooms that girls that age crave so I helped them make fuzzy wastebaskets, yarn animals, and lipstick blotters to brighten their rooms. I always brought snacks along--some took their shares back to the cottage to give to friends--some gave the crafts they made to friends and rela-

tives. All of this was done at first at the Home School where I worked through the recreation department--usually in the daytime but sometimes at night.

"The way the girls came out of their shells was remarkable--it must have been anticipating the sensitivity group therapy. The most withdrawn girl of all became the most outgoing; the shyest became the clown of the group.

"This type of volunteer work was breaking new ground but the administration was wonderful in going along with my ideas. We never met in a cottage--always in the rec room or the canteen."

In late March of 1962 the legislative advisory committee approved hiring a psychologist and three social workers for the Home School, which Hartford said would "in effect double the present social staff". In May, Hartford summed up the plant priorities as (1) fire-resistant buildings in which to house our wards; (2) adequate space and facilities for a truly effective rehabilitation program; (3) construction indirectly related to the program (staff housing).

On July 28 Turnbladh asked the legislative building committee for two new cottages, remodeling of the administration building, construction of a central warehouse and shop building for a total cost of $463,500. Hartford had noted in May that the last construction at the Home School was the addition of the gym in 1941, a Federal Public Works program.

In January of 1963 Sam Newlund reported in the Minneapolis Tribune that rules governing visits and disciplinary segregation at the Home School had been relaxed. The girls had been allowed only one visit a month from relatives and could leave the school for home visits only a few times a year. The new policy set no limits on relatives' visits and permitted a home visit every two months. Also a new maximum of five days for confinement in Pioneer Cottage was set, with the expectation that it would be more likely to be two or three days. Prior to the rule change the confinement period varied from a day or two to several weeks.

Hartford credited Dr. Gisela Konopka, professor of social work at the University of Minnesota who had been evaluating the Home School rules, with suggesting these changes. A January 21, 1963, story in the Minneapolis Star on Dr. Konopka pointed out that, since Judge Arthur's comments a year earlier, many improvements had been made at the school. Dr. Konopka had spent two days a week at the school since September, using group sessions to get at the girls' problems. She pointed out that "Get-tough-throw-away-the-key" approaches are costly to the taxpayers. While some individuals must be locked up for life, the sound corrections approach aimed at not only protecting society but retrieving all those who have even a humble contribution to make to the human family.

Dr. Konopka also pointed out that most of the girls, before reaching the Home School, had received physical treatment far more brutal than any institutions administer. If harsh physical treatment were the answer to the girls' problems, they never would have tangled with the law. On January 22, the second in a series of three articles in the Star pointed out that Home School girls were keenly conscious of race and racial discrimination, that many were Indian and even more were black. The next day, in the third article, Dr. Konopka praised Hartford and staff for what they were doing and pointed out what still was needed--more books in the library, general overhaul of the educational system, an end to the rule that the girls could not associate with other former Home School girls after release (since those girls might be their only friends).

In April of 1963 Newlund reported in the Minneapolis Tribune that the Department of Corrections was investigating rumors of homosexual activities at the Home School involving girls and, allegedly, three staff members. Deputy Commissioner Joseph Rowan said, however, that the staff members named in the statements made by residents and former residents had resigned before the statements were made and not, he was sure, for any reason related to homosexuality. Hartford told Newlund that homosexuality is a problem in all training schools and that housemothers had been instructed to be alert. Hartford told an investigating subcommittee that a full-time psychiatrist and a couple more psychologists would help solve the sex problems at the school and that the homosexuality problem had been exaggerated.

"Homosexual exaggeration results from a common girls' school phenomenon in which pairs of girls 'go with' each other," he said. "This is a kind of ritual pairing off practiced by perhaps half of the 215 girls in the institution. But being paired off is more often a status symbol than a matter of sex deviation."

The Home School was still being closely watched, however. Anoka County Board members were reluctant to send girls to the Home School. They cited the high incidence of runaways, the $6 per girl per year allowed for school materials, and the fact that a ten-year-old girl had been confined there for stealing candy bars after her divorced mother had left her at home alone without food.

