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SUMMER ROOF REPORT

1937

Stuyvesant Neighborhood House

Respectfully submitted

Edward Sand



There are two very good reasons for the unmistakably successful Roof season just completed. First, the advent of the new amplified musical recording system, and second, the genuine and contagious spirit of enthusiasm displayed by our House membership for the simplest Roof event. While it is true that the response to the amplifier and the element of generous enthusiasm were not common to all divisions of the House membership in the same degree, it was unequivocally evident in the Intermediate and Senior groups whose attendance equalled more than twice the total of all of the other three attending divisions combined.

To say that the 1937 Roof season was not a success because the attendance of the Junior, Upper Junior and Mothers divisions did not approach anything like the total of the Intermediates and Seniors would be far from a correct appraisal of the summer's roof activity. In fact such a conclusion would exclude good reasons rather than poor excuses for small attendances to work with in these three divisions. From a casual canvass of the Juniors who attended, we found that more Juniors did not report for roof activity because



their parents would not permit them to stay much after eight o'clock. In the Upper Junior division we found a predominance of boys and girls who went out of the city for the summer -- more so than in any of the other groups. We discovered that we were losing not only those Upper Juiniors who went to Camp Edlaia or some other place for the summer, but also their friends who remained in the city. The latter did not seem to find as much in roof activity when their friends who left town were not with them to share in the fun. Nothing less than an "act of God" prevented the Mothers from registering a much larger attendance. It was simply their lot that it should have rained four Thursdays out of the nine during the summer.

The following is a statistical summation of the foregoing for the months of June, July and August:

June 9th to 24th

SENIORS

48	
55	
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	103

INTERMEDIATES

73	
85	
53	
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	211

UPPER JUNIORS

26	
30	
<hr/>	
	56



JUNIORS

26
6
30
<hr/>
62

MOTHERS

program not begun

TOTAL ATTENDANCE FOR JUNE

432

July 1st to 30th

SENIORS PLUS INTERS

83
45
80
152
200
80
<hr/>
640

UP JRS PLUS INTERS  
PLUS SENIORS

186
83
<hr/>
266

UPPER JUNIORS

13
12
23
23
11
<hr/>
82

JUNIORS

30
17
30
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77



MOTHERS

55	
60	
44	(concert)
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159	

TOTAL ATTENDANCE FOR JULY

1224

August 1st to 28th

INTERS PLUS SENIORS  
PLUS UPPER JUNIORS

150	(Game and Dance)
250	( Game and Dance )
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400	

INTERS AND SENIORS

184	
168	
280	
180	
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812	

UPPER JUNIORS

75	(Reunion Night)
46	
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121	

JUNIORS

27	
24	
30	(Party)
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71	

MOTHERS

68	( Mr. Misch & Drum )
50	
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118	

TOTAL ATTENDANCE FOR AUGUST

1522



SUM TOTAL FOR THE PERIOD

3178

TOTALS BY DIVISIONS:

INTERS-SENIORS	2216
UPPER JUNIORS	475
JUNIORS	210
MOTHERS	277

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A very flattering commentary on the success of the roof this year is reflected in the manner in which we "competed" with the attractions of Roosevelt Park. Despite the lure of a hot 13 piece orchestra there, and the unleashed rythm of half a thousand or more dancers, the Inters and Seniors, who would be the most suseptible prospects for Roosevelt Park, participated consistently in activities on the roof. The answer to their preference for the Hebrew Tech Roof was a frank admission of the fact " that is wasn't that the music on the roof was any better or the girls any prettier or the boys more handsome ----- but simply that the " Stuy " roof made it possible



for girls and fellows to really get together." " On the Hebrew Tech roof a fellow didn't have to size up a girl before he asked her to dance with him ---- and he didn't have to run the chance that she'd turn him down when and if he asked ----- on Stuy's roof anybody was a good partner to dance with ---- and no Stuy girl ever thought herself too good to say " yes " right away to a fellow's offer to dance."

Dancing on the roof was a major activity in this age division. In previous years, until nine o'clock, when baseball was in session in the larger section, the boys and girls played checkers and several other quiet games. This year we had to get the music going in the smaller section just as soon as the evening began. After nine o'clock, in other years, we utilized the entire large section for organized games. This year we had to satisfy the desire to dance, and the number of people who wanted to dance by setting aside at least one third of the roof for dancing activity.

On Monday nights, after nine o'clock, the remaining two thirds of the roof was devoted to hand-ball, deck tennis, paddle tennis, badminton, box hockey, etc. On Wednesday nights



because of the tremendous attendance, after nine o'clock we threw the entire roof open to dancing with the exception of a small section which we reserved for badminton. Badminton held its own with dancing, we presume, because it was a new game to most who attended.

