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A STUDY OF FOUR LIBRARY PROGRAMS FOR DISADVANTAGED PERSONS. PART II, APPENDICES B: BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMUNITY COORDINATOR PROJECT, THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY NORTH MANHATTAN PROJECT.

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This document contains observations of library staff and interviews with community members about the Brooklyn Public Library Community Coordinator Project and the New York Public Library North Manhattan Project. The Community Coordinator Project employs four professional librarians to take an active part in community institutions and organizations in order to extend the library's service into the community and to interpret needs of the community to the collections, and services in the Countee Cullen Regional Branch and the Schomburg Collection of Negro Literature and History, both located in Central Harlem. (CC)

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**A STUDY OF FOUR LIBRARY PROGRAMS  
FOR  
DISADVANTAGED PERSONS**



**CONDUCTED BY  
BANK STREET COLLEGE OF EDUCATION**

The University of the State of New York  
THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
Division of Library Development

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A S T U D Y O F F O U R L I B R A R Y P R O G R A M S  
F O R D I S A D V A N T A G E D P E R S O N S

For the

DIVISION OF LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT  
The New York State Library  
State Education Department  
University of the State of New York

Conducted by

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P A R T I I

APPENDICES B

BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMUNITY COORDINATOR PROJECT  
THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY NORTH MANHATTAN PROJECT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE  
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July 1967

Appendices contain the original material gathered by the Field Staff through observations and interviews.

BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY  
COMMUNITY COORDINATOR PROJECT

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**BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMUNITY COORDINATOR PROJECT**

**Observations**

### Sidewalk Service Van

Van was parked on Ralph Avenue near Fulton Street. The closest branches were either the Bedford or Macon Branches. The van arrived at 2:00 and planned to leave at 4:00. This was because during the last week in June there was only one CC not on vacation or at the ALA convention. Three aides and Mrs. ----- were present. The neighborhood was near a shopping area, a park, a junior high school and a project.

The books were set up on steel racks in the street and two aides worked on registration and circulation. Miss ----- and Mrs. ----- approached people as they walked by. Many adults passed the van and said they "wanted no library card". A few signed up. Some said they had cards. Many children and a few teenagers signed up. They had been playing in the playground. Some boys - about 15 started dancing to the music from the van.

When school let out the children stopped and the van was swamped with junior high students. Many already had cards but some knew nothing about the library and signed up.

### College and Career Club

This program was held in a Community Center in a Brooklyn ghetto. The center is near a large new housing project and shopping area. The center itself is a fairly new building with facilities for sports and meetings. The program was held in a large room with a stage. Mrs.-----



the local community coordinator was the speaker and Miss -----accompanied her.

The College and Career Club is the only one of its kind in Brooklyn. The members are from the ages of 12 to 16. Most are in junior high. There were about 25 members present, about 10 boys and 15 girls. The children were all well dressed in school clothes. A few of the boys had on shorts and colored tee shirts. Mrs.----- sat on a stool in the front of the room with the children around her in a semi-circle. She had with her about 16 books of plays by Sophocles. The subject of the book talk was Sophocles.

Mrs.----- began by telling a shortened version of Oedipus Rex and then she gave the main plot of Antigone. She gave a brief description of the Greek's idea of the festival and a description of Greek tragedy and explained how much of Greek influence still remains today in the modern theater. As she described the play she fit in certain quotes to keep the children's interest. The children stopped Mrs.----- a few times and asked her a few questions. When she was finished talking about the plays she asked a few questions. Could any part of the problems which Antigone faced be evident in the modern world? The children picked up this question well and brought up the idea of moral law versus civil law. They gave examples of civil rights, the poll tax and capital punishment. After the discussion had come to a close Mrs.----- showed films of a trip to Greece which she had taken. She showed things which were relevant

to her talk, - the Greek countryside where Oedipus was supposed to have killed his father and later wandered. She also showed slides of the ancient Greek ruins of the theater where Sophocles' plays were put on. The children were interested and many asked questions about the country and the people of Greece.

Mrs.----- was very warm and friendly with all the children in the club and seemed to know them all on first name basis. She told me later that she had been working with the children in younger groups for quite a few years. Many of the children's parents were community leaders and she had visited their homes. The majority of these children are college bound. Their parents are the middle class Negroes in this ghetto community. The children reacted well to most of the talk, but towards the end of the discussion they were getting a little restless. Mrs.----- had brought about sixteen copies of the book which she had taken the quotes from. All these books had been checked out at the close of the program.

#### Observation of Sidewalk Service Van

I arrived at the library about 10:30 A.M. Miss-----, the aide, and Mrs.----- loaded the van, and when Mr.----- arrived we left for Bedford Avenue near Brevoort Place. The areas where the van is parked are chosen by the Community Coordinators. They are chosen on the basis of the number of people which the library feels they can reach in this area.

The van was parked in front of a Youth in Action center.



We got out and set up the book stands. There are about seven of these racks and several boxes which are set on the street. Most of the racks were set up with a certain type of books e.g. sports books, Negro history and usually two racks of consumer books. A table is set up with library registration cards. The van contains a tape recorder which plays popular music such as jazz music. Also on the registration table is material such as book lists and brochures on library services. Many of these are in Spanish, Italian and English. The books which are set up are books which would catch the interest of many people in this area. Many are books on current racial problems and consumer problems such as How to Get Your Money's Worth. Books like these are of great relevance to the lives of people living in the ghettos of New York City.

After we had been in front of the Youth in Action center for about an hour we moved down the street where Mr.----- thought we could catch more people. This corner was closer to the business section of the area of Bedford Stuyvesant in which we were located. Mrs.----- sat at the table and Miss----- and Mr. ----- spoke to people as they passed by. They asked the people who walked by if they had cards and told them how they could get them at the van if they wished. If people already had a card they could take out any number of books. If they wished to get a card they were required to show some type of identification with name and address, and they could take out two books. The books were due in two weeks at which time they

could pick up the library card at their nearest branch. If they didn't know where the branch was located the aide showed the person a map of the Brooklyn Public Libraries and located the nearest branch. Mr.-----and the aides were friendly and warm. Many of the people passing by looked at the books and passed. More than half of those who passed by talked to the aides or Mr.----- and many of these signed up for cards. Typical remarks of the passers-by were "Are these books for sale?" Most of those who signed up for cards had no idea where their nearest library was. If the patrons wished a certain type of book, someone would look for it or give them information on where to get it.

Most of the people in this area where the van was parked were Negro. They appeared to be of the working class. Some were housewives but quite a few were working girls in their twenties. One girl said she didn't want any books. All she wanted was money. So Miss----- showed her a book on how to make more money. She signed up for a card and took out two books. Another older man told Mr.----- about his job and how he had organized a group of teenagers at the YMCA. He asked if the library could put on a program for his group.

Later in the afternoon the children arrived just about the same time as the story tellers. The story tellers had a selection of books and the children seemed fascinated by the books.

#### Observation

This program for mothers was held in a public school in a Brooklyn ghetto. The school is an elementary school.

It was scheduled to begin at one o'clock. About one block from the school is a large project which is only about 5 years old. The school itself is about 40 years old. The Head Start program in the neighborhood is held in this school.

The program was held in the school auditorium. There were about twenty mothers present with their children sitting beside them. Most of the mothers were dressed in everyday dresses and some were in slacks. The children were in their school clothes. This had been the last day of the Head Start program in the school. In the front of the room there were books set up. On the stage there was a selection of children's books of all types. On the piano was a much smaller selection of books provided for the mothers to take out. They were books like Dr. Spock's How to Care for Your Child. There were also books on how to help the child in subjects like new math. Along side of the piano was a table for registration and circulation of books in the library. There were two aides present at this table.

About 1:30 the program began. The family counselor for the area introduced the guests. The theme of the program was how to give your children a head start. A worker from a local welfare agency spoke first. She explained welfare procedures and asked for questions. There were none from the mothers. By this time the story tellers from the library arrived and the children had been taken to another room to hear the stories. Then Mrs. ---- the local Community Coordinator was introduced.

She began by introducing the project she represented. She spoke for about fifteen minutes. She presented books which she and her staff felt would be of help to the mothers of Head Start children. Some of these books dealt with specific problems. She explained that these books were available in the library and that if the mothers wished to take out any of these books today they could. They could register for a library card and take out two books or if they already had a card they could take as many as they liked. Then Mrs. ----- who had been in the Brooklyn preschool library program began by reading the first few pages of a book. She went on to explain how children's books had changed. They were no longer the dull and colorless books which we read in our childhood. She explained the concept of books for the preschool child. The mothers were told that books could be taken out by them if their children were too young to get a library card. She continued to give examples of how books could be used to explain difficult concepts to a child. For example she gave The Dear Bird as a book which might help the parent give the child an idea of death. She also used a book entitled What Is Inside Me as an example of how the parent could help the child understand sex. Certain books were presented for the parent to use to help the child in school. For example - number and ABC books. She concluded her talk by explaining the procedure for taking these books out of the library.

Both speakers from the library were achieving some of the objectives of their project. They were introducing adults to the concept of the library outside of the actual building. At the

same time they were getting these adults into the library by letting them know that the books must be returned to their nearest branch library. They were also introducing the children to the books by providing story tellers during the program for the mothers.

Mrs. ----- seems to have chosen many of the wrong types of books. The books on care of children did not seem to be necessary. Not one book of this type was taken out, while books like the ones dealing with new math were all taken out of the collection.

### Observation

A Consumer Education Fair was held at a public school in a Brooklyn ghetto and the library was asked to participate. The library had been asked to participate through the local community coordinator, Mrs. ----- . The fair began at 11 o'clock and was expected to close at 6 o'clock. This was the first program held by the C.C.P. that I had observed.

The school (a well equipped junior high) in which the fair was held is about 10 years old. It is located near the main business and shopping area. The buildings directly surrounding the area are tenements in rundown condition. A block away is a fairly new housing development. I arrived at about 12:30.

Both Mr. ----- and Mrs. ----- were outside with the Sidewalk Service Van. Mr. ----- directed me upstairs to a room



where story tellers were working. The room which they were using was the school library. The library was set up with chairs and tables all facing the windows with the story teller facing the children at a main table in the front of the room. Other story tellers were sitting among the children. Books were displayed on the tables for the children to look at and read. Outside at the van Mr.----- and his aides were directing children to the library and there were signs so that parents knew that they could leave the children in a supervised place while they attended the various workshops being held at the fair. The children attending were, for the most part, neatly dressed except for a few who were in tee shirts. The children varied in ages from 5 to 10. There were groups of children constantly coming in and out. Sandwiches and soft drinks were served to the children. This was done by women who were working on the fair.

There were three story tellers in the room when I arrived. They were all dressed in cool summer dresses and were talking to the children as they were drinking their soda pop. The selection of books which the story tellers had was excellent. They had brought books of varied interests for younger children. (Fairy tales and books like The Red Balloon, Andy and the Lion, Where the Wild Things Are, Five Chinese Brothers are a few examples.) Also there were songs which were in illustrated books. They explained to the children that these were books which could be taken out of their libraries and directed them to the van outside if they wished to sign up. The story tellers were bringing the books to the



attention of the children. The books selected to be read kept the interest of most of the children and made them aware that the library was theirs to use.

I observed all three of the story tellers. Each had her own particular style. One of the women began with a song to get the attention of the children and then chose a book to read. She seemed to just read the book with very little imagination or interest in the children. Her voice was too low and she didn't have much inflection. Another didn't read any stories. She concentrated on the illustrated story books like Billy Boy. I felt she should have chosen or let the children choose the stories because they didn't seem to know the songs and very few of them participated. The last story teller was by far the best. She let the children choose the stories they wished to hear, and often let them read. There was a much greater response on the part of the children. More took part in the stories and seemed to be enjoying themselves than earlier in the afternoon. About every 45 minutes the story tellers would stop and circulate throughout the room talking and reading to the children individually. This seemed to be what each child liked best.

As a whole the program went well but I felt that there were many things lacking. Since the library planned this for the younger children they should have planned something for the children from the ages of 10 to 12. This was evident from the fact that children that age kept running in and out of the room disturbing the younger children all afternoon. Also I felt that

the children should have had more of books to be read. During the stories many of the children took no interest especially during the illustrated story books. They seemed to like finger games and followups to the stories best. One of the over-all objectives mentioned in the progress reports of the CCP is to make children love books. This type of story telling program makes the children aware of books in an atmosphere outside of school. It is also a case where the library comes to the child. The fair was aimed mainly at parents but while providing this opportunity for the children to become acquainted with the library it forced the parents to see the library not as just that institutional building full of dusty books which is down the street.

While all this was going on inside the library the sidewalk service van was parked outside. Mr.-----, Mrs.----- and two aides were present. They were registering people for library cards and allowing those with cards to take out books. I only observed this for a short while because most of my time was used in observing the story telling program. One interesting incident occurred just before the close of the program. A man who had been drinking began talking to Mr.----- about how he had a problem. Mr.----- thought that the man was saying that he was an alcoholic. He referred him to AA and told him about its facilities. The man explained that this wasn't his real trouble but that he could not read very well. He explained how he had found it necessary to quit school at an early grade and had never continued reading. He said that he was eager to try to improve his

education. Mr.----- then helped the man select a book which was at his level and registered him for a library card. This type of situation is typical, Mr.----- said. For the library to reach people such as this man it is necessary for them to appear in the community with the van. A man such as this would never enter a library to ask them for assistance. Therefore the library and its staff must make an effort to reach out. From my observation on Saturday I feel that the CCP is aiding the people in Brooklyn through services such as the ones I have described.