During the two years remaining before his resignation in 1965, Hartford was able to point to a number of improvements. A psychiatric consultant was hired to be at the school four half-days a month; drama, chorus and world geography were added to the curriculum; cosmetology was accredited; a school paper was started; the electric lock system, which would open all doors simultaneously in the event of fire, was installed; an electric sewing machine was placed in each cottage along with those in the school; four new positions were filled --psychologist, social work supervisor and two caseworkers; Tekakwitha Cottage was built and named in a contest among the girls; Home School girls worked as trainees in caring for retarded children at the

Brainerd State School and Hospital; solitary confinement was down to one-seventh of its previous length; a club of former Northwest Airlines stewardesses "adopted" a cottage which they visited monthly; return of probation and parole violators and number of runaways sharply decreased; a fifteen-member committee of Sauk Centre citizens was formed to aid the Home School in its contacts with the community, the legislature and the state; and length of stay was reduced to an average of nine months.

Hartford continued to ask the legislature for more staff and facilities, but was no longer in Minnesota when some of those requests were granted. He resigned on June 11, 1965, to join the Allegheny Mental Health Clinic in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

He was succeeded by Kenneth F. Schoen, who would go on to become Minnesota's top corrections officer.

CHAPTER V

KICKING SACRED COWS

Although he was only thirty-two years old (the news media's favorite appellation was "boyish towhead"), Ken Schoen was already a veteran of corrections administration. At age twenty-seven he became head of the Youth Vocational Center in Rochester, Minnesota.

"Our idea right from the start was that help, not punishment, should be the goal of the Home School," said Schoen.

As he told the Minneapolis Tribune:

"There's a great difference between discipline and punishment. We want to discipline as good parents discipline their children. We're interested in developing the individual. We want our charges to become self-respecting young ladies. So really the essence of our program is the staff who works with girls. I want to give special attention to good staff training and morale because this will reflect in their work with the girls."

Schoen reflects on his Home School experience as follows:

"There were very few men on the staff when I went to the Home School. 'Call the men' meant call the maintenance men. And I was displeased to find so many of the school and social work staff members living on the grounds--in sleeping rooms or apartments in the Inn. They weren't doing it for the kids' benefit, but for their own convenience. It's healthier for kids and staff for the staff to get off that tight little island in their free time. Adults who live in a Home School cocoon aren't going to be much help to kids who need preparation for the outside world as their time to leave approaches."

On September 22, 1965, in a Minneapolis Tribune story, Schoen was described by a fellow corrections official as a man who "will probably kick a few sacred cows in the hind quarters." Schoen planned to spruce up the place--the classroom building had already been painted, and the gray stucco cottages were awaiting the paint brush. Overgrown shrubbery would be removed.

Schoen also planned to dilute the traditional preoccupation with housekeeping chores and give the girls more interesting things to do.

The Minneapolis Star was also quick to recognize the innovative aspects of Schoen's leadership. In September 23, 1965, editorial headed, "New Chapter for Sauk Centre", the Star said: "Schoen's influence on policies, procedures and atmosphere at Sauk Centre have been felt already in his few months there. His wife,though not officially on the staff, is an added asset, because of her experience in parole and state hospital work." The Star thought that all in all, "things seem to be looking up in this branch of the state corrections

program."

Another tradition that ended with Schoen was the use of Morse Hall as the superintendent's home. The housing of correctional institution heads in mansions was a tradition which began generations before when wardens and superintendents were baronial figures of considerable political importance. They lived in a manner to which they and their legislative supporters thought they were entitled.

Oldtimers recalled a colorful picture of life centering around the building in Fannie Morse's days. In a Minneapolis Tribune story, Ed Brecken recalled a "dandy team of horses hitched to a surrey with the fringe on top". The horses would prance up the semicircular entranceway to pick up Mrs. Morse and deliver her to her appointed tasks.

The Tribune continued: "Not far from the main building was a small wooden sentry shack. It was here that anybody entering the grounds had to pass, and if any young whippersnappers had something in mind besides rehabilitation of delinquent girls, they were shown the way back to town."

When tin-lizzie taxicabs replaced horsedrawn vehicles, the cabbies worked out a night-time signal with the man in the shack. A certain blink of lights meant the visit was legitimate, recalled Frank Costello, and the taxi would be allowed to pass.

But the Schoens frankly disliked living in the fifteen-room mansion. Connie referred to it affectionately as "Southern Gothic hodge-podge". Ken told about having to carry a diaper pail from his son's second-floor bedroom on the north end of the house to the basement laundry room farther south. His assessment: "An ugly chore".

A benchmark event in the history of the Home School occurred on June 1, 1966, when, for the first time in the fifty-five year history of the school, boys as well as girls were admitted to the Sauk Centre institution. By October, the 150 inmates of the Sauk Centre Home School included 18 boys, ranging in age from twelve to fifteen (the girls were aged twelve to twenty).

