

Winter 1941

Training of Delinquents in Certain Middle Western Industrial Schools

Maurice C. McCann

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarlycommons.law.northwestern.edu/jclc>

 Part of the [Criminal Law Commons](#), [Criminology Commons](#), and the [Criminology and Criminal Justice Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Maurice C. McCann, Training of Delinquents in Certain Middle Western Industrial Schools, 31 Am. Inst. Crim. L. & Criminology 589 (1940-1941)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Northwestern University School of Law Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology by an authorized editor of Northwestern University School of Law Scholarly Commons.

TRAINING OF DELINQUENTS IN CERTAIN MIDDLE WESTERN INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS

Maurice C. McCann¹

"Tis education forms the common mind;
Just as the twig is bent, the tree is inclin'd."

Pope.

The confusions and conflicts which arise in the clash of our American conventions and our closely integrated socio-economic life are apparently unavoidable. The youths of today, in their contact with life, are faced with many perplexities. It is impossible that an immature mind can perceive the hundreds of pitfalls which may be ahead in their many-sided existence. A child must be taught everything he knows—to eat, talk, to walk, and to obey or disobey the rules and regulations of life.

Lewis E. Lawes, Warden of Sing Sing, has pointed out that:

No man or woman is a born criminal. Problem children are usually created by problem parents. When the home fails to shape the behavior patterns of children, then other social agencies must assume the burden of developing in them wholesome and well-integrated personalities.²

Each day approximately 3,012 male persons are born in the United States—1,099,465 each year.³ Each of these tiny organisms has inherited a pattern of growth which will carry the majority of them to adult manhood. Growth and

maturation take place automatically under the proper conditions. The boy expands in his stature and personality to become a man.

The individual makes his contribution to society and in return should be entitled to health, enjoyment, and a chance to develop his personality. If, moreover, he has health, enjoys life, and develops his personality, then and then only will he become a good citizen.

The forces of the child's environment, such as the school, church, movie, recreation, and companions, have a very important bearing on how successful the boy and girl will be in adapting himself or herself to a happy and useful life. That society does not always afford the conditions which will enable the child to adjust successfully is proven by the fact that out of every hundred persons who are apprehended by the police, seventeen are boys and girls. When we consider that in 1938 more than 700,000 youths of 21 or less have engaged in some type of law infraction, we must feel the need for more positive and intelligent guidance for our youth.⁴

Schools can be only as good as the citizens are willing to demand and sup-

¹ Washington Junior High School, Racine, Wis.

² Marjorie Bell, ed., *The Offender in the Community*, New York: Year Book of National Probation Association, 1938, p. 260.

³ *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1939,

P. 87. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1939.

⁴ J. Edgar Hoover, *Youth's Duty to the Future*, p. 1. Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice, Washington, D. C.: (January 11, 1937), An address at Notre Dame University.

port. Inadequate provisions for schools in times of prosperity, and retrenchment in periods of depression contribute to maladjustment, delinquency, and crime among our youth.

It would seem that our educational system, as one of the important factors of the boy's environment, has an enormous task to perform. Among the primary objectives of education should be not only the teaching of honesty and straightforwardness, but also the teaching of an avocation and a vocation. The objectives of education are defeated in the training gained in school in reading, writing, and arithmetic, if proficiency in these subjects is used to further a life of delinquency and crime at the expense of the tax-payers. The objectives of education are defeated also if the child does not spend his leisure time in useful or at least socially harmless ways, and if he does not know how to work.

Mr. J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, has said:

Crime is basically a youth problem and our young people are being arrested in far greater numbers than would seem to be possible. During 1938, 18 per cent of the persons arrested were under 21 years of age. They accounted for 12 per cent of the murders, 28 per cent of the robberies, 42 per cent of the burglaries, 30 per cent of the thefts, 51 per cent of car thefts and 24 per cent of the rapes in our U. S. These youths are living examples of neglected home training and the failure of society to meet its obligations to the younger generations.⁵

The statistics compiled in the World Almanac for 1939 report that the law

enforcement committee of the American Bar Association, at its annual convention at Indianapolis, July 25, 1939, state that one out of every thirty-seven persons in the United States is a criminal, and that 200,000 citizens will commit murder before they die. The cost of crime is estimated at \$15,000,000,000, and it shows an increase over that of the year before. It is also stated that major crimes are committed at the rate of one every twenty-two seconds with the result that the United States "has the greatest prison population in relation to total population of any country in the world."⁶

