

CENTER FOR HUMAN RELATIONS STUDIES

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

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S U M M A R Y

Educational Alliance Area Study (HR-7)

Prepared for: Officers and Trustees of the

EDUCATIONAL ALLIANCE

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A. The Lower East Side

In accordance with the original agreement, this study has included a cursory analysis of the 1950 population figures for the Lower East Side - East 14th Street, Third Avenue, the Bowery, Spruce Street, Ferry Street and the East River.

In 1950 there was a total census count of 214,969 individuals in this area. This represents a 0.3% decrease in population since 1940 (when the population was 215,601). Of this total 202,417 were white; 7025 - Negro, and 5227 "other". Distributed throughout these racial groupings were 13,472 Puerto Ricans. This population was distributed by age as follows:

Under 5 years	21020	10%	of total population
5 - 14 years	24990	11%	" " "
15 - 39 years	83221	39%	" " "
40 - 65 years	65725	31%	" " "
65 years and over	20013	9%	" " "

These 214,969 residents of the Lower East Side were occupying 71,506 dwelling units, of which

- a. 6660 were in public housing projects
- b. 768 were in Amalgamated-Hillman project

Addition (to a and b) of the units which have been constructed since 1950 and looking ahead to completion of future projects, now in process, make it possible to predict that in the near future there will be:

- 10,746 public housing units
- 2,711 cooperative middle income units
- 1,585 Knickerbocker Village units

No census count is made of the religious backgrounds of individuals; therefore figures on that bases cannot be reported. It does seem apparent, however, that there will be a sizeable Jewish population in the area for some time to come.

B. Scope and Methods

The study included the following:

1. Systematic "on-foot" observation of the area below Delancey Street
2. Home interviews with members of 533 families, of whom

330 were Jewish
203 were non-Jewish
88 lived in Amalgamated-Hillman Houses

They constitute a 10% sample of the area bounded by Pike, Division, Norfolk, Broome, Pitt, Gouverneur, Cherry and Madison Streets, chosen because:

- a. It lay around the Educational Alliance
- b. It appeared to include a significant proportion of Jewish families

These families represent a total of 2098 individuals. Information secured from them concerned: opinion of the neighborhood; use of leisure time; voluntary associations - in and outside organizations; use of summer camps; general opinion of community agencies; specific conception of, and sources of information about, the Educational Alliance.

3. Interviews with 193 teen-age youth who had not re-registered for 1953-54 program activities at the Educational Alliance prior to November 1953.*
4. Analysis of 214 diaries reporting use of leisure time on one week-end by children enrolled in the Rabbi Jacob Joseph and Beth Jacob Schools.
5. Discussions with four groups, composed of a total of 92 individuals.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. The Neighborhood

- a. What is the neighborhood like?

51% of those responding to this question described the neighborhood in positive terms (range: "Very good" to "All right"). 12% had no definite response, were "neutral"; the remaining 37% responded in negative terms "Not so good" "Poor" or "Very poor". 30% stated that the neighborhood is "changing for the worse" while less than one percent considered that it is improving (the majority of these live in Amalgamated-Hillman Houses).

- b. Advantages of living on the Lower East Side were given in the following order: convenience (near to work and transportation); proximity (to friends and relatives); permitting a sense of "belonging"; cheap rent; lower cost of living as compared with other sections of the city; desirability of apartments (again primarily from residents of the Amalgamated-Hillman Houses).

*For the purpose of brevity in the summary these youth will be referred to as "Drop-outs". However, it should be noted that this term - originally employed in planning - is not descriptive of all of these youth some of whom have returned to the programs of the agency since the time of the interviews.

- c. Disadvantages of living in the area were defined as: "Puerto Rican influx"; poor housing; sanitation (poor); lack of security on the streets; congestion.
- e. Plans: 480 of the 533 reported definitely on their point of view regarding remaining in the area. Roughly 75% of these plan to remain; the remaining 25% wish to move. Of the former, Jewish families represent the majority (248). Seventy three Jewish families expressed a desire to move from the neighborhood.

In the discussion of the neighborhood, intergroup hostility was expressed freely and by a significant number of those interviewed. This feeling seems to be close to the surface, readily verbalized, and indicative of significant intergroup tensions within the area.

II. Concept of Community Agencies

Of the 533 interviewed families, 350 think well of community agencies; 34 expressed negative opinions; 149 expressed no opinion. Most of those interviewed seem to think of community agencies as "settlements" and to make no distinction between this and the community centers. The highest single positive response was that community agencies are "good for children". Reasons for negative opinion were scattered. Among those who expressed no opinion were newcomers to the neighborhood, or those who are involved in other activities; e.g. of churches or synagogues, family groups, schools. Apparently they had felt no need for other community agencies and had not had occasion to learn about them.

III. Concept of the Educational Alliance

Three hundred and thirty-seven interviewed families expressed favorable opinions about the Educational Alliance: 270 of these gave no specific reasons; 61 described it as "good for children"; 4 like it for the good citizenship training it offers; and 2 think well of it because of its "good Jewish fellowship". Of the 337, 108 based their statements on present experience, 103 indicated that their statements were based on past experience, 87 on experiences of friends and neighbors, 17 on "hearsay", 11 on descriptions given by relatives, and 11 on sources such as literature, newspapers, or other agencies.

One hundred and thirty-nine families had no opinion of the Educational Alliance. Their contacts, if any, had been too slight to provide bases for opinions.

Fifty-seven families expressed negative opinions of the Educational Alliance: of these, 35 gave no specific reason, 10 (all non-Jewish) thought it to be open to Jewish people only. Seven stated that there were too many Puerto Ricans and Negroes in the program, 5 described the agency as "not religious enough". These negative experiences were reported as based on: own past experience - 16, statements of friends and neighbors - 14, "hearsay" - 12, experiences of relative - 8, own past experience - 6, literature - 1.

Only 59 of those interviewed made any voluntary reference to fees, of this number 40 stated they are too high, 19 that they are "all right".

IV. Leisure-Time

Use of leisure-time of Juniors (3-11) was reported in the following order: 1) home-centered activities, 2) free play outside home, 3) organized activities in agencies. (This order is based on number of responses and proportion of time spent in these activities.)

Youth (11-17) reported: 1) free activities outside the home, 2) organized activities, 3) home-centered activities.

Adults' leisure-time activities take place 1) in their own homes (TV and radio highest) 2) in homes of friends and relatives 3) in commercial establishments (movies, theatres, bars) 4) in organizations.

Activities which would attract those not now attending fall under four major categories: adult programs - educational, cultural and social; athletics (especially for male youth); "more recreational programs" - youth and teen-agers.

"Drop-out" interviews revealed the following reasons for failure to re-register in Educational Alliance programs, in the order listed:

1. Moved out of the neighborhood
2. Lack of time
3. Program not interesting
4. Friends do not attend
5. Unfavorable response to experience at Educational Alliance
6. Neighborhood deteriorating (afraid to travel on streets)
7. Fees too high
8. Incident at Educational Alliance

These 193 youth listed the following in response to a direct question regarding activities which would interest them in returning to the Educational Alliance:

- | Male | Female |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. "A good gym", more athletics | 1. Dancing |
| 2. Swimming | 2. Arts and Crafts |
| 3. Dances | 3. Swimming |
| 4. More social activities | 4. More social activities |
| 5. Crafts | 5. Music |
| 6. Shops | 6. TV and movies |
| 7. TV and movies | 7. Photography |
| 8. Dramatics | |

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