While the idea of mixing boys and girls in a correctional institution raised a few eyebrows, Schoen was reporting that the "boy-girl problem has been minimal". And actually, there was nothing new about the practice. In fact, the Sauk Centre Home was an outgrowth of a male-female institution that had become overcrowded back in 1911. It was in those days that the State Training School at Red Wing had both boys and girls.

The Minnesota clubwomen of the late 19th and early 20th century, who worked so long and so hard to get the girls into a school of their own, would have been stunned by the new coeducational status of the Home School.

Schoen and his superiors contended that the mixing provided a more normal situation. Their argument was that you don't help people adjust to a normal, two-sex society by putting them in an abnormal, one-sex institution. Then Minnesota Corrections Commissioner Paul Keve, in a Minneapolis Tribune article of January 27, 1967, said, "At Sauk Centre the youngsters are at an age where they are just becoming aware of the opposite sex and it is kind of swimming against the stream when we separate them at that point." He added that he had visited many of the fourteen or fifteen public juvenile training schools in the country with both boys and girls and found that "superintendents were unanimous in their enthusiasm."

One cottage was set aside for the boys, but classes and social events were coeducational. One benefit of the practice was a reduction in homosexuality among the girls. Such activity, of course, may have meant no more than hand-holding, exchanging notes or close identification between two girls. Said Schoen:

"Lesbianism is an area of behavior where many points of view are held and hotly debated by the staff. Certainly a lot of behavior was interpreted as lesbianism which wasn't that at all--all kids crave a best friend and it certainly doesn't imply a sexual pair bond. However, we did do a study in which we followed up the sexual behavior of girls after they left the Home School. And we found that, of those who had been heterosexual before they came to the Home School and were homosexual while they were at MHS, more remained lesbians than returned to heterosexual behavior after they were released. This certainly indicates that it was at the Home School that they were initiated into lesbianism."

As Schoen completed his first year as superintendent of the Sauk Centre institution, he could point to some twenty changes that had been made in the way things were done. He was planning a half-dozen more.

When he arrived, for example, he discovered that the commissary was issuing surprising amounts of paraffin. He was told it was for canning.

"But we don't do any canning here," he said.

He found that the girls were being requested to polish the floors in the cottages by rubbing them with cakes of paraffin and scrub brushes.

"Some cottages even had a rule that a certain number of strokes was required on a board," he said. Schoen said he tried to stop the practice but that some of the staff bought paraffin in town. He finally solved the problem by purchasing commercial buffers.

"Another thing we stopped was the bounty," Schoen says. "Unbe-

lievable as it sounds now, a five dollar bounty used to be paid to anyone in the community who called in with information leading to the capture of girls who ran. Once a guy called in a description of a car in which two runaways were believed to have made off. The car was stopped and found to hold only two perfectly innocent teachers from another town. The bounty hunter was indignant that he didn't get his money just the same.

"The dress code was another innovation. We collected copies of dress codes from public schools all over the state and made ours comparable. When I first went to the school the girls couldn't wear shorts or slacks under any circumstances or two-piece bathing suits or Halloween masks."

Schoen also could look with satisfaction upon a lower return rate. The largest reduction was accomplished under Superintendent Hartford, when it went from 60 percent return down to 35 percent. During the first year under Schoen, the rate dropped to 30 percent. "The place is running more smoothly and the runaway rate is down," Schoen told Minneapolis Star reporter Maurice Hobbs.

Horses for the students were due to arrive soon, and Schoen asked the State Legislative Building Commission to provide central cooking (meals were cooked in each cottage at the time).

Schoen also announced the following relaxation of rules:

1. Girls, except some of those in the locked security cottage, no longer were locked in at night.

2. At fifteen, students were allowed to smoke if their parents approved, and at eighteen, smoking was their own choice.

3. Visiting regulations were loosened.

4. Social workers were moved from the Administration Building to the cottages. Seventeen counselors who had been living on grounds were moved off the grounds after working hours.

5. Addition of male counselors meant maintenance men no longer had to be called to handle violent girls. (Schoen recalled an incident in which one of the girls had gone swimming and refused to come out. Those in charge decided that since this was a problem involving water, the school plumber should be called).

6. Male counselors also gave the girls a strong male figure to relate to (among delinquent youngsters, it has been found that the father was a weak personality). Also

having men around led to the girls losing weight and improving their personal appearance.