We support 11,000 jails and 3,000 other penal institutions, housing hundreds of thousands of prisoners. Statistics show that over 75 per cent of those criminals started their delinquent careers in youth. The greatest number of offenses today are by individuals 16 to 21 years of age.⁷

Institutional Information

Somehow our reformatories and correctional schools must increase their efficiency in rebuilding human character. The ideal correctional institution of today is a place in which delinquent boys receive treatment in a scientific manner so that they may again fit into community life.

It must be realized that no matter how good an institution may be, it cannot be a satisfactory substitute for the child's own home life. The environment should be made to match as closely as possible the situations the child would meet in his own home, school or

⁵ Bell, *op. cit.*, p. 259.

⁶ *The World Almanac and Book of Facts*, p. 78. New York: New York World Telegram, 1939.

⁷ C. A. Tolson, "Youth and Crime," *Vital Speeches*, Volume 2 (April 20, 1936) p. 468.

community. The institution must realize that it exists for the child and its duty is definitely to adjust and train him to return to his home community.

This survey reveals the following institutional information on Middle Western Industrial Schools.

1. The five boys' industrial schools of Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan are comparable in general physical characteristics except in respect to acreage. The institutions with a large number of acres will necessarily have a large amount of farm maintenance work. But the value of farm training for a city boy is questionable.

2. The evidence indicates that the greater number of boys in these institutions are at age 16. This indicates that the bulk of the vocational training program should be on the senior high school level.

3. The races in this study of 3,023 boys showed that the proportion was three of the white race to one of the black race. Indiana has a high percentage of negroes as does Michigan where boys are received from the industrial city of Detroit.

4. The cost of keeping a boy in the East North-Central Industrial Schools ranges per year between \$266.76 to \$547.04. The average cost per boy is approximately \$400.00 per year. Many variable factors enter into the computation of per capita cost.

5. The average age of all industrial school boys is 15.8 years and ranges between 15.3 years in Illinois to 16.5 in Wisconsin.

The range of intelligent quotients is from 75 in Ohio to 90 in Illinois, and the average of 82.6 places the majority

of the boys in the dull or low normal group. This fact indicates the need of vocational training.

The time spent in the institutions ranges from 10.5 in Ohio to 18 months in both Indiana and Wisconsin with the average for all schools at 14.2 months.

The educational level is at the eighth grade except in Ohio and in Wisconsin, where the seventh and ninth grade levels prevail.

Vocational Personnel

The most important consideration in the proper functioning of the correctional institution is the staff personnel. In this personnel, the vocational teacher has a very important place. As an army is only as good as its soldiers and a school system as good as its teachers, so is any correctional institution only as good as its personnel, particularly its vocational teachers. The superintendent may furnish the leadership and develop the morale, but the real guidance and daily inspiration must come from the teachers. There is indication that the vocational teachers are often doing good work in the institutions we surveyed. Where there has been evidence of good morale and static conditions, the trail usually leads directly to the door of the administration.

One duty of the superintendent of the industrial schools is to make recommendations for improvements and changes. An examination of reports and records, shows that very often the necessary recommendations for improvement of the institution's vocational training program have not been made.

In cases where the administrator is a political appointee or lacks progressive leadership, the program of the institution tends to remain static.

The salient points that are revealed in the data concerning the vocational personnel in correctional institutions are summarized as follows:

1. The median range of salaries of vocational teachers in the correctional institutions was from \$110.00 to \$134.50 per month.
2. Only fifty (47.1 per cent) of the vocational teachers had a high school education.
3. Fewer than nine (8.5 per cent) of the vocational teachers had a college degree.
4. The trade training of the vocational teachers varies from five to forty years and seems to indicate that this requirement is well met.
5. Salaries, school training, buildings and equipment of the public schools are superior to those of an industrial school; yet a boy whom society considers delinquent is supposed to develop good character traits in inferior schools. Character cannot be created by punishment, but rather by proper environment and training which the industrial school is expected to provide, but seldom does.