#### Observation

Community Coordinator van is parked at the corner of Bedford Avenue and Brevoort Place; a short tree-lined street of brown-stones, near the Youth In Action family planning clinic and across the street from some businesses. There are more cabs than people around the street. The van, a panel truck lined with books inside, has two loudspeakers from which comes Latin and jazz music. There are about four library staff and two children's librarians around. A card table on the sidewalk has literature about the library. Some wrought iron standing racks holding hardback books are spread along the sidewalk near the wall of a building. There is also a wooden rack of new paperbacks, and the children's aides have set up a rack of children's books.

Finally two Negro mothers come along dragging four young children. The aide captures three, with the mothers' consent, and

sits on a step to read to them and sing some songs. The mothers meanwhile have gotten literature from the table. The two older children are interested and attentive.

Several people came by to get library cards or take out books. A selection of books deals with Negro history and problems, child care, biography, sports, etc. also Spanish books. Paperback books are marked only with date due, and no one knows to whom the books are issued.

One aide has moved down the street to the fire escape steps of an old brick theater. She has given books to three little girls, and two others, who are three or younger, are climbing around. One mother sits in a chair on the sidewalk, a baby in her lap; an older woman sits on a milk crate.

An aide then brings all the children to the stoop closer to the van, where there are more books. A mother and father bring a little girl and leave her while they go sit in the shade across the street. One aide reads to one child, the other occasionally points out pictures.

### Interview with Mr. A

Mr. A \_\_\_\_\_ is the Senior Community Coordinator of the Community Coordinator Project of the BPL. On June 7th Mrs. Burrows and I met him at his office in the branch library for an interview. He began talking by explaining his part in the project. He was the first community coordinator in Brooklyn and began his work in 1961. Mr. A \_\_\_\_\_ found it necessary to join several community groups as an actual dues-paying member. He worked directly with Youth In Action (he is now a member of the board, the Brownsville, Red Hook and Bushwick Community Councils, and with groups ranging from businessmen to explorer scouts. By becoming a member of these groups he could show each group how they could benefit from library services.

We saw selections of books used in the Three B's\* program and pictures of some of the shops in which they have been placed. Also there were pictures of the sidewalk service van taken on some of its various stops. The bookmobile goes out several times a month to various areas of Brooklyn. Mr. A \_\_\_\_\_ seemed to feel that the van was one of the most successful parts of the CCP. He said that often the responses of people to the van's services are better in the more disadvantaged areas of Brooklyn.

Recently the library has had exhibits at Food Fairs in the area. They have participated in setting up the Macon Adult Education Classes and have suggested and made up book lists.

\* The Three B's are Beauty Parlors, Bars, Barber Shops.

**BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMUNITY COORDINATOR PROJECT**

**Interviews**



A \_\_\_\_\_ and his staff evaluate the materials needed in the collections. Each Community Coordinator (there are four) has his own separate collection from the branch library in which he is located. The evaluation is made on the basis of requests by the borrowers of the library.

Unfortunately, many of these activities have been discontinued during the month of June because of school closings, graduations and due to the fact that several organizations are setting up summer programs to begin in July. Mr. A \_\_\_\_\_ suggested that I go out with the van several times for observation. There are also meetings where a speaker from the CCP will be present, as for example at a Parents of a Head Start group and a meeting of the Career and College Club.

There will be a Consumer Education Fair where the van and story tellers will be present. These meetings will present a chance to see the program in action and to talk to the people whom the van contacts. Mr. A \_\_\_\_\_ also suggested the names of several community leaders with whom he had worked who he felt would be of help.

The programs which the CCP has been working with seem very exciting and inventive. The interviews and observations of the CCP should prove rewarding, allowing me to see the project in action.

Interview with Miss C

Miss C, is the Community Coordinator for another area of Brooklyn. Her office is in a branch of the BPL. I was supposed to observe on van with her and her staff but the weather was cloudy and rain was predicted so the van did not go out on this date.

Miss C. began by explaining what she felt was the main objective of the Community Coordinator Project. She said that it was a project designed to attract the adult nonreader to the library. A project with its main emphasis on the adult, not the child. They try to reach this adult through the organizations in the community. A form letter is sent out to all organizations which the coordinator feels could make use of library services. Sometimes clubs or groups reply and many times they do not. Miss C. explained that when she became a coordinator much work had already been done in the area of connecting organizations by Mr. A. Often when one community organization has heard about the services that the library can offer other groups approach the library. One community leader will let another know about the availability of library services. Still recruiting must be done by the coordinator, some of which can be very enjoyable. Miss C told of one occasion when she was invited to the opening of a casino in Bushwick. In the atmosphere of Scotch and pop music she made dates to hold programs for about six organizations.

Miss C. proceeded to give examples of programs which

she has held in her district which are typical of those held in other areas of Brooklyn. They have worked with JOIN This is an organization of young adults of whom many are high school drop outs in which they attempt to train and find the members jobs. One of the leaders of the group was contacted by the library and asked if the group would like to make an organized trip to the library. Miss C. arranged for the library to be open on a night which it is usually closed. Seventy three members and five teachers came. Two films were shown, and books were circulated. The group asked if they could have another similar program in a few months. Miss C. made arrangements with the branch librarian and the program was again well attended. Members of

JOIN came from not only Brooklyn but Manhattan and the Bronx.

Another group with which Miss C. has regular contact is the senior citizens' organization in the area. She said that she gives book talks fairly regularly, and usually they are well attended. They have also arranged for this organization to hold art exhibits in the library. At the close of the senior citizens' club last year, the members provided food and Miss C. arranged for them to have this in the library. Under the LSCA the CCP is not allowed to provide food at any of their functions. Another regular program which Miss C. puts on is with a home-making class which meets every six weeks in the project located next to the Bushwick Branch. During each session she gives a book talk on some aspect of homemaking. She has been requested to bring books on subjects like catering.

Miss C. explained another way in which she felt the adult nonreader can be reached. She said that she has placed exhibits in a few banks and housing projects. One of them was in the only Puerto Rican bank in New York City. This exhibit was entirely in Spanish. Most of the exhibits in the banks are in display cases while those in the projects are manned exhibits. Themes such as summer reading and books as gifts are used in these exhibits.

Miss C. expressed a wish to work with more industries in the Brooklyn area. She said that in 1965 the library had been allowed to place an exhibit in the cafeteria of the Fison Chemical Company. They had placed two manned tables at each end of the company cafeteria and she said that in that one day alone the library had reached at least 1000 people. Some of the more recent programs have been book talks with the Young Israel Club of Brooklyn. This was a book talk in which ten books were discussed. The books were presented in contrast such as modern and traditional. The group consisted of women of varied ages. Miss Bullock said the turn out was excellent and that they were asked to return next year. She also spoke at a meeting of the Hebrew organization. This time only one book was used. The talk went over well but the library had only provided books in English and the members of this group wished books in Hebrew. They were asked to return again next year. Miss C. said that the problem of books in languages other than English was often found in groups of a foreign ethnic group. She explained that she had learned Spanish and had spoken in Spanish at a PTA meeting which consisted predominantly

of Spanish speaking people. She said that knowing their language and attempting to speak it broke the barrier which often existed with adults of a non-English speaking group. Once she spoke in her broken Spanish the audience was much more at ease.

Miss C. expressed a desire to let me know that all the programs of the CCP were not complete successes. She said that often they learn by their mistakes. For example, when she returns to the Hebrew Organization next year she will bring books in Hebrew. She said that often films do not work out for the group for which they had planned them. The coordinator must learn from experience what is best for separate groups.

Interview with Community Leader

Mr.--Z----- was one of the community leaders to whom Mr. ---A----- referred me for an interview. Mr. ---Z----- is an officer of a bank and loan society. He said that he had known about the CCP since Mr. -A----- first began working on the project in 1961.

He said that he had always thought of the library as a pretty dull place. "I never knew anyone who went to the library except maybe once in a while for a book." He said that since Mr. ----- had initiated the CCP he himself has found the library to be not just a building storing books but a great information center which can offer varied and needed services to the community. "Now when I see Mr.----- I think of the library." Mr. ----- said that he felt he was only one of the members of the community who had been made aware of the library as a living institution. He felt that the CCP had done an amazing job in helping people in all levels. He said he had attended various programs, such as the investment program.



Interview with Community Coordinator

Mrs. ----- has been a Community Coordinator since 1964.

She said that she had had good results from her program in P \_\_\_\_\_

but that things were slow at this time of year. Mrs. ----- said that she felt all the programs must be designed to attract all types of people in the community and therefore must be designed to meet a primary need of the community. She said that often some type of bait must be attached to the activity e.g. loud music on the van. Mrs. ----- was very busy and time didn't permit her to offer a more complete interview.

Interview with Head of the Brooklyn Community Coordinator Council

Mrs.-----had heard of the CCP from Mr.-----who was a member of the board of the Central Brooklyn Community Coordinator Council. She explained the nature of her organization. It is a group which coordinates all the community organizations in Brooklyn and tries to direct the programs of all these various organizations. This organization started in Bedford Stuyvesant to get all organizations to work for the good of one another. They have five group meetings a year with representatives of all the groups present. She said that at fairs, such as the consumer education fair which I attended, the library would bring the van and provide story tellers so that more parents would be able to attend. Mrs.-----said that the people appreciated the fact that they could come to the fair and feel that not only they benefited but that their children had an opportunity to be introduced to the library.

She said that she knew that several organizations which were members of the Central Brooklyn Coordinator Council had used the library services offered by the CCP Youth in Action, JOIN and Boys' Clubs were some she mentioned. She said in closing that she felt that the library should try and make the nature of their varied services known to more of the organizations in the neighborhood.

Interview with Family Counselor

She knew about the CCP from Mrs.----- whom she had known before she was a community coordinator. She said that the library had been a great help to her by bringing books and films to programs such as hers. She also mentioned the fact that it also was a great help when the story tellers came to the Head Start programs.

Interviews with ChildrenFive year old boy

He knew about the library because his mother had taken him there. Also, he had had the story tellers tell him stories on the van when it was near his house.

Boy in second grade

He knew about the library. The teacher had taken him when he was in the first grade. He said that his brothers and sisters did not go but that his parents went.

Interview with Aide

She said that often aides spend much of their time on busy work. They often plan programs and spend time collecting books for the programs. The collections of the project often don't have enough copies of certain books which are connected with a particular subject which a program is being centered on.

Interview with Minister (Telephone)

Reverend ----- knew of the CCP because he knew Mr. A----- personally. He said that there had never been any programs put on by the library in his church. The library did post a calendar of events on the church bulletin board. If the people in his church are particularly interested in a program put on by the library they will attend. Reverend ----- said that he felt that the library had been of a great service to the people of the area in recent years. He said he knew of the work of the van and felt that it was providing a needed service to the community.



Interview with Community Leader.

Mrs. ----- is the representative for Bedford-Stuyvesant for the BPL council. She said she had known Mr. A----- since he had begun the CCP in the Bedford Stuyvesant area. She said that she felt that the program as a whole had been a help to the community. She mentioned a series of programs on investment which had been offered earlier in the year. She said that she had attended and that the material offered by the CCP was good and that the programs were well attended. She felt that if they had been announced in more places in the community that more people would have attended. This was a common complaint which Mrs. ----- made. She felt that when the library is offering a program it should be made known to more people in the community.

She said that she had attended lectures on Negro history which the library offered and she felt that more programs like this which are of such great interest to the people of the community should be arranged. Mrs. ----- mentioned a series of poetry reading which the CCP had sponsored. She felt that this didn't go over very well. The point she made was that many people in a ghetto area have enough to do and don't go to a poetry reading on a Monday night. She felt that this might have been better attended if it had been held on a Sunday afternoon. Programs such as this do not meet a primary need of the community and this is what she felt the CCP should be attempting to do first.

She felt that the CCP must do a greater amount of moving out into the community and that they should keep increasing their collection of pocket books. Mrs.----- seemed to be very upset with the idea of the van. She thought that many books would be lost if they were given out on the van. Other than this she had no objection to the program.

Interviews - College and Career ClubBoy - Junior High - Negro

He had been to the library about a month ago. He had gotten a book for a book review. He felt that the library should make more films available. Everyone in his family used the library.

Girl - Junior High - Negro

She had been to the library about two months ago to get out a book she wanted to read. She said that her parents sometimes go to the library to see films. She couldn't think of anything the library could offer the club or her which it didn't already do.

Boy - Junior High - Negro

He had gone to the library a few weeks ago on a class visit. He thought his younger brothers and sisters used the library.

Interviews at Sidewalk Service Van Program

Miss ----- (aide to Mr. A.

Miss ----- had formerly been a story teller for the BFL in the pre-school program. When she decided to attend library school she applied for the job as aide to Mr. A. She has been working at this job for over a month. She told me that this day was a typical day on the van with the exception that there were not many children in the area. She said that usually the children arrive in the morning and do not leave until night or late afternoon. The response she has seen from the van has been excellent. For instance, many books circulated are paperbacks and the name of the borrower is not placed on the record. She explained that few books were lost in this manner. She told me that many contacts are made on the van.

Woman from the Board of Youth in Action

She had heard of the CCP from Mr. A. who is also a member of the Youth in Action board. She explained that the organization had always had good cooperation with the library. She said that the library had planned book talks and exhibits for basic education classes organized by Youth in Action. "The library and especially Mr. A. have been helpful in planning programs and in letting us use the facilities which are at their disposal." She went on to say that the main problem in Bedford-Stuyvesant with the libraries was not cooperation with organizations but the fact that there were not enough branch libraries for the population. She did not feel that the facilities in her area were large enough.