7. A fourth vocational subject, cooking, was added to the training already offered: cosmetology, business and nurse's aide work.

Schoen sums up some of the achievements during his administration as follows:

"Among the changes made while I was superintendent was improving the three R's at the school, strengthening the art program there, and adding driver's training. And we got most of the jobs still being done, at a terrific waste of time and money in each cottage, shifted into a central program. The central kitchen wasn't built until after I left, but it was being installed. And the baking, laundry, etc., that had been done in the cottages were done in one place for all the cottages."

In October of 1966, the Home School acquired riding horses, an idea Schoen came up with after he saw the empty barn and stable that had been used years ago when students farmed the school's 265 acres. He asked an organization of former Northwest Orient Airlines stewardesses to finance the idea. From the proceeds of the group's charity ball in April, 1966, seven horses and equipment were purchased. An eighth horse was donated by a family. When one of the horses dropped a colt, the students named it "Schoeny".

"Some people were, and still are, bothered about the kids having things like the riding horses," Schoen said. "What they don't understand is that the horses--riding them, caring for them--help the kids develop a necessary sense of self-esteem as well as a sense of responsibility. The horses were never intended to be goodies for the sake of goodies."

In 1967, the legislature formally changed the name of the Home School for Girls to the "Minnesota Home School".

Then Minnesota Corrections Commissioner Paul W. Keve was telling the press that he was "very enthusiastic" about the integration of male and female delinquents. Fear of pregnancies was almost totally unfounded, he told the Minneapolis Tribune. "Pregnancies are things that happen in public high schools, not in these training schools," he said.

For the boys' part, it was noted that since being admitted to the coeducational institution, they were engaging in "less cussing" and were "sprucing up a little more". Their table manners had also improved because of contact with the opposite sex.

The Minnesota legislature also appropriated in 1967 the largest

amount of money for new buildings in the history of the institution; $482,000. This money would be used to construct a Central Services Food Preparation and Storage Building; one two-unit cottage; to remodel and improve the school building and greenhouse; and to install water softeners in the entire institution.

Likewise, the Sauk Centre Herald reported on June 22, 1967, the operating budget was brought to an alltime high of $1,984,869 for the 1967-68 biennium. Included was the addition of eight new positions--five on the cottage staff, two teachers and one clerical person.

The year 1967 also saw the beginning of one of the most popular community events; the annual Home School Smelt Fry.

By February of 1968, a new volunteer, or community-interest program, was underway. Purpose was to interest residents of Sauk Centre and surrounding communities in performing volunteer work at the school. The ultimate goal was to have area groups adopt each ofthe eight cottages.

The job of first coordinator of volunteer activities at the Home School fell to Connie Schoen.

"This was my job at the Rochester State Hospital, before we came to Sauk Centre," Mrs. Schoen said. "To get started at MHS I got myself invited to meetings of every possible organization--church groups, homemakers' clubs, professional clubs--to tell them about the Home School and what volunteers could contribute there.

"I never took a group for a tour of the Home School that at least one person wouldn't say, 'But that girl is such a sweet little thing! She couldn't have done anything very bad!'"

Ken Schoen points to another area that has been strengthened: the link between the school and the community. "The Sauk Centre Citizens' Committee has certainly done a lot to acquaint the people of the community with what the Home School is really like. Even more had been accomplished, I think, in the policy of hiring more Sauk Centre people at the Home School--full time as cottage counselors and part-time posts suited to women who couldn't, or didn't want to,work full time because of family responsibilities."

Further insight into the Schoen philosophy was provided when he told the Mrs. Jaycees at an all-state meeting in Rochester: "Juvenile delinquency should produce in us the same lack of vindictiveness with which we view the mentally retarded or mentally ill."

On September 1, 1969, the Schoen administration ended when he resigned to become director of a new rehabilitation program at Rochester for young adult offenders. The new program was called PORT (Probational Offenders-Rehabilitation and Training), and provided

for offenders to be housed at the corrections building and hold regular jobs during the day.

Schoen's departure from MHS in 1969 launched the four-year administration of Pat Mack, who was advanced to Home School Superintendent. Mack had served for the preceding three years as group living supervisor.

CHAPTER VI

BEYOND MERE HUMANITY

Pat Mack's term as superintendent was as marked by change as that of Schoen, and he was equally dedicated to treatment rather than punishment.