Vocational Shop Data

In industrial work there are many ways of training employees. The methods of securing training may be placed in two classifications: Training by absorption and training by intention.

Training by absorption does not provide a definite arrangement for class study and supervised instruction. New employees or boys get what they can by listening or by watching others do the work. In the industrial schools we have studied, the officer in charge of the squad detail perhaps will explain

briefly if the boys do not seem to understand their tasks as quickly as he thinks they should. Usually there is no deliberate instruction; consequently it is a most costly process in an industrial school, as well as in industry. It cannot be justified in view of the fact that the boy spends only an average of fourteen months in the institution.

The method of training is that by direct intention with a definite course of study. It affords a saving in time and money, and most important of all, it is much the better method for rehabilitating the delinquent boy. Training by intention assumes that the teacher is a man trained for the job who can use the best teaching methods, and who can analyze not only his trade but especially the needs of the boys in the institution. There should be little doubt that this method, carried out in a basic vocational shop would be more efficient and produce better results than training by absorption.

Some pertinent facts on vocational shop data are:

1. The kinds of work carried on in the five institutions we have surveyed are similar in most respects as to population and general characteristics.

2. There is a total of forty-five vocational activities which include not only shop but agricultural work. There may be some activities that have been rated as both maintenance and vocational because they are each in part the exact proportion being difficult to judge.

3. The quantity and quality of shop equipment were rated fair for all schools except those of Wisconsin in which they are poor and those of Michigan in which they are good in quality.

4. The average time a boy spends in shop is the same for all schools, four hours a day, which means that he spends one half day in shop or maintenance work.

5. The number of boys in shop or work assignment is from 10.8 at Indiana to 14 at Michigan. The small variation here is not important. Excellent vocational training could well be given in classes of this size.

6. Most of the training offered is not given with definite ends in mind, nor are the procedures used those considered best for educative purposes.

Institutional Vocational History of Paroled Boys in Wisconsin

In the preceding pages a general study of Industrial Schools of the East North-Central States has been reported. The following is a more specific and detailed study of certain phases of the life of the boys at the Wisconsin Industrial School at Waukesha, Wisconsin, and of their lives while they are on parole.

The answer to the question, "Who are the boys at Waukesha?" may be found in the Wisconsin Statutes.

Whenever the court shall determine any child to be delinquent such child shall continue under the jurisdiction of the court until he becomes twenty-one years of age, unless discharged prior thereto.⁸

Those boys, then who have been declared by the courts to be delinquent and are not yet on parole are at Waukesha.

The institutional history of Wisconsin

paroled boys reveals the following important facts:

1. The outstanding cause for commitment to Waukesha is stealing with truancy. Theft of property, occasioned 60 per cent of the commitments.

2. The paroled boys who were questioned in the course of this study had spent from six to seventy months at Waukesha. The median of time spent is eighteen months.

3. A study of the total time spent in shop or work assignment at Waukesha shows that institutional maintenance jobs such as, housework, general farming, dining room, dairy, and kitchen work were leading work assignments. It is understood that boys in the institution may do two or three or more different assignments.

Parole Period of Wisconsin Boys

The Statistical department of the State Board of Control of Wisconsin defines parole as follows:

Parole is the act of releasing or the status of being released from a penal or reformative institution in which one has served part of his sentence on condition of maintaining good behavior and remaining in the custody and under the supervision of the institution or some other agency approved by the state until final discharge is granted.⁹

In some places the terms *placement* and *follow-up* are used instead of the word *parole*. Parole has always been associated with the state's penal system, and placement and follow-up are more nearly applicable to the state industrial school vocational training programs.

⁸ Wisconsin Statutes, 1937, Section 48.01 (5) (b), Madison, State of Wisconsin.

⁹ *Probation and Parole in Wisconsin*, p. 1. Prepared by the Statistical Department, State Board of Control of Wisconsin, 1937.

The word "parole" is derived from the French word which means "promise" or "word of honor". The early method required the parole officer to keep constant check on the offender and stressed the idea of segregating him rather than integrating him into the community.