Interviews at Parent MeetingMother - age 30- Negro

"Yes I go to the library. I often take my child and get books for my husband and myself. I have been going since I was in school myself. I encourage my children to go and I take the younger children if I feel that they are too young to go themselves."

Mother - age 25- Negro

"No I don't go to the library. All my children are young and I didn't realize that it was for children. I thought that the books could only be read inside the library. Today was the first time I knew the books could be taken home. I took out some children's books today and will try to encourage my children to go in the future."

Mother - age 20- Spanish

Spoke poor English. She said that she knew nothing about the library. She was glad to know that they had books in Spanish. She said that she would try to go in the future and to take her child.

Interviews held at Consumer Education FairChild about 5 (girl)

She said she knew about the library and had library cards. Her favorite type of books were stories like The Red Balloon and Madeline. She had first heard about the library from the van before she was in school. After that they had told her at school and there were two branches near her home.

Child about 7 (girl)

She knew about the library and had first learned about it in school. She had two library cards: one for school and one for the public library. Her favorite type of book was Curious George. She read well for her age.

Child - 6 - (boy)

He knew nothing about the library before this day. He had been sent to story telling room by Mr. ----- after he and two friends had walked off with 8 books. The boy had no idea what a library was but liked books. He wasn't able to read very well but seemed very happy to know that he could take books out of the library.

Child - 9 - (boy)

He knew about the library. He had first heard of it in school when his teacher took him on a class visit. Comic books were his favorite books. He said he didn't go to the library because they had no comic books.



Woman - age 40 (Worked for organization that put on the fair.)

She didn't know about the CCP by name but had heard of the services offered by the library. She went to the library herself and encouraged her children to go. She felt that the story tellers were a great help to her organization: they allowed more parents to attend the fair as there was a place to leave the children which was supervised. She also felt the van was a great aid to the community. The only suggestion she offered was that the library do this type of program at more fairs of this sort.

Social Worker in the Brownsville area

He had heard of the CCP during his work with the Career and College Club. He felt that the programs offered by this project were very effective. He stated that book talks and films which the library had arranged for the organizations he worked with had been successful. He felt that the main emphasis should be placed on the preschool child. If the children are reached he felt that the adults would go to the library.

InterviewsBoy - Negro - 8

He went to a Catholic school and had no idea of what the library was. He was glad to take out books and thought he would go to the library soon.

Boy - Negro - 8

He knew nothing about the library and didn't like books but after hanging around the van for about half an hour he took out a book.

Woman - Negro - 25

She had a card from The New York Public Library but she had just moved to Brooklyn. She said she thought the van was a great idea and thought they should have it in Manhattan.

OBSERVATIONS

North Manhattan Project  
The New York Public Library

Countee Cullen Gallery  
Art Reception Preview

My husband and I went to Countee Cullen at 7:30 for the "Art Reception Preview" by the Weusi Art Creators. The gallery is on a balcony overhanging the main reading room and the stacks of the library. When we arrived only four people were in the gallery. We wandered around, looked at the show and also looked down below at the main room of the library. Two of the observers of the show (all of the people were in their late twenties or early thirties) left and one teenager (girl) came up and then several more people began arriving. Several people greeted one another. It turned out that they were two of the artists.

Nothing in particular seemed to be happening so we went downstairs and explored the other parts of the library including the Schomburg Collection.

We returned to the gallery and the four people there were all seated on a couch talking with one another. By this time it was 8:30 and we decided to leave. I had noticed a punch bowl and paper plates off in a side room near the gallery but did not know whether it had any relation to the art show.

As we left I noticed a sign telling of a memorial being held at P.S. 175 for Langston Hughes (one block from the library) at the same time and wondered whether that had anything to do with the small number of people at the art show.

After talking with the program director on April 6 I learned that the "reception" connected with the art show had begun after 9:00. "You see, in Harlem everything begins very late. Nothing happens early. It's very hard to schedule anything but we have to be very flexible if we want the people to come to the library." The program director also mentioned the Langston Hughes memorial and said that it took away most of the library's crowd. "The people come home and change and a few came here before the memorial. It really stole any interest for the show."

The party really got going later with a few people. They forgot cups so it was a problem. See, we aren't allowed to buy food or that sort of thing for coffee groups under the project money. So the people bring their own refreshments, but last night they forgot cups to drink the punch from.

"Did you hear the music?" I hadn't. "That was really great. Some of them brought records. Since it was late we started the music softly. It didn't bother anyone in the library so it was turned up. I'm sorry that you weren't here."

Evening at Countee and Schomburg

General Observations About the Use of the  
Library on a Monday Evening - open until 9:00

There were about 15 to 20 people scattered about the main area of Countee Cullen. Two teenagers (boy and a girl of 14 to 16 years) were industriously working on what appeared to be research papers in the young adult section of the library. One other young boy was working on homework in the section next to the young adult area. The remainder of the people were seated at tables or browsing in the stacks. One man was watching television. It seemed quite likely from his behavior that he was a drug addict.

We did not go to the children's room but did go to the Schomburg Library. The main room was quite busy with older students, both Negro and white, who were studying. There were also some adults reading magazines and pamphlets at the various tables.

Since this was my first visit to the libraries I did not talk with anyone or really explore the shelves., etc. I wanted to wait until the next day when I was to see the program director and would then be formally introduced to the library staff.



Children's Lecture  
with author Lorenz Graham 4:00 P.M.

The program director took me to the children's room and introduced me to Miss S., the children's specialist under the NMP. I went into a side room of the children's library where the lecture was to be held. Mr. Graham began soon after four. Only 11 children were there at that time. Six very small boys (5-7 yrs.) were seated together and the rest were girls scattered about the group of chairs facing Mr. Graham. Several of these girls wore uniforms from a parochial school.

As Mr. Graham talked about how he first began to write and then described his books, more and more children of various ages trickled into the room. This side room is separated from the main children's room by a door and glass window with sliding panes. Girls of 9-11 years stood outside the room near the open windows and appeared to be listening to the talk. By 4:25 close to 25 children had come into the lecture.

At the end of the talk Mr. Graham began asking the children questions about themselves. What they wanted to do, where they went to school, etc. This discussion lasted for 10 minutes. The children seemed quite shy and whispered their answers. They all seemed quite fascinated by what he had to say. Near the end of the question period several girls got up and left. Five minutes later I noticed one of them returning with one of Mr. Graham's books clutched in her arms.

When the group broke up many of the kids flocked around Mr. Graham to get his autograph. A number of the children who had been listening outside also came in during the next fifteen minutes seeking his autograph.

I talked with one boy who sat at a table off to the side with me during the lecture. He had listened to the lecture, occasionally glanced at Mr. Graham and then leafed through an encyclopedia. I asked where he went to school and what grade he was in. He is in the 5th grade at St. \_\_\_\_\_ ( I believe) a Catholic school in the 140's. This boy - Rafael - a Negro had a slight accent probably indicating he has fairly recently come from one of the islands - said that all his friends came to the library. His parents don't use the library, but his older sisters do. He also said that he came to some of the things the library had but not all of them.

When I asked him what other sorts of things he would like the library to have he said, "I wish they had a television up here. They have one downstairs in the adult part." I asked him if he could use that TV. "I guess I could but it's in the adult part of the library."

I then wandered into the main room and looked about. The children's library is a delightful place. There is considerable chatter and the rooms were filled with kids of all ages. The shelves are filled with new and exciting books and the total environment is cheerful and a pleasure to be in. There were four librarians in the room who were continuously mobile and one boy -

a Puerto Rican - 18 yrs. working at the desk checking out books. The children would run up to one of the librarians and ask for a great variety of books or types of assistance with homework.

"Miss S. \_\_\_\_\_" said a 9 or 10 yr. old boy, "I want a book on World War I. Any book at all." She went off with him.

A heavy girl of 11 or 12 yrs. came up to another librarian and said in a deep husky voice, "Heh, I want you to get me that great book about sex."

There were two mothers in the room working with small children as they found books.

I talked with Mrs. W. about the children's library and asked what they were planning for the next few weeks. They too have discontinued most of their special programs but do have classes coming in for tours. They send notices to all the neighborhood schools inviting them to come for a visit and a program to be held at the same time. The classes can only come once and they see a movie or hear stories. After that they tell the teachers of the neighborhood that they are welcome to bring their classes back after two o'clock as a group even though they will not have a planned program. Several teachers have done this regularly through the year. When I asked for references, she said that they had not ever recorded the names of the teachers. She then remembered two teachers who had frequently returned from P.S. 175. One of these teachers even came after school with his classes. I am attempting to reach these people and hope to get further leads from there.

Mrs. W. said that the NMP had made it possible for the Library to extend all the special services and events to the community. "See that shelf of books there?" There was a wall filled with books for very young children. "We completely stocked that with NMP money. Those books disappear very fast. It's pretty full now but in a few months they'll be gone. The books are small and thin so the children lose them very easily. We need lots of money to keep it full."

Mrs. S. \_\_\_\_\_ asked me whether I had seen the schedule and said that she would have more time to talk another day. "Things are pretty much over for this year. They're just some tours left. Then we'll have a summer program." She had to help a child. I asked Mrs. W. about the summer program. "Last summer we did wonderful things up here. Everything will be very different this year. There aren't enough people. Anyway most of the kids have day camp and things like that. We had one great idea - having story picnics in the library. But the main office said no. Now we are planning to go to some of the community centers with stories. We want to reach the kids who don't go to camp or belong to anything. They come to the centers. We'll go and maybe they'll start to come. We want something pretty unstructured. We'll read a few stories. Then we'll have a balloon parade back to the library and run a more structured program here. We hope it works. We're just beginning to work on it."

Countee Cullen,  
observing, asking questions and going  
with an 8th grade class on a tour

I arrived at Countee Cullen at 9:40 just before the class scheduled to have a tour arrived. The class came from the Bronx ( a mixed Negro and Puerto Rican group) with their teacher and their school's librarian. The class explored the main room of Countee Cullen and then was led by the young adult librarian down to the auditorium in the basement.

She explained that they were to see a movie, "Free At Last" which had only been shown to two other classes. She apologized to them that the movie they had hoped to see "The History of the Negro People" had to suddenly go to another branch. She asked them to give her their "honest opinion at the end" about the movie and whether other classes should see it.

While the projector was being fixed she asked the class how many of them had ever been to Countee Cullen. Only one boy had. She told them that if they saw any book they wanted they were welcome to take it out if they had their library cards with them and then return the book to the branches in the Bronx.

She told them that there would be "lots of programs this summer so watch for them. Last summer we had two steel bands playing. Kids from Har-you played them. Then we had a wild rock and roll band called the Sparks. They played in the movie "Up the Down Staircase". Maybe you have read that although it's pretty



hard."

The class then saw the movie which traced the history of the Negro very briefly from the time of the emancipation. The sound was very poor and the projector made a terrible racket. At one point the projector broke. While the man exchanged projectors the young adult librarian told the group about Countee Cullen, the poet, and about the Schomburg Collection. The group seemed bored and grew rather restless. The movie continued but at least ten of the thirty kids paid little attention and chattered among themselves.

At the end, the young adult librarian had trouble getting their attention to introduce a Negro woman of about 45 yrs., Mrs. S. \_\_\_\_\_ who would take them to the gallery to see the art exhibit and then to the Schomburg Collection. A number of kids asked to go to the bathroom or for water so she, after several attempts, got their attention and said that they would stop at the bathrooms and then continue the tour. The young adult librarian told them that she had put book lists for them at the door. In the hall outside of the bathrooms a table had been set up with several books and piles of the booklets made under the NMP called "Books About and By Negroes". The kids gathered around the table and seemed to be quite interested in the lists and examined the books together.

When the group went to the gallery I talked with four boys who immediately sat down and never looked at the art work. "Our teacher made us come."

"Now we don't use the library. What's in a library?"



"The library is too far away. It seems sort of cool. A TV in a library."

"I've seen this library before. I used to come down this way last summer. I went to a group down the street. . . No, I never came in the library. I saw lots of people always coming out and in. I never knew what for."

The girls in the group looked at the painting quite intently and said that they used their school library all the time.

Mrs. S. \_\_\_\_\_ took the group to the Schomburg Collection in the next building. She immediately gave up trying to talk to the class as a group. The kids spread through out the room examining the exhibits, playing with the globe and looking at the statues. I talked with more of the group but their answers indicated that they didn't use Countee Cullen. If they used any library it was their school library.

I then talked with their school librarian. She knew about Countee Cullen and many of its activities although she had not heard of the NMP. "It's too far for these kids. It's a funny class. The girls are much brighter than the boys. That makes it pretty hard. Our school is a real mess but the only nice place is the library. They seem to come a lot. Most of them don't even have public library cards. Maybe they once did but they're scared to go back because they lost books or have fines. I even went to the branch near them and tried to convince the people there to let me bring back the books and to give the kids another chance. They thought I was crazy. I knew they did that here. I let everyone

take books out of our school library. You should see the stack of overdue notices. I have nightmares all the time now that my shelves will be empty next year. I just hate to get after these poor kids."

As the class left, their teacher asked Mrs. S. what the hours of the library were and whether there were any books on Langston Hughes available. "We're doing a memorial for him on Monday and I have to write a narration." Mrs. S. told her that she would gather what was still in the library and leave it at the desk for her. The teacher also said that she felt the kids really enjoyed the trip.

The library opened to the public at 12:30 and first 15 people streamed in and then 10 more came in, in the next 2 minutes. Books were returned, people went to the magazines or sought new books. One woman went to the main desk and said she had lost a book but couldn't pay for it. She was told that they would work it out. She asked whether she might read the paper and she was told that she was welcome to continue using the library. I spent 30 minutes exploring the main floor and the young adult sections. I found the vocational material (mentioned at JHS 2) among other things. The young adult section is not completely enclosed, but is off at one end. The shelves are filled with new books on the whole and numerous copies of some books were evident.