"We were trying to get beyond simply being humane and putting some actual treatment in the kids' lives. This was the beginning of group therapy," Mack said. "I think the change I got the most satisfaction out of, though, was closing the security cottage completely (the security cottage was put back in after he left). Stowe Cottage became a place for the kids who were ready to be released, but were reluctant to go home. It was actually a pre-release cottage where the kids started to make the adjustments that would be necessary when they went back outside."

In November of 1970, Home School buildings that were not named for people were given new names. Minnesota Cottage became "Richard Cottage" for former Home School principal Irene Richard. Pioneer Cottage was renamed for Annie Sullivan, who taught Helen Keller. Villa Cottage was now Evers Cottage in honor of NAACP worker Medge Evers, who gave his life in pursuit of racial equality. Non-cottage buildings were also named for people. The new food service building was named for Senator Popp, chairman of the Legislative Building Commission in 1967. It was under his leadership that funds were appropriated to construct the building.

A new cottage was named for Dr. Julian DuBois, the first of the three Home School doctors of that name, who had suggested to Governor John A. Johnson that the school for girls be located at Sauk Centre.

Religious needs of the Home School students had always been provided through individual, denominational services. In 1971 a new era of ecumenism emerged as interdenominational services were introduced and students of all faiths were invited to social activities following the services.

Pat Mack recalls: "There were weird things being done at the Home School, often because they'd made sense when the culture there was agrarian and had never been taken off the books. The girls used to march down, night and morning, with their toothbrushes to the housemother who would put a dab of toothpaste on each brush. The girls weren't permitted to have their own tubes of toothpaste because, at one time, some of them ate it. You'd think the staff would have had sense enough to realize that if a girl was eating toothpaste her system obviously craved something that the diet wasn't providing, but they didn't. Some housemothers also had complained that if the girls had toothpaste they would use it to stick pictures on their walls.

"The rule against having ginger in the cottage kitchens was based on the concern that a fermented drink would be made out of it. (No pure extracts were allowed for the same reason). One housemother used to sneak ginger in when she was going to bake pumpkin pies--she couldn't see any sense in making pies that wouldn't taste good.

"That epitomizes the attitude of the staff when I was there. They wanted to do the right thing for the kids but when the rule didn't make any sense they'd do the thing that seemed right to them."

Also in 1971, Superintendent Mack was noting an increase in the mumber of middle class girls sent to juvenile homes.

"Historically, girls sent to institutions were generally poor and pregnant--in that order," Mack told Linda Kohl of the St. Paul Dispatch. "We're finding now that more kids are being sent for other reasons, not so much for pregnancy. Kids are dropping out and getting involved in communal-type living and drugs, and get sent to homes through that route..."

Mack said people today are tolerant of illegitimate births. Girls no longer are sent to homes for unwed mothers as a means of paying the hospital bill, with the child automatically being placed for adoption.

He cautioned, however, that a double standard still applies. When a boy steals a car, his punishment is often moderated with the attitude that "Boys will be boys." But when a girl is promiscuous, people don't say, "Girls will be girls." She is often given an uncomplimentary label, and she may get kicked out of the family because "We don't have that kind of daughter." The main thrust of a girl's treatment, in Mack's opinion, "is to give the girl a feeling of self-worth."

In September of 1971, the Home School was granted federal funds for development of pre-school nursery programs, which provided vocational training for eligible MHS students. Pre-school children were to participate in twelve-week units held two hours a day, three days a week.

"We were very proud of the nursery school program, which was wonderful training for the girls as well as providing a real service to the community," Mack said.

Soon after the first of the year, the Minnesota Home School began using the Boy Scout program as a treatment approach among the boys in DuBois Cottage. The purpose was to help change a boy's behavior so that he would be able to function adequately in the community.

A perspective of Home School life during this period was painted in a magazine article by Thomas Orrin Bentz that was distributed as

a reprint in 1972. As he approached the school, Bentz said, "no walls, no gates stopped me. Two students walking across the campus said 'Hi'. A boy and a girl batted a volley ball. The only fenced-in inhabitants were twenty-one riding horses."

He contrasted the current lifestyle with the austere rules that were in force when Frank Costello joined the staff in 1929:

"Men weren't allowed to talk to the girls. I had a woman report me for saying good morning to two girls while I was firing the boiler in one of the cottages. The girls worked the fields, then were marched down to the basement for showers. They milked cows, made cheese and sauerkraut, butchered meat, pumped water and pulled ice out of our lake. If a girl talked foul, they put her in a tub and dunked her. If she ran away, they cut her hair."