The Wisconsin Statutes state:

The Wisconsin Industrial School for Boys shall be a place of confinement and instruction for all male delinquent children, and the Wisconsin Industrial School for Girls, for all female delinquent children. . . . but no child under the age of 12 years shall be committed to either of these institutions by the juvenile court.¹⁰

The Statutes of the State of Wisconsin state also that:

The Board of Control may parole any child committed to the Industrial School for Boys or the Industrial School for Girls, whenever it is satisfied that such action is for the best interest of such child. Every such paroled child shall remain in the legal custody of the said board until twenty-one years of age and may be returned to the institution from which paroled.¹¹

The time of parole cannot be predetermined but each child must earn his parole by good conduct, progress in school, and progress in self-control. Whenever a child is incorrigible and harmful to the school, he may be returned to the court from which he was committed. A child may be restored to his parents also before expiration of the commitment.

Paroled boys should be and often are given adequate supervision and assistance by properly qualified parole officers in making home, school, and vocational adjustments. No parole offi-

cer should be so burdened with cases that he is unable to give each boy all the attention and friendly interest he may need to make proper adjustment.

The old idea of a parole agent's job was that he should watch the parolee to see whether he was making good and return him to the school as soon as he did wrong. An investigation at one institution found that the parole officer was kept busy day and night running down escapes. The new idea of parole is that it constitutes a program of re-education.

The facts on the parole period of 208 Wisconsin boys may be summarized as follows:

1. There were 56 boys (26.9 per cent) of age 18 on parole. The next highest percentage was of age 20. The median age is 18.

2. One hundred seventy boys (81.7 per cent) were from the city and the remainder were from villages and country.

3. Only 70 (33.7 per cent) of the boys have both parents living. Twenty-six boys (12.5 per cent) lack a mother's stabilizing influence.

4. More than half of the boys had a fair rating in respect to home conditions, and more than 80 per cent had a fair or better rating. Boys with poor home conditions, as rated by probation and parole officers, were 12.5 per cent of the total.

5. Almost 9 out of every 10 paroled boys were returned to their homes. About 5 per cent of the boys were placed in foster homes.

¹⁰ Wisconsin Statutes, 48.14, Madison, Wisconsin, 1937.

¹¹ Ibid. Section 48.16 (2) (b).

About 85 per cent of the boys were placed only once, and 8 per cent were placed twice.

7. Forty-two per cent of the boys are attending school and 55 per cent are not in school.

8. Of the 208 boys, 36 per cent work full time, 25 per cent part time, and 37 per cent not at all.

9. The kinds of employment for paroled boys are quite varied and of entirely different kinds. The leading forms of employment are farming, common labor, N. Y. A., park labor, and baking. Many are attending school full time.

10. The median salary for employed paroles is \$8.00. The range is from \$0.75 to \$30.00 a week. The fact that 14 boys receive \$5.00 per week and 14 boys are on N. Y. A. gives reason for the assumption that these two facts are identical.

11. Twenty-nine per cent of the paroled boys make use of their institutional training, but 65 per cent report that their training was of no use.

12. The social adjustment as rated by probation and parole officers was: 5 per cent, poor; 3 per cent, excellent; and 46 per cent, fair.

13. The number of delinquencies of boys on parole were: none, 84 per cent; and one, 8 per cent. The recidivism in the five States was 29.2 per cent.

These paroles evidently were above the average.

14. The paroled boys expressed their preferences for types of work as follows: auto mechanics, machine shop, farming, shoemaking, foundry work, office work, bakery and printing.

15. Boys who wish to continue their training received at Waukesha were 43 per cent and those who did not wish to continue were 52 per cent. There was no answer from 12.

The purpose of this study was to determine the industrial and vocational methods used in the rehabilitation of the delinquent boy in certain institutions. Having analyzed and evaluated the methods used, the following recommendations are suggested as possible aids to the solution of the problems brought out by this investigation.

Vocational Personnel

The responsibility for effectively carrying out the industrial schools' vocational program rests with the vocational teachers. To be able to meet the complex problems of youth on the proper level, only the best trained and best qualified teachers should be on the staff of a boys' industrial school. All public school teachers are required to be licensed and must meet certain rigid requirements before teaching our normal children. Proper handling and rehabilitation of the boy necessitates a high grade personnel rather than untrained instructors at low salaries. The very best of plants, supplies and equipment are wasted if the staff do not meet good teaching requirements.