I then went into young adult librarian's office and sat with her and Mrs. S.

I asked whether there was an adult librarian under the NMP and they said no. The general staff took care of the adults. "There really isn't much of a program just for adults here. Most of the work is with the kids." I asked what the situation with the staff was. I wondered whether there was just a lack of trained people or not sufficient funds to hire them. She went through the history of the people who had worked at Countee Cullen during the past year or two. The major difficulty lay in the lack of librarians. Also there are very few young adult librarians around. She lost three women who worked with her this year for a variety of reasons. One left because the NMP was to end in March and she took another job.

About 1,800 children are registered as borrowers in the young adult section which includes 8th grade up to approximately ages 18 or 20. There are several hundred more children registered, due to the fact they think that they come with their classes, and about the same number (1,800) adults. When I asked, the young adult librarian said that more young adult girls were registered than boys but that the boys seemed to spend more time in the library. "I'm always aware of more boys. I think they come here together to do their homework."

Mrs. S. is currently running the only group activity still in session in the library. It is a class for unwed mothers that meets once a week. "I took over the class from the young adult librarian and we had a large group several months ago. . . about 35. Now it's dwindled to about nine, sometimes only five. I have to go call

right now to find out why. I think the girls have been transferred elsewhere but I have to check."

The young adult librarian said, "Mrs. S. has done great things with the girls. She had several sessions on charm and how to keep themselves. They saw a movie which I want to see." They both decided that I should not sit in on this particular group.

Young adult librarian: "Even though I started with these girls and they know me I will not go back to listen. It isn't fair to them. They see me around and they're pretty nervous."

I asked them what they planned for the summer. They were not sure but would see when the young adult librarian returned from her vacation. The young adults are all busy during the summer. "None of the kids come in here anymore. They have graduation and too many outside activities. You won't see any of them around to speak of. The season has really been over for over a month."

Children's Library Countee Cullen  
6th Grade Tour and Program

I arrived at the library soon after 9:00 A.M. and chatted with the librarians in the children's section for 20 minutes. They had an opportunity to ask me some questions about my purpose for being in the library. At 9:20 the sixth grade class arrived in the children's section. A young librarian in training, Miss L., who works part time in the children's section was going to give the tour. Miss L. comes from the Midwest, is about 25, and studying at Pratt Institute. She plans to return to the Midwest next year.



"They have been wonderful to me here. I never dreamed that they would let me do so much. It's been hard because I didn't know anything about Negro history. Working here is quite an experience. They just let me try all kinds of things and that's the best way to learn. I hope this program goes all right now. I'm not sure of what I am doing." She went into the side room of the children's library and faced the class that had seated themselves. The class consisted of 12 girls and one boy who looked younger.

Miss L. welcomed the class and their teacher, a young Negro teacher, to Countee Cullen and told them briefly what she would do. First she wanted to tell them about the children's library and then they would get to see the rest of Countee Cullen and the Schomburg Collection.

The program for the class consisted of the following:

Miss L. asked the class if they had heard of the Anansi in Africa and led a brief discussion about where they lived referring to a map on the cover of a book. She stood in front of a small round table that had five books standing on it. Miss L. showed the class pictures of the kings' stool used by this particular tribe instead of a throne. After showing the class pictures of several types of stools she told them a folk tale. The class seemed only mildly interested at first; suddenly one could see in their faces that they were listening to the tale being recited and half way through it they began to laugh in the expected places. When the tale was over one could see

that they were pleased with that experience.

Miss L. then discussed the James W. Johnson Collection that stood in the room we were in. The books were exclusively about Negroes and their history here in the U.S. and in Africa and the Carribean Islands. She then began to discuss the books she had set out on the table one by one. In between books she would direct questions to the class which was all Negro. She asked whether they had heard of various people, if they had read certain books and if they knew where various areas were in Africa.

The children were quite shy and did not display much knowledge relating to the specific questions. As she talked the class grew more restless - more accurately six girls in the back began to whisper, one began to suck her thumb. Miss L. would pause briefly if she saw someone talk and the child would immediately stop. Miss L. handled the group very efficiently and displayed considerable self confidence. As she spoke, she periodically glanced at the class' teacher: these glances seemed to be seeking approval or disapproval of what she was saying about some particular Negro or an aspect of African history. The teacher busily wrote down the names of books mentioned.

Miss L. then told the class about the Schomberg Collection. She also told the children that they were welcome to browse about the children's library and take out any books which might interest them. "Do any of you want to get library cards today?" A number of the children said that they would. At least half of the group indicated this. "You know that you



won't be able to take out any books today if you are just getting a card." There was a groan from the children. "Do any of you have cards?" One girl said that she did, but then said it wasn't true.

Miss L. immediately led the class out of the children's library.. I was somewhat confused because they did not get an opportunity really to browse and no one was shown where she could sign up for a card. We went downstairs to the main room of Countee Cullen. As we walked down I spoke with several girls. It turned out that they came from P.S. 157 and were not all from the same class. A few children from each class had been selected.

The four girls that I talked with at this point had never been to Countee Cullen even though it was in easy walking distance from their homes. "We use our school library" was the general response.

Their teacher, when I spoke with her for a moment, said that a few went to the 125th St. Branch but that most of the kids found books, if they read, in the school library. "I am very interested in the books the librarian mentioned. Our school library doesn't have this kind of thing yet. We are in the annex school so there are really two libraries. The annex has a poor selection so far." She had to catch up with the front of her group.

Two girls from the group came up to me and asked whether I was a librarian. I simply told them that I was a teacher.

We were passing through the main room of Countee Cullen at this point. "What's that over there?" asked one girl. I explained that it was a television and several others gathered asking about the TV. I found myself describing it and its use. "I never heard of that in a library!" "What's up there?" The girl was pointing to the area of the art show on the balcony so again I explained. As we walked through to the Schomburg Collection five girls walked with me asking questions about the library. I must admit that I found myself giving something of a sales talk about all the things this library offered to them. This class was not taken to the art show. I think this was unfortunate because the girls appeared to be interested.

Schomburg library was open this morning and ten people were working at the tables -- all but one were Negroes. Everyone seemed to be studying or writing. The children were asked to be very quiet. Several of the "scholars" (as they were referred to by Miss L.) seemed rather annoyed by the disturbance that a class passing through caused. The children were shown newspapers on racks that came from Africa and then led to the display cases. All but three girls were fascinated by what they saw. The three others wandered as though totally bored and stared out the windows near the display cases.

Two girls, who had appeared to be especially interested during the whole program, came and asked me whether they could take books out of the Schomburg Collection. I directed them to Miss L. for the answer. Then four girls went to their teacher

and I overheard them asking whether they could study Africa. The teacher explained that it was too late this year but told them that it was a wonderful idea.

Several of these girls then wandered over to me. "These books here on Africa are really neat," said one girl. "Why can't we study this stuff now?" asked another. The librarian then showed the group the oldest book in the collection and led them to the statue of Ira Aldrich and told the history of the famous actor.

As the librarian led the group back to Countee Cullen the children looked around the room, touched the statue and reluctantly followed their teacher out. They all seemed very pleased with their trip as they left.

"It is so hard to know how to discuss Negro heritage with these classes that come. One time I referred to their people as Negroes and their teacher came to me afterwards and said that I was never to refer to black people as Negroes but as Afro-Americans. Then another time I used Afro-Americans and that teacher told me they were colored people. It's very hard to know quite what to say."

She then went on to say that she came from the Midwest and found her experience at Countee Cullen "the best thing that had ever happened."

P.S. 100  
Art Show put on by the children

I went to P.S. 100 with three of the children's room's librarians. Two of these, a young woman and man, had been hired under NMP funds. The third was a trainee from the Midwest. They said that they wanted to go just to see and asked if I would like to come along. We walked to the school and talked along the way. No one on the street said anything to them but quietly stared at our procession. As we walked we passed a church elementary school. I asked the young woman whether they sent groups to the library.

"You know, they are really the most horrible school. We sent them a letter in the fall inviting them to schedule classes to come for our programs and tours. Their headmistress wrote back that her children used the library anyway and didn't need our tours. Well, I wrote a nice letter back explaining that we had changed our programs and did much more than only giving a tour. The letter was really nice. They never bothered to answer us."

One young man said, "Naturally they think that their kids are better than any one else in the neighborhood." "I don't see where they get that idea. We see those kids in the street all the time," said the other.

"You know what we should do? We should take films of what their lovely children do out in the streets. It would be an audio-visual service from the library. Boy, would they be shocked at what their horrible little brats do to the others."

I asked whether these children did use the library. "Oh, some of them do. No more than any other school," he replied.

We arrived at P.S. 100 at 12:00 and several children who were standing outside of the building yelled hello to the librarians. Most of the children identified one or another of them by name. We went to the basement of the school where the show was being held.

The auditorium was filled with the art work of all the grades. Fifth grade children greeted us and took us individually on a tour. I was given four tours by different children. During the tours I began talking with the kids and would finally ask about the library. The three 5th grade girls and one 5th grade boy all said that they went to the library with their classes earlier in the year. Two of the girls said that they went to the library every week. One child said, "I take my little brother and sister when I go. They don't read so good but they like to look at pictures. I'm a good reader. My teacher told me that I could be a guide here because I was so smart."

The other girl said that she lived with her grandmother and wasn't allowed to go there very often.

The third girl went alone each week. "Them ladies are real nice so I like to go. They help me."

The boy went up to the librarian and said, "I lost my library book. . . but I found it!"

"Bring it back to us then. Don't worry about the fine. It's wonderful that you were able to find it."



"I found it. It's at home. The lady at the library said not to bring a book back until I got a letter. I don't have no letter."

He explained that he should bring it back anyway, and not to wait for a letter.

"O.K. I have the book under my bed. I'll come to the library after school."

This child said to all three of the librarians during the rest of our hour stay that he would be there after school. We then left. As we were walking out children in the hallways called greeting to the librarians, again by name.

I was quite impressed at how well known the librarians were known to the children roaming about the school. It strikes me somewhat unusual that the children knew the names so well. I asked the librarians about this and they said that a lot of the children from P.S. 100 used the library.

"They came with their classes and now come back." They felt that most of their parents didn't use the library.

"Maybe a few come to the programs at night."

"You won't see many of the kids in the library now. The season is over and the place is empty."



Interviews

North Manhattan Project  
The New York Public Library

Interview with Mr. A.  
a teacher at Harlem's Adult  
Training Center, 140 W. 125th St.

Mr. A. is a teacher at the Harlem Adult Training Center.  
We met in his office after his classes were over.

The Harlem Adult Training Center is an institution run by the Board of Education for people ranging in age from 18 to 60. The students stay for 15 weeks and about 300 come at one time. The school is solely vocationally oriented -- "to train people to read well enough and understand sufficient math to be able to prepare and take some sort of job."

I explained my purpose for the interview to Mr. A. He then explained how his organization became involved with the Countee Cullen Branch. "The program director came to 125th St. several years ago and talked for an hour with the classes about why they should go to the library. . . .I had heard about the project from someone else...No, I don't remember exactly who. It was someone in the schools. I heard that the program director had been going to the elementary and some of the junior high schools around here telling the teachers about the new things happening at the library.

So then I called him. I also knew he went to Har-you. We had just begun then and he didn't know about us.

We lack many facilities here so I decided to try to get him here. The school's work is solely related to vocation-

al material. The English and math are related to the job. It's hard for us to get materials. Although we are only supposed to be concerned with training them for jobs many of us want them to read beyond the classes, so the library is the logical source. We don't have a library here and any materials that are here can't be taken out of the building. So we got the program director to come when the North Manhattan Project began.

He came about five times at five month intervals. He came that often since we change our population constantly. Each time the program director came he spoke with a different group... He also came with the branch librarian and his assistant.

"When the program director came we would gather about 100 students in a room before lunch and he would talk for an hour. They had a chance to ask questions, and then the program director would speak again in the afternoon to another group of 100 or so..." I asked what those talks were about. "Well, first the program director would talk about the library in general and why it would be a useful place for their needs as students. He brought 30 to 40 books related to all their courses for them to see. These were vocational books. His main pitch here was to show them that the library had practical purposes. The vocational literature we have here in the school is very limited and Countee Cullen has an excellent selection of books directly related to all types of work our students are headed for. The program director then gave them all applications for library cards. Actually we took these applications and used them as a lesson in English class in filling in forms.

This sort of practice is very important for the students.

We had found it very hard to get students to the library before. It's only ten blocks away but almost no one went near the place. The program director told them about the books on Negro History as a motivating force. The Schomburg Collection was also examined. . . .Yes, he told them about the movies. Many went to the movies, poetry readings, the music programs and all sorts of things. As a matter of fact they wrote about it in their school paper several times."

I asked Mr. A. whether the students went as a class with the school or on their own. "No, we never took them. They would meet one another outside and go in groups. They were all students here. They did all the arranging themselves," he answered.

I then asked whether the school notified them of the events. "The library sent us fliers every few weeks about the coming activities and we would post them around the school. All the English teachers announced the programs too. Sometimes the library would send us several hundred announcements and then we would stand at the door downstairs at 3:00 and give everyone one as they left. Those programs were their first contact with anything cultural. Many of the students told us that after they went. It was a very important experience for them. I hope that you can keep the project going."

I explained to Mr. A. the purpose of the Bank Street Study. We briefly discussed the issue and the problems involved in discontinuing a project that has had such impact.