Bentz continues, "When the boys arrived five years ago, they were still counting toilet paper and locking all kids in their rooms. There were routine assaults on staff by kids trying to get out. Then one cottage was unlocked. Now only Sullivan Cottage, housing for short periods the few students who need intensive personal care, remains locked."

Writer Bentz personally experienced a taste of such bygone rigors by spending a night in a Sullivan Cottage room that was no longer in use. He described the sensation:

"My room that night had a bed, a light bulb and enough floor space to lay out my clothes. The door closed from the outside. The peephole slid shut, and the bulb went out. The same bare bulb brought morning at 6 a.m. Not even the breakfast I had to eat in bed appeased my hunger for the freedom of a front porch or even an open hallway. The few rooms like this, found only in Sullivan, are never-used reminders of the past. All student rooms have desks, chairs, lamps, drapes and closets."

Evers Cottage, for example, "is another world".

"A typical thirteen-year-old Evers boy comes to the Home School performing at the third or fourth grade level in most of his subjects," Bentz wrote. "Although he is behind in school, he is probably of average potential. The goal of the program is to bring him up at least to the lower end of the class at this age level. If he can achieve even modest success in school, he might not need delinquency to satisfy his need for acceptance. Achievements in school and performance on work details are reinforced by giving points which move a boy with improved behavior up from novice through apprentice to honor levels eventually leading to parole..."

One of Mack's proudest innovations was the"quiet room". When a student got in trouble, the staff member went with him (or her)

alone to the room. The counselor was bound by the rules to stay as long as the student did.

Pat Mack said: "Where before the kid had been locked in an isolation room until she made all the right noises of remorse and pledges of better behavior in the future, the quiet room meant the kid and a counselor had to go into isolation until the problem had been hashed out. The object was not to punish the staff, but to have the staff member in the same relation to the kid as the parent would be in the community. Where runaways used to spend up to sixty days in isolation, the average quiet room with a counselor brought the average down to forty-five minutes."

Writer Bentz described his experience with this program.

After discussing points and privileges with Bentz during the day, one of the boys ran away that evening. He was caught at 1 a.m. in town. The Evers counselor on duty went with him to the quiet room in Sullivan Cottage, where together they worked out his problem. The same morning he was back in his room in Evers, a novice again. Pat Mack told Bentz:

"The temptation is to punish the kid, put him under lock and key, because then he'll know I'm not somebody to mess with. But rarely is a kid hurt so badly that he doesn't know what it means to relate. What he's really saying is, 'Stay away, because if you get to know me you'll hate me.' What we try to do by staying with him is say, 'We've seen you, but we still like you.'"

Superintendent Mack said his institution was the only one of its kind anywhere to do away with isolation. By October of 1972, no students were under lock and key. When locks were first eliminated, escapes increased but soon went back to normal.

What did students think about this program?

The attitude of one of the students was described in a Minneapolis Tribune story by Sam Newlund:

"When you're locked up alone, you've really got to be phony to get out of there," the student said. When she was locked up alone in Sullivan she gave a phony 'no' answer when asked whether she would run away if released. In isolation, 'I just turn all against authority.' She mistrusted authority figures, but indicated that things were different when a counselor sits in that barren room with her--treating her as an equal, confessing his own feelings about her as well as demanding that she reveal hers."

"It's a lot better," she said. "You feel like people care about you more."

A major change in the state corrections concept occurred in 1972 with the introduction of regionalization. Along with regionalization came community corrections. Under this concept, persons who enter correctional services are "treated" by the community rather than by a statewide department.

For western Minnesota, this meant that so-called juvenile delinquents were to be treated in their own towns, in their own counties, in private or church-operated facilities selected and financed by the child's home county, or in the Minnesota Home School in Sauk Centre.

Thus continued the evolution of MHS, which changed from an institution of all girls to girls and younger boys statewide, then to older boys as well as girls, sent from forty-nine counties in western Minnesota.

In an article in the Sauk Centre Herald of December 28, 1972, MHS staffer Ron Wolter put into perspective the changes in the way children in trouble have been removed from parental care and placed in the custody of the Home School.

Many children in the past were removed directly because of parental neglect; some because of tragic circumstances such as accidental deaths of both parents, and others because of "bad" behavior. Wolter said all students now at MHS were there because of "bad" behavior, although not necessarily very bad or criminal. A large portion were there for running away from home, truancy, behavior injurious to themselves, "incorrigibility" or "general disobedience to authority (parents, teachers at al)".