In order then that an effective program of rehabilitation can be carried on in any institution, it is necessary to have a qualified staff. All vocational instructors should be certified and properly trained. Those instructors on the staffs who are below state public school requirements should have the advantage of college or university instruc-

tion in vocational courses at the institutions in which the entire vocational staff may enroll. Whenever possible a semester's leave of absence should be given to members of the staff to acquire the necessary training.

Vocational Training

The aims of the vocational school should be to give the boy the fundamental principles of a specific trade; to give him skill in the handling of tools; to give him a realization of the need for orderliness, system, and neatness in the vocation; to teach him the proper use of shop equipment from the safety standpoint; and to aid him in the development of his character. The boy who is directed into a line of work which is interesting and meaningful to him is more likely to be happy and to keep out of trouble. When the boy from the urban area can be interested in learning skills and acquiring knowledge relating to some trade, a big step has been taken toward the solution of his difficulties. Even if only part time work can be found, it will act as a deterrent toward further temptation. It is only with an efficient parole department that a good institutional program of vocational rehabilitation will hold up and produce results.

Statistical information would seem to show that the delinquent boys are below the average in intelligence and training in comparison with public school students. This fact should lend added weight to the argument of the necessity for a complete vocational training program. The time spent is quite short for a good vocational training, but much may be accomplished in

10 to 18 months with the boys studying and working in the shop one-half day, six days a week.

Vocational Training Program.

On entrance to the institution, each boy should be routed through certain standard vocational shops spending a try-out or exploratory period in each. The types of shops should conform to those of the public vocational schools and the leading industries of Wisconsin. After finishing the exploratory period, the boy selects the vocation to follow in which he is most interested and which his advisors recommend. The boy may progress as rapidly as he wishes, and on fulfilling the qualifications he may be recommended for release providing his conduct is good. This is only a suggested approach to a possible vocational training program which has many angles and which a competent director and staff would have to work out.

Vocational Guidance.

Vocational guidance for all children and a system of follow-up that integrates school life with work experience, is needed. Upon educators, teachers and school officials rests an almost equally important responsibility not only in providing character building and intellectual training and guidance in personality unfoldment, but also in heading off youth's maladjustments and delinquencies. The community is justified in demanding that its school supplement without interfering, of course, with parental responsibility, the disciplinary and moral shortcomings of the unsuccessful home.

Testing Program.

It is most important that there be a well laid out testing program under the direction of the psychologist. The more scientific the program is the more surely the boy may find his proper place. A test of mechanical aptitude would be of value in determining the placement of the boy in the proper vocational shop.

Shop Equipment.

The shop equipment of all institutions is definitely below the quality and quantity of the public vocational schools. Most of the machines are of old type and are not comparable to machines used in industry today. To be able to give instruction that will correlate with what is being done in the industrial shops, it is necessary to have up-to-date tools and machines.

Placement.

The parole officers as they usually are now should be thoroughly trained and should have a reasonable amount of experience in case work under supervision. They should have a good knowledge of the social sciences and mental hygiene. They should be familiar with the different types of agencies and their work in the community. But, in addition, their case load should not be so heavy that they must limit their vocational as well as other guidance work as now occurs.

Industrial School Philosophy.

There must be a progressive and understanding philosophy toward delin-

quent boys. It must be realized that the institution exists for the rehabilitation of the boys, and the administration and personnel must operate the institution to serve in the best way possible the unfortunate inmates. It should be understood that the life of the industrial school should be as good a substitute for the home, church, and school as the personnel can make it. It must be the specific duty of the institution to adjust and rehabilitate the boy to take his place in the community as a worthwhile and useful citizen. To this end, it is without doubt the program of the administration to provide proper vocational guidance, vocational and industrial arts training. The vocational or exploratory nature in teaching fundamentals to the younger boys, and increased work with greater development of related knowledge and skills for the older boys.

Delinquent boys are not in the institution to be degraded or punished and made to all sorts of drudgery. They must be recognized as individuals who in most cases have had no control over the circumstances that caused their misfortune. When boys are assigned to work that has little or no training value, their duties should be changed frequently and their health and vocational needs should be given primary consideration. Real treatment is the substituting of new habits for old undesirable ones and capitalizing on the boy's abilities to pull himself up on the proper level for his own adjustment in life.