I asked Mr. A. how many of the students did go to the library after the program director's talks. "A great many of the students went: At least 25 percent joined the library each time he came. Normally the library doesn't accept applications by mail, but they made an exception for us. We handed out the applications for their lesson, and then collected them at the end. We told the students that they should see me if they seriously wanted to join the library. We were amazed at how many came back. Then they had to fill out the cards and bring them to me. I put the training center stamp on them and mailed out a batch when 20 or so were turned in.

"Gee, I even have a pile right here that I must mail. These are applications that have recently come in and it's over 3 months since project director was last here. Many of the students went there to do their homework. The project director or some of his staff always assisted them. Many of them live in poor places for working and the library provided good conditions as well as assistance.

"The project director took the books he brought back with him, and many would go to Countee Cullen the same day and use the books he told them about. The library has a wealth of vocational materials which are directly related to each student's needs. Groups of at least ten would be there every afternoon earlier in the year."

"Another thing they did in the library was to use it as a study period for the Civil Service Exams. The project director showed them here what they had and they rushed over afterwards.

Courtee Cullen has all the information on Civil Service and the books about the tests. The staff at the library spent a lot of time helping them. We don't even have that sort of material here.

"Even three or four of our students studied for their Armed Service exam there. It's funny how hard many of us try to stay out of the Army and these boys worked so hard to get in. . . just pass the test. I know for sure that they never would have made it if the library staff had not coached them. There was one woman. .I can't remember her name who really made it her job to help those boys. No one here has the time to give that sort of help. I guess the Army is better than nothing for many of the boys here. They sure get a better life than standing around on the streets all day. . .

"Some of our students also just go there to listen to records or watch the T.V. Many of them don't have television so they can see one at the library. . . . The project director really worked very hard with our group and followed up his visits here with the students in the library."

I asked Mr. A. what his personal impressions of the North Manhattan Project were and the effects it had on the Harlem community. "I really feel that the library is the cultural center of Harlem. I am constantly amazed at how well known the programs there are. I've run into people all over the city who know about it. Just the other day I was talking to a man who owns a silk screening factory downtown. One



of his men displayed his photographs in a show there. And the library has excellent things. .really special exhibits. That SNCC photography show was marvelous. It travelled all over the country. When it opened at Countee Cullen, Gordon Parks came for the opening. That's pretty special. One of our students was so motivated by their programs that he even began displaying a few of his photographs there."

I asked whether his students used Schomburg. "Many of the students do use Schomburg. It's particularly useful with the Muslims. Schomburg is good at relaxing tensions they have. They are a tough group. They are always asking why isn't this done, or why do people do this or why is it that we always hear this. They say that there isn't any literature that tells the truth. I told them about that little book store across the street. .do you see it there? Well when I showed it to them I had to back down. It's closed all week except for a few hours on Friday and Saturday. So then I told them about the Schomburg Collection, and they went, of course, to prove me wrong. Well, they were amazed and quite excited. They couldn't believe it that a place they could use told the truth. But they never can be satisfied and had to find something wrong. They can't take the books out so the white institution has foxed them again. . .Don't underestimate the importance of getting a Muslim to admit a place has books that tell the truth. It's very significant."

We talked for a few moments about the image of a public library that is run by white people and is considered a white institution by the people of Harlem. However it seems quite evident that the North Manhattan Project helped shatter part of this image in Harlem. "If the Muslims will go there to use the library and many of them have taken part in militant programs the old image is changing."

Mr. A. had no ideas of further innovations needed or changes that should be implemented. "The library does more than its share for us. It's the most important aid to our school. It fills our needs but I can't say how well it works for everyone. It just musn't be stopped."

Junior High School  
#1

Mrs. Winsor and I met at JHS #1. We had arranged to interview Miss T., chairman of the English Department, at 1:00 and Mr. Y., an English teacher, at 1:45. The principal of JHS #1, Mr. M., introduced us to Miss T. and allowed us to use his office during the two interviews. His presence seemed to have no noticeable effect upon either Miss B. or Mr. H.'s responsiveness. At approximately 2:15 we were able to briefly talk with Mr. L.

Perhaps a few details about JHS #1 should be mentioned before proceeding with the interview reports. It was built in 1922. The school now houses 1200-1300 male pupils in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. Mr. Y. said that the majority of the pupils who come to JHS #1 read "well below grade level." Reading deficiencies seem to characterize most of the student body thus presenting great problems to the administration as far as curriculum planning is concerned. The school building appeared old but not unlike other public schools of its vintage. JHS #1 has been a "tinder box" within Harlem and was to have been closed several years ago. The staff was unable to control the young boys within the confines of the school.

Interview with Miss T., Chairman of the English  
Dept. held at 1:00

Miss T.: a white woman of approximately 35 years

Mrs. Winsor explained the nature of the Bank Street research project. Miss T., before having any specific questions directed to her, explained how she felt Countee Cullen influenced the community -- "the cultural events held at the library," were, in her opinion, of the greatest importance.

Circulars were sent to the school "on request" describing each coming event. Miss T. asked Countee Cullen to send these announcements after she saw another teacher carrying an announcement of a poetry reading around. It is important to realize that Miss T. only took her present job in February of 1967 therefore missing any literature Countee Cullen might have distributed at the beginning of the 1966-67 school year.

The first library event Miss T. was aware of was the reading of a Negro poet held at the library. All of the English teachers gave their classes information about the reading; the children were also invited to bring their own poetry to read. It was her impression that a number of JHS #1 students had attended the poetry reading.

Miss T. felt that the children at JHS #1 were initially motivated to enter the library by the movies offered during the school day at Countee Cullen. Their interest grew when they

learned that their past fines and charges for lost books would be waived. Various teachers, took their classes to the library and encouraged the students to use it. She felt that many students did use the library since many of them came to school with library books.

The Countee Cullen Library sent lists of teenage books to the school for the children to look over so they might have some idea of what they wanted before entering the library.

Miss T. seemed only vaguely aware of the North Manhattan Project. She did mention that a book list was sent to the school by the North Manhattan Project entitled Books About and By Negroes.

Miss T. continually referred to Mr. Y. saying that he could give us more detailed information about the use of the library and the services it offered to his classes. "The main thing I know about the library is that it is just getting the kids into the library."

When asked about additional services the library could offer the community Miss T. said the crucial thing was "a need for lots of money to keep the project going. I understand that the staff is being cut." The film projectionist and several children's specialists were being removed. "If the project goes, the community will really suffer. If there is no service for each particular need, no one will go to the library. The library is the center for all cultural things here in Harlem.



"The children here do read. . . .they have the money to buy paperbacks..all kids today have money. How do you think they buy comic books, gum or candy?. . .The trouble is that there's no place to buy books around here. I don't know the community that well but the only place I've seen is Woolworth's. The kids read Baldwin and Wright. They read autobiographies like Malcolm X and Sammy Davis Jr.'s books. Woolworth's can't keep them in stock. .I go in there to look. Most of it's junk."

Mrs. Winsor presented the idea of having the library sell paperbacks and asked whether it might be a useful service. Both Miss T. and Mr. M. felt that it was a terrific idea. Miss T. suggested that the Library find a member of the community or a library aide to cope with selling of the books. "The kids and other people will buy them. I know that."

Miss T. had to leave to teach her class. She did not seem to know specific details about the North Manhattan Project or the Countee Cullen-Schomburg services. She was aware that some cultural events took place at the library and that some of the children had attended them. The main point that she mentioned was that Countee Cullen was "the chief cultural center for the Harlem community."

Interview with Mr. Y., an English teacher for two 8th grade sections (8.6 and 8.7), a 7th grade class and a



Reading class. (I am not sure whether the 7th grade class was a regular English class or his remedial reading group.)

Mr. Y.: a Negro man:

During the interview Mr. Y. volunteered the following information about himself. This is his first year in New York City. He grew up in the Midwest and then lived and taught in Ohio. His degree is in social studies and he is "pinch hitting this year by teaching English." Next year he will teach social studies. "My son came to New York City for law school so I came too. Now the distance won't be so great. . . I live in Harlem."

During the early fall Mr. Y. received a letter from the young adult specialist for the North Manhattan Project saying the project was being enlarged and could accomodate the schools in the area. Mr. Y. was invited to meet with the young adult library staff to work out a program and schedule for his classes in the library. "Since there are no high schools around here the junior high schools got a break. We get more service since we're the next oldest school group."

Mr. Y. met with the project staff and arranged regularly to bring his two eighth grade classes to the library. They tried to set up a program that would keep the children "interested". Mr. Y. took each class separately (one having 24 students, the other 25) once every other Tuesday afternoon.

"In the beginning we realized that one school period wasn't long enough for a library trip. I arranged it so that the class could go for the whole afternoon. We leave at 1:30. . they spend their English class in the library and also miss another class. . .I got someone to cover for me during the last period and the kids don't really miss anything. . .I dismiss them at 3:00 from the library."

In the fall each class was given a tour through the library and through the Schomburg Collection.

"Very few of my boys can read at grade level. 8.6 and 8.7 are average reading levels for these groups. Almost no one here can read at grade level. . . .I don't know what they do in elementary school. How can children go to school and not learn to read?"

"Most of my boys knew of the library but had had little contact with it. If they had they were very shy. You know, they lost books they took out or had high fines piled up. The Library was wonderful and waived all the debts. Temporary library cards were issued on the spot to everyone in each class. That was really a wonderful thing for them to do."

Mr. Y. repeatedly mentioned that the library was "very cooperative". "We had about 50 percent cooperation from the boys. They didn't know lots of things the library offered. . . . One thing that helped was that the library considers an eighth grader an adult. He can sign for himself. The earlier grades

like sixth and seventh can't go as a class when the library is open to the public. They have to go in the morning. An eighth grader has complete freedom."

"In the beginning of our library program we saw movies in the auditorium. We asked the boys what they wanted to see. They saw things like the story of Jessie Owens. . .lots of sports. .a film on the Olympics. . .a good movie was a CBS Special with shots taken all over Harlem. The kids loved it. They saw places they knew. Some of them even recognized people they knew. They were so excited by it."

"The young adult librarian and the other ladies tried to make the program uninstrusive---make it unlike school."

"Countee Cullen has a teenage room where we would go. Most of our time was spent on the first floor although the kids have access to the whole library. They were given pamphlets listing the books so they could look over each category and decide what they wanted to ask for. . .the young adult librarian, Miss E. or Mrs. F. stayed with us for the whole two hours each time we went."

We asked Mr. Y about innovations the North Manhattan Project could include. "I read an editorial in The Post during March saying there would be a cutback in the program. I was very concerned. A number of teachers were too. I went to the library and told them. . .Our classes stopped last Thursday (25 May) because the eighth grade has graduation practice. I don't know what will happen next year."

We asked Mr. Y. how many students use the library.

"About one-third of each class (not sure whether he referred to his own classes or all classes) go themselves to the library. There are several programs at the library not connected with school and I know a few kids went."

"The library project I took my classes to did a whole lot of good. It was a break in the routine of the week. They had an afternoon off but it was beneficial. I was frankly amazed at the appeal of the program for the kids. . . . You know, going to the library eliminated cutting on Tuesday. The boys were always after me about going."

Mrs. Winsor asked whether the library program had any influence on the children's writing. "I had them write little essays which I have at home about what they thought of the library program. The young adult librarian passed out cards that asked them what book they had read and what they liked or didn't like about it. The books were racially centered--books about people they had heard of."

We asked Mr. Y. whether his classes were the only ones from JHS #1 involved regularly in the library project. As far as he knew they were. "Some classes would go on their own. The 8<sup>1</sup>, 8<sup>2</sup>, and 8<sup>3</sup> classes. They only need a stimulus. They don't need constant attention. But with boys like mine you've got to get them interested in something to read. . . . If a class can go to the library there is a range of thirty books that have been read. I had to read a lot of books I didn't know so I could

work with the children. Usually a class reads only a few different books they find in the classroom. . . . We can't follow any specific English curriculum. The curriculum has to be setup for each class since their abilities are so varied."

Mrs. Winsor asked Mr. Y. whether he felt the Schomburg Collection would be useful to his social studies classes next year. "The kids aren't very interested in the Schomburg Collection for English. Maybe they might be for social studies. I've never been there alone. I hope to get there this summer. The kids liked the weapon display best. (the African weapons) I really feel this heritage bit is overplayed. The children need things that are current. The African descent business is around them here. They hear it from the Black Nationalists, the Muslims and groups like that. It's preached on the street corners and in community groups. . . . Stories or movies about Booker T. Washington and George Washington Carver are no good. They have no meaning. The boys like to hear about young people. Things people do today aren't so far away from them."

"My chief objection to the library is the Schomburg Collection--the spacing and location. It's used by college and graduate students so it's difficult to take classes there. It's a large room but the children disturb the people who are studying." Mr. M. entered the conversation and agreed with Mr. Y. They should separate the slides and projectors from the studiers.



The space is too small. Anyway the children mainly like the exhibits."

Mrs. Winsor asked both men whether it would be useful to set up a program for teachers - a series of seminars discussing the facilities in the library - the Schomburg Collection in particular. Mr. Y. felt that it was an excellent idea. Mr. Y. had to leave for a class at this point.

He was extremely open and actively talked about his contacts with the library. (We directed relatively few questions to him.) He was very aware of the North Manhattan Project; the NMP enabled his classes to use the library receiving great assistance from the librarians. The children were not aware of the NMP. Their visits were "just part of the library". Mr. Y. felt that several teachers did use the library independently of their classes. He did not know what services or privileges were available to teachers. For example how many books he could sign out for his class.