Wolter explained the historical development of juvenile corrections in the Herald article, as follows:

"In the early 1900s, in Illinois, it was decided that children who were not considered mature enough to marry, vote, make contracts, also were not mature enough to be criminals. Out of this concept grew the concept of juvenile courts. Juvenile delinquency came to include a wide spectrum of behavior that would be considered criminal if committed by an adult. Among juveniles, these forms of behavior were grouped with 'status' behaviors--running away,truancy, disobedience and the like. These latter behaviors are termed 'status' because they are offenses only because of the age of the individual (an adult committing them would not be considered 'bad', or having committed a crime).

"Despite this disparity in seriousness of the offenses, the Illinois officials felt comfortable with these juvenile crime laws because the youth in any case was to be protected from criminal accusation, just as he could not vote, make a contract, get married without parental consent, etc.

"Over the seventy odd years since then, the concern about children has eroded until today a juvenile delinquent is regarded as a junior hoodlum, or a criminal, even though many have behaved in a way that would not be considered criminal if an adult had so behaved," Wolter said. "The children at the Minnesota Home School are there not as criminals but as youths needing assistance in growing up."

The mission of MHS, Wolter said, is thus to "use the Home School, the community and all available resources to help the child at MHS change enough so he or she can return to the community prepared to live differently and to find other ways of behaving than those ways which were judged to be delinquent."

On January 26, 1973, former MHS Superintendent Ken Schoen was named Commissioner of Corrections for Minnesota, succeeding David Fogel, who resigned to go to Illinois. Schoen was then 40 and had been assistant commissioner under Fogel.

In May, Schoen named four deputy commissioners to fill posts created by a reorganizational law passed by the legislature. One of these new deputy commissioners was Pat Mack, who was assigned to the metropolitan region, including Ramsey, Hennepin, and Anoka counties.

May also brought such spring activities at MHS as the annual smelt fry, day camping for boys and girls of the Sauk Centre area, and a new session for pre-schoolers.

CHAPTER VII

SOME SOPHISTICATED INNOVATIONS

Harvey Akerson, then 51, was appointed by Schoen to succeed Mack as superintendent starting June 4, 1973. In 1963, he joined the Department of Corrections as an adult parole agent. In 1966 he became corrections supervisor for the ten-county Mankato area.

The security cottage that was eliminated during the Mack administration was restored.

In November, members of the state Senate Finance Committee Division of Health, Welfare and Corrections were meeting on the MHS campus on a building request. The Home School's major proposal was for a new school building to replace Mary Lyon School, a wood frame building built in 1920 and designed for exclusive use by females in a traditional academic program. Overflow classes were currently being held in Mary Lyons Annex, a former cottage living unit built in 1916; in the upper floor of the maintenance building; and the industrial arts class was held in the basement of the school near the furnace.

The MHS educational program was being reported at this time by the Sauk Centre Herald.

"The MHS educational program's major thrust," said a Herald story of November 1, 1973, "is helping the students individually and in small groups in basic and remedial areas, as 95 percent of MHS students are two or more years academically retarded. An additional important area is career education exploration and development of job entry level skills. The individualized educational program is meeting with a great deal of success as students have shown, on the average, an increase in basic skills equal to four months for each month they are in the program."

Volunteer services were also becoming more sophisticated.

Based on the Big Brother and Big Sister programs, the volunteer job at the Home School involved forming a one-to-one relationship "that will provide an individual child with a satisfying and developmental contact with an accepting adult friend outside of his usual sphere of associates," said a Herald story.

Qualifications for a volunteer included "ability and willingness to volunteer time needed to establish a friendship with selected children on a regular and consistent basis, usually once a week; good mental health and adequate physical health to carry out the assignment; ability to be flexible, patient and understanding; willingness to accept differences in values and behavior; genuine friendliness and a warm accepting personality."

Responsibilities of a volunteer were "to visit your child regularly, usually weekly; to be friendly, patient and understanding, offering a friendship with some scope for both give and take; to keep engagements, to be on time, and be dependable (even if your child is not); to give the child your full attention during the time of your visit and respect him/her as a person, respecting his/her interest, likes and dislikes; to provide the child with an opportunity to find a satisfying and accepting identification with his/her own sex; to help the child develop interests and activities that will meet present and future needs in community living; to keep in touch with the volunteer coordinator or caseworker to let him know how everything is going; to keep a concise record of time spent and send in monthly reports; and to participate in inservice training programs."

Sauk Centre community organizations were assisting with volunteer programs at the Home School, including the Jaycees and the Mrs. Jaycees.