Dancing was not so popular with the Upper Juniors. Probably because the boys could find very few girls to dance with. The dance<sup>rs</sup> who were once their social contemporaries, by summer were outgrowing their former companionship, and were now bidding for the attention of the more mature Intermediates. The young fellows in this division and those of the girls who did attend absorbed themselves almost entirely with games. Baseball held a complete and permanent lure for the boys. The girls liked badminton and deck tennis. Sometimes the girls danced together and sometimes the boys---teaching each other steps that only veteran Inters and Seniors dare venture to undertake on a dance floor. With the boys we were frequently successful in involving them in group games like "association," "dodge ball " "volley ball " and "obstacle races."

While there was a dearth of Juniors, their program was far from an unsuccessful one. Those who attended, did so consistently. They responded quickly and enthusiastically to all



of the activities inaugurated. As we might expect, the Juniors needed close supervision and planned programs of diversified character. " Dodge ball " was always the early evening's warm-up session, with " volley ball," " cat and mouse, a " Hi-li " contest, an obstacle race or two just as an inevitable in the evening's program as "Bimmie's " well scratched knees..Our greatest surprise ws the manner in which these young boys and girls responded to dancing instruction. First the boys regarded their interest in dancing a bit suspiciously. But later they succumbed and were willing to give up as much as half of their evening to dancing instruction. A party at which " even refreshments " were served, topped off the summer program for the Juniors.

For the first two weeks, we are frank to admit the Mothers roof presented somewhat of a problem. I think for those first two weeks, the Mothers came to the roof because they liked the ice water --- and we welcomed providing it because it was such a successful activity---and we killed some part of the evening chopping the ice, carting pails of water and washing the glasses. But we learned the secret of a successful Mother's roof after awhile. Even though we knew little or nothing about hemming a skirt or "koshering" meat we were more than willing to talk about it.

We discovered that the way to start a Mothers' evening off was, first, with a little " schmooze " and then for each of us to start



on two ends of a line of fifty or sixty Mothers and to dance with them one at a time, down the line until each had an opportunity to "trip the light fantastic" around the roof at least twice. Then and not until then would they become receptive to something as daring as "Guess What Mrs.....Said", "Pass The Necktie" or something equally as frivolous. Highspots were reached, of course, when we had Mr. Misch and Drum to lead the stampede into a Russian Schere or when half a dozen Mothers were sure that the handsome basso in the W. P. A. Concert gave them the "glad-eye." .....And so the Mothers were finally entertained but were eternally obsessed with sorrow for their leader who could not be with them.

This report would not be complete without mention of the success of a popular innovation this summer. Combination basket ball games and dances proved huge successes despite the obvious incongruity of basket ball competition during hot weather. On the occasion of the "Phoneix" club challenge to the House team, that game brought over 150 spectators down the gym and 250 to the roof after the game. Successive games of the "Meteors" vs "Jewels" and "Curtis-Wheelers" vs Meteors" brought equally as large numbers to the roof.

Towards the close of the summer, for the last two weeks, we opened all of the evenings to a mixed attendance of Upper Juniors, Inters and Seniors. Then was the time when an observer could best behold the true significance of a summer roof. No better testimonial



of the flourishing existence of that sometimes elusive or intangible spirit of camaraderie so typical of Stuyvesant House could ever be found. Suave Jerry Levine who might otherwise be playing "sharpie" outside of Goldfeder's removes his cigar long enough during the evening to teach little 15 year old Kate Blacker how to "Peabody." Over in one corner, dimmed by the shadow of the wall side of the roof several girls who have just returned from Edalia seem to have disassociated themselves from their surroundings and are being carried away in their nostalgia for Camp, with camp songs, sighs and giggles of pleasant reminiscence. Solly Brandt, who is a deaf little fellow, seems to have caught the tempo of the music in the spirit of what he feels sufficiently to "Lindy" gloriously around the roof with Mildred Biederman. Benny Oaklander and Benny Gherltler are bringing a bit of the Savoy's color into the picture and are doing a miniature "Big Apple" to the glee of several admiring onlookers. Dave Nadel is sprouting his favorite philosophy of life and love to Ray Hollander, both of whom are unaware of the music, the shouts and the dancers who occasionally bump into them. A steady stream of dancers weave a rhythmic circle around the roof ---- the feathered "shuttlecock" flies above their heads ----- hundreds of East Side boys and girls are impervious to the heat and congestion of the streets beneath-----

And so the roof goes on---- each night not just a repeti



tion of monotonous activity, but a pot-pourri of many moods,  
expressions, interests, exchanges, personalities, likes and  
thoughts.