The North Manhattan Project made a very positive impact upon Mr. Y. and he repeatedly referred to the "wonderful cooperation and assistance that the young adult librarian, Miss E. and Mrs. F. gave" to his classes. "I just hope this can go on next year. Even though I'll be in Social Studies I want to see that some English classes will take advantage of the project."



Interview with Mr. M. - white principal of 50-55 years.

Mr. M. said he had never been to the library with any classes but had been to several meetings after school and in the evening. (He did not discuss the nature of these meetings.)

"The library project is a wonderful thing but teachers complain that the same classes are always there. There are several problems. First I can't control the scheduling; the library does. They contact the teachers. The second thing is the traveling. If the class goes for one period (42 minutes) they only go for a walk and see very little. It's a ten minute walk there. If they go all afternoon they lose their eighth period class. So then I have to get someone to cover for the teacher. Other teachers expect their class and don't know where they are. The class doesn't show because they've gone to the library.

"I don't know whether there's enough material in the library to relate to their school curriculum. If a class goes to the library they lose valuable instruction time. They can't afford to miss it. There's little value going on school time, particularly if for only one period. It would be O.K. for two periods. We want to someday try to parallel classes in their curriculum so some classes could leave with a teacher and the others would be covered.

So far we don't have a main or core curriculum for each grade.

We just started grouping the sixth grade for some group activity."

"Anyway I have a book fund in my budget. If a child uses the library to do an original piece of research after school we will give him an award of a book. Any activity pursued after school in the library might get an award. It just can't be done during school time with the scheduling problems."

Mrs. Winsor asked Mr. M. for further ideas about a "workshop" or similar plan for teachers at the Library. "I think it is an excellent idea but will they attend? We pay teachers to go to institutes and they never go. . . Well even if a few teachers went it would be wonderful. The library should give them pamphlets and that kind of material. The few teachers would tell others about it so the word would spread."

Mr. M.'s comments were primarily concerned with the problems of an administrator: the problems of scheduling classes and secondly, the fact that only a few classes could be accommodated by the library.

Interview with the Project  
Director of the NMP at Countee Cullen

I met with the project director to find out about the NMP and to obtain possible leads into the community where the influence of the NMP might be felt and the services used. I did not interview him in any formal sense. I wanted him to get to know me and to find out from a primary source exactly what was going on in the library.

The events sponsored specifically by the NMP have been decreased somewhat in the past year and most drastically recently due to a lack of staff. Some of the people hired under the project left after March 1967 when the future of the project was threatened by discontinuing the funds. Although staff had been assigned to NMP, both groups of staff within Countee Cullen worked together as teams in each division: children, young adults and adult. The total staff, including custodians and guards, had been 36 and now stands at 24 - 25. The NMP does not reach any other library branches in North Manhattan due to lack of staff. (It was reported that they did work in other branches.)

In the beginning of the project, two years ago, the staff of the NMP went out into the community visiting various groups (churches, HARYOU-Act, YMCA, schools, block associations, community centers) to tell them about the library and the new services that would be provided by the project. This type of recruiting has largely stopped. "The community knows about us now and again we don't have the staff to take this time."

The library staff is currently working furiously on their

latest annual report which I will be allowed to see and use next week, they hope. From that report I can get a list and possibly some discussion of the events run by the project during this past year. All the classes, lectures, book clubs, films, etc. have been discontinued for the summer at this point. Many things were stopped on May 1 because the children play outside, and the library needs time to prepare its reports and plan for the summer. I will be able to see some classes who visit the children's library but beyond that little will be happening. The record players are currently being repaired so no one comes to hear the records. They are not sure when the repairs will be completed.

The project director gave me five people to contact about their use of the library: two people from Harlem Teams for Self Help

- a man from the Urban League who is working with dropouts so they can finish HS
- a man from the Harlem Adult Training Center
- a man working at the YMCA as part of Haryou concerning the Heritage Program

All of these people deal with adults according to the project director. have begun to make arrangements to see them.

I asked the project director how far the NMP's influence spread into Harlem. He showed me maps designating where the "borrowers" for each library division came from. The greatest numbers came from the area directly surrounding Countee Cullen. He did point out that a number of people came from the Bronx but were

not shown on the map.

I then asked about various community groups, that had been mentioned in their previous annual reports, which they went out to. "We don't go there (Program S) anymore. It's a shame because we had a wonderful person who really helped the kids with their work. She left and we don't have anyone to take her place." Although they send out notices and flyers to groups in the area they depend on the people to contact them as well now.

I asked the project director how well known he felt the name NMP was. "I don't think too many people know about it. Within the library we try not to make it a separate thing. . . . It has one disadvantage. The older people who used Countee Cullen for years need to know about the project. They often grew tired of coming or are lazy about the library. If we could convince them that new things are going on here then they would come. With the kids it's less of a problem. We have been able to reach them."

The project director mentioned some of the activities that were held this year and showed me photographs taken at the events during the past two years. "It's a real shame that you are here now because so little will be happening. The library is pretty empty now. Some things will pick up over the summer but nothing like last summer. Last summer was fantastic. You should have seen all that went on. We can't do it this summer because of the staff shortage. It's such a shame but there is nothing we can do."



I told the project director where I had been and what my plans were for the next few days. He felt that it would be best for him to take me to meet the other staff members from whom I could get a better picture of what went on in each division. "Ask all the questions you want while you are here. We are so involved with what goes on that we assume that everyone knows too."

We went upstairs at this point and together met with the young adult specialist under the NMP project.



Interview with the Young Adult Librarian

She described what they were doing, or had been doing during the past two years. All of this was recorded in their annual reports. The only classes that regularly came to the library for a planned program were those of Mr. Y. (see that interview of June 2). She felt that it had been very successful. "We couldn't handle anymore than those classes because of the lack of staff. Many classes come for one visit and a tour and then return on their own. We also get a lot of classes from far away - Long Island, Bronx, New Jersey, etc. They just come to see the library and primarily the Schomburg Collection. The neighborhood groups might come individually after school."

I asked her about what she did when not conducting tours. She stays at a desk and is there to help the teenagers with their homework or if they are looking for books. ("A big thing we did was to waive fines and allow the children to take out books even if they had lost them in the past. No other library will do this.) We have so much money that we can do it. I mention my name a number of times on a tour hoping they will remember it. I tell them to bring their long overdue books to me or have me called so that it can be waived. They really did remember and lots of them came asking for cards.." Another woman had run a book club for several months this year but finally discontinued it as their interest dwindled. Last year the book club was a great success but now the kids have so many things to do after school that they don't need

to come."

The young adult librarian and the project director both described how the library had thrown away many of its old books and had purchased many new and more interesting books for each division. They also bought numerous copies of the more popular books.

The young adult librarian explained that she had tried something new this year. "Normally young adult librarians get together and decide what they think teenagers might like to read. No one has ever really asked the kids what they want. I started handing out cards with names of books on it asking for their opinions. I only have done it for four months so I can't make any definite statements yet."

The project director said, "Well, some speculation might appear in your report. No other library could ever do this. Just having the project staff makes this kind of thing possible. Our kids get much more individual help. A librarian usually only has time to tell you where the book is or runs and finds it for you."

Interviews on 137th Street

I arrived a few minutes early for my appointment with Mr. O. at Harlem Teams for Self Help. Several girls standing across the street began talking with me. "You look like one of my teachers," said one 20 year old girl. I picked up the conversation from there and began talking with the five girls who were all about 20 years old. They all lived in the neighborhood and were students at Harlem Teams for Self Help. Four of them had children although they weren't married. They volunteered the information about their own lives with little coming from me. Somehow a rapport was established and we talked for 15 minutes. Each of them described what they wanted to do when they finished their program.

I then felt free to explain what I was up to when they asked, and asked them about what they knew of the libraries. "I don't go there. I got better things to do," said one.

Another said she heard they had movies but she never went except with her class, she added after a pause.

Two others said that they went every week with their class to see movies and learn about the library. "I went once after class. My baby, she keeps me all the time."

The other one never returned on her own. The fifth girl said that she did not even know that there was a library around the corner.

I asked them whether they knew of any of their friends or classmates who went to the movies or shows. They shook their

heads no and then they remembered that one girl at the school went all the time. "She ain't got no baby."

"Yeh, she lives at home."

"She's a square chick...I guess she's smart. The library's for that kind."

Then they asked me some questions about myself and if I would be up this way anymore. I told them that I spent a fair amount of time at the library. They were going to the park with their gym class. As they left they introduced me to their gym teacher. He sent them off to catch their ride. They said goodbye and the two girls who had initiated the conversation said, "See you again." One of them said, "Let's get together. I didn't know white chicks could be so cool. Maybe we'll come to that place over there." The other said, "Will you show us the library? Then we can go out." A third girl came back toward me, "I'll come too. Can I bring a baby?" I assured her that she could and they left.

After they left the teacher, Mr. V., a Negro man of 25 years, asked what I was doing and I explained. He seemed very interested and began talking about the library. "The school takes all the kids there every week for movies. The people there have been a big help for us." He told me he grew up in Harlem and went to college in Ohio. He asked me where I was from and we chatted about places we both knew. "You never could believe how that place has changed (referring to the library.) I never went near the place as a kid. Now they have great programs." I asked if he had heard of the NMP and he hadn't.



He did know that they received a lot of money two years ago. "Isn't that going to stop soon?" I told him that I didn't know for sure but that the library was concerned. "Boy, we will be in a mess if that happens. It's been great for our kids." He really didn't know how many of the kids at the center used the library on their own or about the influence on the community. "Some people use it but I'm not sure. I just teach physical education, Mr. D. will know best."

Harlem Teams for Self Help  
Interview with Mr. O.  
Counselor and Teacher

Mr. O. was a young Negro man who warmly greeted me and took me into his office which was used by three other people. "Please excuse the close quarters. We really suffer for space."

I explained why I had come. He first explained something about the Harlem Teams for Self Help. They have 20 week programs for 17 to 20 yr. old kids who have graduated from high school but can barely read or do "basic arithmetic." "Our major desire is to help these kids in social relationships. They need to know how to function in this environment. Most of them grew up here and maybe left for a bit. They need to learn how to get along with the next guy. Remedial work is given but it's not our sole purpose. Some kids in a different program come to work toward taking and getting their H.S. Equivalency diplomas. After the first group finishes here they go on to vocational school. We don't do any of that here. 75 per cent of our graduates go on for more training. The training they choose ranges from A to Z. The whole bit, nursing, IBM etc... A few of these kids try to take jobs as soon as they finish here. I try to discourage that. They aren't ready and they usually end up back here all over again.....I also work with another group that want to go on to college.

I grew up here and it's funny. I went to college and



now am working on my Ph.D. I just can't believe I did it and don't know how I did it. It's hard when I see these kids. They should be doing it too but I always forget that it isn't so simple.....Look, here's something we're just typing up for the groups. These are terms they need to know so they can fill out applications. We spend a lot of time teaching them how to fill out application blanks and that sort of thing....."

Mr. O. then led into their use of the library. "We took the whole school there every week for some sort of program. We always saw a movie and then let the kids wander around..... We took about 165 kids at once. It got pretty crowded but the people at the library have been wonderful to us." I asked how the programs were initiated. "We asked them for material on how to use a library and that's where it all started. They sent us notices for all the events and lists of the movies for us to choose. We would choose what we wanted to see each week and they would get it set up for us. We worked out our own schedule and they somehow managed to put up with us.....They explained about the library a little in the beginning, but we did most of it. It would take too much of their time, and we don't want to take advantage of them. Really, they have done such wonderful things for us....The kids saw great movies."

I asked him whether the kids used the library on their own. "Some of them go over there to do research for a class or run errands there for me. A lot of them do good jobs and really know how to use the place. It's funny. Some of them will say

they don't like the library or complain about having to go. But it's obvious they like it. They never make a sound during the movies. Since we go every week some of them begin to look around. They see something they think looks interesting and before they realize it they are hooked on reading. It's happened to quite a few and I am thrilled when it happens. We let them loose and the casual atmosphere helps them."

I asked whether he thought they went to any of the events held in the evening. "We have a problem here. Legally we can only keep them here from 9 until 3. After that they have their own babies, little brothers, or sisters to take care of, or some have part-time jobs. We tell about things they might like but they just can't go because of their kind of lives."

I asked him whether he had heard of the NMP. He thought for a bit and then remembered that it was somehow a part of the library but knew little beyond that. I then asked whether the kids found the Schomburg Collection useful in their work. "They don't go there too much. If someone is doing a research project on the Negro or on dope addiction they might go there. Countee Cullen has a lot of books they can use too. ..Just a minute. Here is a paper from one boy who went to get some poems from Schomburg for a program we had. I just had him copy them, but he went to Schomburg and found them."

I then asked Mr. O. what other services he felt the library might offer which would be useful to his group or to the

community. "That's a hard and very good question. I really should have been thinking about that kind of thing... It would be wonderful if they could have programs - sort of seminars for the kids during the day....about things in the community...politics...housing...all that sort of thing. The kids want information about everything going on around here and discussion groups would be a big help. They could do papers and study before each meeting." Beyond this he again mentioned how helpful the staff at the library had been and what a "great resource it was."

I thanked Mr. O. and he said, "Please feel free to come back anytime if I can be of more help."

Mr. O. did not know the names of any particular staff member at the library. No one specifically worked with his school. The whole library staff seemed to participate as far as he could make out.

HARYOU - Act  
W. 135th St.  
Interview with Mr. V.  
Director of the Heritage Programs

I met with Mr. V. in his HARYOU office in the YMCA for one hour. Mr. V. is about 50 years old and quite a distinguished man. Among all of his many activities he is the editor of Freedomways and has written several books and many articles.