Meanwhile, the arts were not being neglected at MHS. In a collumn of May 12, 1974, Minneapolis Tribune writer Robert T. Smith described MHS teenagers at Southdale Shopping Center. A student named Doug recited a poem he had written as other teenagers worked out dramatic improvisations.

The teenagers were part of a project of the Corrections Department known as "New Focus--Arts and Corrections", designed to rehabilitate youth through the arts.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

There is a story that a man who had just finished reading H. G. Wells' Outline of History was asked what he thought of the work.

"On the whole I liked the book," he replied, "but I didn't care for the ending!"

That's the trouble with attempting to bring an historical narrative up to the present--fluctuating events cause a tangle of loose ends that cannot be neatly tied. As this is written, for example, the Minnesota legislature had before it a study commission proposal to convert the Minnesota Home School into a minimum/medium security institution for men, thus ending the school's traditional juvenile responsibility.

This is not the first such proposal for profoundly changing the Home School's function, however, and in the absence of further developments, the staff continues to devote its full energies to the tasks presently assigned.

Superintendent Akerson sums up the present situation this way:

"The average stay of a juvenile here now is a few days less than six months--I'd like to get that down to five months...We've found that in their school work here the students improve dramatically during the first two months, but by the fourth month and later their grades and effort go 'way down.

"What people don't realize is that adjustment has to be made on the street. The longer the kid is kept here after those first months, the more disoriented he'll be when he returns to his home community and the more likely he is to head for the people and activities that got him in trouble in the first place. We don't want a maximum security juvenile corrections system!

"There's some unconscious discrimination in the courts, too. An adult, for example, usually is put on probation by a court for a first offense. And among juveniles--judges are more reluctant to send a girl here. Nearly 80 percent of the students here now are boys. If a girl is with a boy who commits a burglary, chances are he'll be charged but she won't. The girls are most often sent here for incorrigibility, truancy and promiscuity. The boys are usually sent for burglary, car theft, and vandalism--burglary is often committed just for beer money.

"The running away is down now, partly because of the shorter sentences. But one boy cried in his desire to stay after eight months.

"Since Lino Lakes no longer takes students, the expectation is that the Home School will grow. For 1976 it was expected that it would cost $50 to $55 a day to keep a juvenile here, based on a thirty-day month. We've been working on an experimental five-week program. Students cannot have committed a crime against a person, must have no previous record and cannot have committed more than $2,000 in vandalism. Those who fall into that category are chosen at random by a computer; other students with the same background serve as a control group. It will take a while, of course, to be able to see any pattern in whether or not they're more likely to be 'repeaters' than the six-monthers. We wrote to each judge before starting the experiment to see if any had objections, and they hadn't. But since we started the program the judges and the caseworkers have decided they <u>don't</u> like it. It's human nature to benefit from kindness more than from rough treatment and the short term program looks hopeful right now. But we received one girl accompanied by a court order saying, 'If you put her in short term program I'll subpoena you to show just cause.'"

This narrative necessarily must end on this uncertain note. Lacking a crystal ball, no definitive conclusions are possible. But though a narrative may be over, the very fascinating, human story of the Minnesota Home School goes on.

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PERSONAL INTERVIEWS:

Ben F. DuBois, 92, lifelong Sauk Centre resident and son of first Home School doctor

Julian F. DuBois, grandson of first Home School doctor, son of second, present Home School doctor himself

Olga Houghton, former teacher at the Home School (1946-72)

Char Hedin, former teacher at Home School (1954-56)
Frank Costello, 45-year employee of Home School
Amy Boobar, retired social worker at Home School
Henrietta Kessler, first recreation director at Home School
Lyla Jacobson, relief officer at Home School 1930-35
Cynthia Medhaug, present volunteer coordinator at Home School
Flossie Vandesteeg, former Home School teacher and steward
Pat Mack, former Home School superintendent
Kenneth Schoen, former Home School superintendent,
now Minnesota Commissioner of Corrections
Harvey Akerson, present Home School superintendent
Katherine DuBois, wife of former Home School doctor
Connie Schoen, first volunteer coordinator at Home School
Inez Patterson, former Home School superintendent
Mrs. Paul Groethe, one of first volunteers at Home School
Mrs. Philip Moos, former Home School teacher
Mrs. Audrey Saxton, former social worker at Home School
Adele Schoofs, retired Home School nurse
LaVonne Berg, present Home School educational administrator
Mrs. L. J. (Bud) Bokinski, former Home School art teacher