I explained why I had come, and he first asked a few questions about Bank Street College and made a few comments, none related to this project. He spent a fair amount of time discussing the programs at the Y. There are nine "units" within the Heritage Program each "serving 20 - 30 kids." "Countee Cullen is the base for our research material...base for ready reference material. There, there are materials they can take out. Let me look for the bulletin my classes wrote using library materials for their research." Mr. V. spent much of our interview gathering materials for me about HARYOU that he had written or others had written for the programs' curriculum. He never could find a copy of the bulletin written by the students, but said he would bring one to the library for me. "They use Schomburg occasionally but mainly they use Countee Cullen. Those books they can take out...anyway most of what they are looking for can be found there. Schomburg doesn't like to have the kids around as much."

The Heritage Program is divided into a series of levels which the kids work up through. There are two classes: 6 - 12 yr. olds and 12 - 16 yr. olds. The major group of students are high

school age. After a kid had gone through several study levels the "potential teachers are chosen to take a Heritage Leadership class. These students go to the community groups and teach other children about their heritage."

"We use the library all the time. The students know about everything going on there because we make it well know. They come to school here at night so instead of meeting with their teacher we take the whole school to the library for the cultural program. They are required to go in place of class. ...We monopolize the programs there. I am asked to give talks quite frequently. We have the best poets around here so they are always giving readings. Our musicians are also very good. Some of the music programs are made up of a combination of kids...from here and other groups. ...I've worked with the project director all along. He's a good friend of mine. When the NMP was first talked about, even before it was approved, I was asked to be a planner for it. I just couldn't because I am a very busy man....."

"Our kids go all the time on their own. We train the children into the library habit and they go." Mr. V. spoke with great pride when referring to his students. "A number of our students go there just to get facts that they can take back to school to repudiate what the teachers tell them. Lies, all lies. The schools don't tell these kids anything about their history." Mr. V. then spent a bit of time describing some of the curriculum they taught to their groups.

Mr. V. is a militant man and devoted to instilling



pride and knowledge into his students in reference to their heritage.

"I grew up in Harlem...well actually I came here as a kid from the South. I've lived here all my life except for two years in Brooklyn, a few years in the army and of course not when I am travelling abroad. I live a few blocks from here. This is my community. The library is very important to me not only for my work here but because this area is my home. People think Harlem is a cultural desert but they just don't know. I work a lot at the library because it provides important things for my people in this neighborhood."

The final question I asked Mr. V. was about additional services the library might offer. "The library should be a basic information center. They should have mimeographed sheets or pamphlet material about this community...who represents the community in Congress, the political structure of the government...things on the people's urban rights. The library should be a basic reference department. The library should be the center here for my people to go to find out what their rights are...how they can apply for jobs, what health services are. It's too hard to run all over the city to find out this information. It all should be in the library...You've seen the civil service information in the library. Well that's something. There is information on exams. What they need now is a complete collection of college catalogs. There should be all the information for late high school students on what requirements they should take and how to apply for fellowships. All school requirements should be there for adults



and youths. The counselors in the schools don't tell the children what they must take if they want to be a nurse or go to college. Some students have to spend up to a year after high school just making up the requirements."

Interview with Library Trainee  
working on Main Floor at Countee Cullen

K. has been working part time at Countee Cullen for almost a year while studying at Columbia's library school. She does not work under the project but said, "There isn't any difference. Everyone works together. Schomburg is the only separate part," I asked her more about Schomburg and another library assistant came over. "It's nothing like it was in the past. Arthur Schomburg was supposed to have been a great guy. The place really hopped then." I asked whether any part of the NMP money or staff worked there. They weren't sure. "I did a study of the collection last year for school and couldn't learn a great deal. They are going some microfilming with NMP money and some reorganizing." "There aren't any projects or programs there like we started here."

I continued talking with K. and she repeated what the others had told me about the programs held there. "I never have been to many of them. Last summer I was taking a course so had to make up the time I missed here at the Donnell Library. You can't imagine how different it is there. The librarians run around and maybe get a book for you but no one spends any time with the people. It was a real shock for me. I was so used to the special feeding method we use up here. We spend a lot of time with each person. After a while you get to know them and the sort of thing they might like.

"Like last summer we learned about the people who used the records regularly. There was one high school girl who came

in every day just to listen to French records. She never took out a book..just wanted French lessons. She said she was interested and couldn't get it in school."

"Did you read about the library in the paper?" I said that I had recently seen several articles but asked her to tell me the history. "Well these articles started coming out in the paper saying the project was going to end. Boy, did everyone get upset. Someone said that the NMP would be no more and the money was to go to the South Bronx. It's terrible. Once they start something they should follow it up. What's going to happen to the people here. After the articles were printed several staff members had to look for other jobs. A lot of the staff left or was transferred. There's this great man, Mr. N. who lives down the street and works at the funeral parlor. Maybe you could talk to him. He's the only name I know. Anyway he got so upset..he used to come in here everyday and almost lived here then. He made up handbills protesting the end of the project. Just before he was to give them out another article came out saying that the project would be extended for six months. Mr. N. gave out the notices anyway. He used to stand out by the door and went to a local coffee shop to give them out. Six months doesn't mean much. They told us they would send more staff but we all know they won't. Saying it would last for six months kept people quiet for a bit but they don't realize that we can't do half the things we used to."

I asked about leads for people to talk with and no one on the main floor could help me. K.said, "If you only had come

earlier. We know everyone by their faces but not their names. The library is almost empty these days. June is one of the dead months. Very few people come and if they come it's to return a book." She had to go to the information desk so I went to the children's library.



Interviews - Children's Library

When I arrived there was one young boy in the library who left immediately, empty handed. I chatted with one of the librarians at the desk, and she was the only one in the room. As we talked seven children came in in pairs or alone, returned books and immediately left.

One girl had overdue books and owed 12 cents. She only had a nickel and that was accepted. The librarian explained to her that Sunday was counted as a day they had to pay fines for. I talked with the child for a few minutes and also with her companion. They were both 9 years old...cousins living together, and in the same class at P.S. 100.

The child who returned the overdue books said that she came to the library once in a while. "I don't come much. My aunt...she gets mad. They make me pay money." "That's because you never bring them back, stupid," said her cousin.

I asked the cousin if she came and she said, "Not much. I don't read so good. My mother gets real mad if I don't come home fast. We gotta watch the kids after school." They also did not think that their parents or the adults they lived with had ever been to the library. "My aunt can't even read. She's even stupider than me."

One girl came into the library with an adult and returned her books. Then a flurry followed because she couldn't find her card. The adult became disgusted and walked to the shelves, and the girl asked if she could get a new card. She was asked if she

was sure it was lost and then allowed to fill out a new slip. Her aunt, the adult with her and with whom she lived, signed the card and the child went to look for books. "Here are the books for you," said the aunt. "I don't want those books," said the child. "I know what I want."

The aunt went and sat in a chair to wait and I spoke with her. "I just come here with her...Naw, I don't have a card. She's too little to come by herself. (the girl is ten) I know what she should read but she thinks she knows better from school. I guess it's good she reads." The aunt never heard of the NMP. She was most friendly but did not personally use the library, other than the children's library for her niece. I gathered that she really had no idea of what did go on in the library.

After they left I went back to the desk. The librarian commented, "The place will be like this for the rest of the month. Libraries have peaks at different times but always in the early and late winter. April is a big month too. You won't find many kids anymore." I asked her if she had thought of the names of any teachers, and a second librarian returned and neither could dredge up any names. "Yes classes definitely used to come back after two o'clock with their teachers once they had a tour. They usually returned once so we never got to know them."



135th St. and Lenox  
Unexpected Interview

As I left the YMCA where I had interviewed Mr. V. a young man stopped me and asked whether I worked in the "Y". I had seen him when I was in the "Y" and replied that I didn't.

I continued walking down the street toward the Schomburg library and he walked along. "Do you work in the library? I've seen you around." I said that I didn't and asked whether he worked in the "Y". I also told him that I had been to see Mr. V. and briefly explained why I was at the library after he told me something about himself.

Ned is 25 years old - a Negro wearing a beret and one earring. He worked in Greenwich Village part time, but was an artist by profession. "I married a white girl...she's Jewish. Everything I know about art I learned from her. I painted a little in high school but never could draw. She showed me everything after we met. I even sell much more than she does. One of my paintings is at the museum at 59th Street."

Ned continued to discuss his art and then asked what I did. I told him that I was studying to be a teacher but was working on a job at present. After very briefly explaining what I was up to I began to ask him a few questions about the library. "No, I never go in there....Some people around here do but my work takes up too much of my time." I asked him whether he ever saw any of the movies..."You kidding? The village has the best flicks."

Then I asked him whether he had displayed any of his art

work in the library. "I would like to but they don't pay me nothing. When you got people to pay why bother with a place like that?" (he pointed at the Schomburg library we were standing in front of). "The kids use the place to display stuff but that's 'cause they're nobodies. I'm making it, baby, and I don't need their kind of help."

Interview with a 4th grade teacher in a public school in Harlem

I explained the research. He said, "I went to Countee Cullen when I was student-teaching at P.S. \_\_\_\_ for the first time." This had been over three years ago which was before the NMP came into existence. "I have been teaching for two and a half years and have taken my classes there. I didn't do it much with my first class. Our school library at \_\_\_\_ burned down last year. Since then it hasn't been in full operation. The kids could go to the school library for a so-called library period but they could only look. None of the books were circulating. That's when I began taking my classes to the library. (referring to Countee Cullen)

...."No, the library doesn't contact any of the teachers. They sent a letter to the principal saying that the school could send ten classes to the library. The principal made an announcement and then anyone interested could get in touch with him. I really pressured him to let my class go and to get other classes to go."

I asked him how many classes there were in the school, and he said about 30-35. I then asked why only ten classes were invited. He didn't know and said that everyone should have been asked to come considering the fact that \_\_\_\_ had no school library. "I even went to the library and tried to explain to them the problem we faced. No luck. They said they couldn't do anything about it." (I find this an unfortunate fact. The library discusses the vast number of classes they give tours and programs for each year. However they do not tell from what locality the

classes come from. The only tours I have seen or read about on the schedule are for classes that come some distance from Countee Cullen. It would seem most important to serve the children of the immediate community first. P.S. \_\_\_ is across the street from the library and all of the children live in the neighborhood.)

"I went to some of the evening programs about Africa...jazz concerts...discussions with Mr. V. ...and, oh yes, I went to the SNCC to the SNCC photography project. I live around here so it's natural that I go.

"Early in the year (this year) I took my 4th grade class to the library after 3:00. I wanted them to learn to use a library since we didn't have one...they had to learn to do research..... Actually in the very beginning I took the whole class after school and then took small groups.

"These were kids who lost books or had fines. They were scared and I wanted to help them back into the library. Then there were the kids who had stolen the metal things from the catalogs which they used for spears on the street. They really didn't want to go back.

"If the kid loses a book from the library, he is screwed." I asked whether the library had made any allowances for such things with his kids. "Well, sometimes. I spent an awful lot of time there trying to help various children without a great deal of luck. Early in the year I took a little girl there who owed \$1 for a book. She only had 50 cents so I made up the difference. Her mother paid me back later but then the child lost two more books and was terrified

to return.

"The library really didn't cooperate with my class. Their attitude about fines didn't help this little girl. They were rather nasty to her. I guess they have to set up rules but...

"I spent 15 to 20 minutes a number of times talking with the librarians there acting as a character witness for some kids who I knew had not destroyed their books. They were kids who had seven and eight brothers and sisters all living in one room. The little ones would tear up the books. The library almost never paid any attention to me. Maybe they would have waived the fine if I had talked for 30 minutes instead of 20. I'd say I had 50/50 luck over there."

I asked him if he knew of the NMP which he had and then asked him what he knew about it. "I heard about that project I guess when I was at lectures or in the library working on a curriculum I was trying to set up on Africa with the UFT. I don't know whether it is a direct or indirect effect of the NMP but there are more people around the library...there are more services there. I never remember there being so many people around to help the children. That part is wonderful and they know what they are doing. The cultural events are pretty new too...The United Federation of Teachers did a big benefit for Schomburg at Countee Cullen. They were making a pitch to inform teachers about the resources available there." (he referred to the UFT as making the "pitch.")

I asked him whether he thought his kids went to the library independently of him. "Oh yes, some of them go on their own. I just got them started. There are so many librarians around that



they aren't afraid to go back."

I asked how many of the children's parents used the library and how widely he felt the services reached out into the community (since he lived there). "Some parents go to meetings. I've seen parents of kids in my class this year and a few parents of kids from my last year's class. But these are parents who are active in everything...they're people anxious to do anything within the community. The services really don't reach a very wide group, but that's true of any project. There are always the few who go and the rest are hard to ever reach."

I then asked what innovations the library could initiate..... "They had a good variety of things...there was a wide representation...They need more music programs and many more indigenous cultural things...African things - people are more interested now than ever before in that sort of topic."

The last question I asked in relation to the project was about further possible leads to teachers in this school who used the library more than once with their classes. He could not come up with anyone and then said maybe I could talk to a first grade teacher who went there a few times he thought.

I asked whether he thought it would be useful to talk with the principal of his school and he doubted it since the man was new. "I don't think he knows anything about the library. I pressured him in the fall but maybe he might know more now. I doubt it."

JHS 2 at 129th St. and Amsterdam  
Interview with  
Miss G. (Head of English Dept.),  
Miss H. (an Eng. teacher)  
and Mrs. J. (a Social Studies and English teacher)

I entered JHS 2 at 1:45. School was closed for the afternoon so the teachers could have some time for clerical work. I met Miss G. as I headed toward her room. She found Miss H. and Mrs. J. and we met together in Miss G.'s office. The radio was immediately turned on to hear the latest reports of the Israeli crisis. After listening for a few moments Miss G. said, "Well we might as well begin. I want to get made-up and go buy a dress." The radio was not turned off and continued during the interview with a mixture of talk and music. Hardly an ideal situation. I explained the purpose of my visit which they seemed to be aware of.

It became rapidly apparent that none of these three women knew very much about the facilities available at Countee Cullen. Mrs. J. and Miss H. had attended an Urban Institute that was held at Countee Cullen during the summer of 1966. "We put our names on some list and I guess that's how they knew about us," said Miss H.

Mrs. J.: "And how. They sent us enough stuff."

I asked whether they had heard of the NMP and they all said no. Then Mrs. J. said, "Yeh, I think it was mentioned on a tour I took with one class."

Miss G.: "We have little use for that library. We use the 125th St. branch. We took classes to the Schomburg Collection but that's about it." (Miss G. gathered her makeup from a locker and disappeared down the hall.)

I asked Mrs. J. and Miss H. how they arranged trips to the Library and what classes were taken. Miss H.: "We worked all fall arranging to drag most of the eighth grades and some others to the library. I got stuck working out the schedule. I never went with any class." Mrs. J.: "Well, I went with one class." I asked how they traveled to the library, what the tour consisted of and what were her and the classes' reactions to the trip. "Some of the classes walked and a few got a school bus. We went for two hours and spent most of the time being taken around the library. A different person would take us through each section." (They did not see any movies. During the last part of the tour the children were allowed to browse through the books.)

"The class I took was really well behaved. They usually cause trouble. The library even commented on the group and compared them to other classes from 43 who had gone before."

Miss H.: "I can't tell you a thing. I never went. I saw the Schomburg Collection last summer but that's all."

Mrs. J.: "My class seemed to enjoy the trip. I know, I even liked it. I asked the kids to write about it when we came back." I asked what they had said. About 40 percent were very enthusiastic. The rest varied in their opinions. Only 8 of her 35 didn't like the trip "but they're always like that."

I then asked whether any of the children had returned and they both replied no, or maybe "a few." Mrs. J.: "Their parents won't let them go there unless it's with a class. It's too dangerous over there. It's East Harlem and none of the West Harlem

parents want their kids near that area." (Note: It is in Central Harlem but people in West Harlem consider it to be East Harlem.)

Miss H: "We just take them during the year for a tour. They go after school to 125th St. and take out books to read. I've seen library books." Mrs. J: "The Schomburg Collection would really help them. One boy went for a social studies project but it's just too far. The best thing at Countee Cullen is the vocational material. That's the kind of thing I could use with the kids."

Miss G. then introduced me and Mrs. K. asked what I was doing there. I explained and Miss H. said that Mrs. K. had been to the library with 4 classes.

Mrs. K: "Oh yes, I went there a lot." I asked her many of the same questions I had asked the others. She, too, had attended the Urban Institute during the summer but "I didn't sign my name to anything so they never sent me any notices like the others." She had heard of the NMP at the institute. "That project sponsors most of the events there. It really sounded like a great thing."

Mrs. M finished a phone call and asked Mrs. K what her classes thought of the trip. Mrs. K: "Well, they liked it all right, I guess. I was pretty bored." Mrs. M: "Didn't they like the Schomburg Collection?" Mrs. K: "We didn't get to see much. The person who talked to us didn't seem to know anything. The person who was supposed to take us around wasn't there." Mrs. M: "Gee, we had a great time. Our speaker had lots to say and the kids were even allowed to touch some of the things."

I asked Mrs. M, what interested her class the most in the Schomburg Collection---the books and manuscripts or the displays?

Mrs. M: "They were only a little interested in the exhibits.

What interested them the most were the books. They spent quite a lot of time there looking over the books and stuff like that."

I then asked what other services they thought the library might offer. Mrs. M: "What I would like is if they could come to us. The kids can't return their books to other libraries. They need a bookmobile." Mrs. M. left the room. Miss H: "We're trying out a new curriculum here. It combines English and social studies in urban affairs. They study NYC communities and that sort of thing. Several classes went around to supermarkets pricing foods. I don't work with it, but Mrs. J. teaches social studies and Mrs. K. does the English for it."

Mrs. M. returned: "What I really wish those libraries could bring us is their vocational material. My classes could really use it." Miss G: "If they could do that sort of thing we would have some use for them. It's too much trouble for even the teachers to go over there."

I asked whether they were notified of any of the cultural events taking place at the library. Miss G and Mrs. M shook their heads, no. Miss H: "Maybe they send stuff..I'm not sure." Mrs. K: "I think I have received notices or seen them around. They had some great programs this year." Mrs. M: "Really. At the library?" (said quite sarcastically).



Interview

Next afternoon standing outside of the library (Countee Cullen) at 2:30. Two women came out so I asked if I could talk with them. They both were Negro (looked about 28-34), simply but neatly dressed. They agree to answer a few questions..."We can't stay long. We have to get to school to meet our children." (they each had to meet 2 children at P.S. 100)

They both knew of the NMP. "Sure thing," one replied, "the project is the best thing that happened around here."

"It's made this here library a new place," said the other woman. "I never used to come to the library. Oh, I guess I went a few times when I was in school."

"I've always used the library," (1st woman) "My mother taught me how to use the library near our home. When I got married and moved up here I just came here. But never did I like the library like now. Why we go to movies, classes by important people, concerts ...just all sorts of things."

(2nd woman) "All these events are wonderful for people like us. We never get downtown for shows. Our children tie us down. Downtown costs too much. Our friends- we take turns and everything's free. After I came here for a while - well, I got interested in books. My boy - he's 14 - comes here to study. I peeked at some of his books so I tried it."

(1st woman) "A few of us come together each afternoon before meeting the younger children at school."

(2nd woman) "But, we come often after their school. They

have programs for the children upstairs. We try to bring them then."

When I asked about additional services they would like to see they answered:

(1st woman) "Nothing could be better than it is."

(2nd woman) "I agree but maybe they could have a place early in the afternoon for little babies. It seems like more of our neighbors could come. They're really tied down."

Interview

As I left (the library) that afternoon I spoke with four men (all Negroes, three ranging in age from 35-45 yrs, the fourth was over 60 yrs.) I have seen this same group day after day on various front stoops of the neighboring buildings and they know me. I told them what I was doing at the library and asked whether they ever used it. Three of them said they never used the library, then one of these said he went occasionally. "Sometimes I go there to look at the paper. See I don't got no card. (turned to companions) Do you guys got cards?" Two of them said no, but that they might have had cards long ago. The one man (the oldest of the group and the only one who hadn't spoken yet) said, "I have a card...always have."

"That's right man, you do go there," said another.

"I go there once a week. Every Friday afternoon. I take three books home and read every mornin'."

I asked whether they had heard of the NMP and they all said, "No."

I then asked whether they thought any of their friends on the block used the library. "The kids do. They know how to read. Most of us don't read so good."

"Speak for yourself," retorted the older man.

Another man said, "We watch people go in there all day. Sometimes lots of people go there at night. We listen to their music out here." "The library for smart folks," said another.

At this point the "numbers man", the man on the block who

watches cars, called two of the men I was talking to away to move some cars. I thanked them and left.

Interview

The 1st man I approached sat at a table in the magazine and newspaper section. This man was a Negro (approx. 55 yrs. old), dressed in a white short sleeved sport shirt, and gray cotton pants. I told him that I was working on a study of the library and asked whether he minded my asking a few questions. He was extremely responsive - almost as though flattered to be confronted. "Sure, ask me anything. I love to talk."

"Oh sure, I come in this place all the time...I read the newspapers." (He was currently reading the Amsterdam News.) "I don't work...never have done much work. I came to N.Y. a while back and my Mrs., she works. I watched the house. She gone now. After she was gone there wasn't nothing to do. I never had much learning. Matter of fact I don't remember much about school."

I asked the man when he started using the library. "A few years back. My nephew, he has good work...he took me here to a movie. Well, I saw this was a real nice place so I comed back. All my life I read a little. Now I come most everyday. Everyday in the summertime. It's quiet here...and so cool. I sort of study. Now I read real good. I learned from the newspaper. Sometimes I find one of their books for my kind. You know, some-one who can't read so good. Kids today are smart. I like to watch the young ones come here to work. They study real hard today."

I asked him whether he came to the library for any of the special programs.



"No. not much. I just come to read. Life's real peaceful here."

The man never heard of the NMP and asked what it was. I briefly explained-- "Yeh. I knew they got some money up here. Mr. N. (the head of a neighborhood funeral parlor) gave me some paper about no more money."

The last question I asked the man was whether any of his friends used the library. "A few guys I know come here. No one studies like me. My little ones, my sister's children come here-- them ladies upstairs are real nice." I asked whether he had ever visited the children's library. "Naw, I'd never been there. They don't want no old people there."

I thanked him. "It was real nice talking with you," he replied.

Interview

I then went to a table in the middle of the library and I talked a 30-35 yr. old Negro man dressed in flannel pants, a plaid sport shirt and tie. He was reading a book on the Black Muslims.

"I use this library very frequently. Every week I read many books. I read on my job. It's vacation for me now. My people went away so they don't need their chauffeur. Most days now I go to Schomburg. Do you know about our place? Their books tell the truth about my people. My babies are taught bad lies in school. I gotta study real hard to teach them straight."

I asked whether his children used the library. "You bet. I make them go. They go for everything upstairs. The baby, she's only six, she come sometimes with the older ones."

I asked about NMP--

"Of course I know about it. I come here whenever I'm free. It's hard sometimes because my hours are very long. They pay me pretty good though. I've seen lots of things here. This place is for my people."

I then asked whether his friends came.

"I don't have much time for socializing. My wife, she comes with her lady friends. Respectable people come in here."

Interview

I then spoke with a young Negro man (approx. 19) dressed in blue jeans and a black jersey. He was reading a book on how to do basic mathematics. He had a pencil and paper which he was using to work out problems. Again I explained my purpose. "I'll make a deal," he said, "Can you understand this stuff? --You look like you've been to school." He showed me some reading problems dealing with fractions. "You help me and I'll help you." We worked for several minutes. "Hey, you should be a teach. You know this stuff real good. No one could ever explain it to me before." I asked him where he went to school. "Oh, I quit, school's a f---ing bore. I left just as soon as I could-- wasn't soon enough-- don't know why they didn't throw me out on my ass before then. I'm a dropout. D - R - O - P - O - U - T." (he spelled it aloud after saying it.) "Now I know better. School's still stupid-- full of creeps. Nothin' cool about school. But life don't swing much now. An education is the only way to get ahead. I'm going back." I asked him where. "There's a place over there" (pointed toward 137th St.) "Ever heard of Harlem Teams for Self Help? Course not. A white chick like you don't know nothing about places lik. that." I told him that I did know about it and he seemed surprised and perhaps dubious. "I'll get there next year." I then asked whether he came to the library very often. "Yeh, I hit this heap a lot. I ain't gonna be the dumb one in my class. I'll learn it all now and show the rest." I asked him whether the library had the kinds of materials he needed. "Oh they got all kinds of things. Lots of learning books. I should be a teach --I can teach myself - not many can do that.....

I don't read no books here. Just study, or listen to them records over there. Man, can you fly on some of them." I asked him whether he had ever heard of the NMP and he hadn't. I then asked when he started using the library. "I was shacked up with this chick until she went square. She went to school and grew real uppity - had no use for my kind she said. Anyway, she brung me here and I got a card. It's the only thing I ever had with my name om it. Coming's like a habit."

I asked whether he came to any of the programs. "Few movies. Seems I always read about them late." Finally I asked whether any of his friends used the library. "You kidding. Man oh man, my buddies they is so strung out. They think I've gone square. They'll see. I'll be somebody-- they'll die." I thanked him.

Interview with the project director

I sat and talked with the director for 45 minutes to ask a few questions and check out some details.

One question that I asked about referred to the training of staff. In their 1966 progress report they said that they trained college graduates who were specializing in disciplines other than library sciences, college students and high school students headed for public service jobs.

For example,-- the audiovisual man, a college graduate in electronics, was retained specifically in library work and then given the position of head of the new audiovisual programs under the NMP. This man, who has left for another job, had to completely build and equip Countee Cullen to cope with new equipment. He was also trained by the library staff to work with the community people.

---one college student was hired for two summers as a story teller--"she turned out to be wonderful. It was a joy to see her at work." This college student, majoring in English, was trained in story telling at the main public library in Manhattan.

---the high school students trained were the pages. "We were offered so many high school students and even more high school drop-outs by community agencies that we couldn't begin to cope with all of them---both in training and funding. We have had to drop some of our pages since the project is ending. One of our pages was our best authority on science fiction. He was amazing. He knew exactly what we had in our collection--he had read all the books. Whenever we were about to buy science fiction books he was



always consulted. He could always tell us what we should buy. He never just did what one might expect a page to do. He was able to help people who came to use the library in this area. We try to have all of our staff work this way."

---Clerks: "We had approximately 10 clerks (5 full time and 5 part time). Now there are fewer. Our clerks are neighborhood people. They're high school graduates but many of them have limited education despite the high school diploma. Having clerks from the neighborhood is excellent feedback to the library. The clerks understand what the community is interested in and can give us guidance in choosing material geared to the varying levels of education of the people. Many of the programs have achieved greater success than expected simply because they hear about it from friends who are our clerks."

The project director and I then discussed the various ways time was spent by the library staff. I wanted to get some better idea of what the various functions of the staff were. It has been very difficult really to observe most of the staff in action. Their programs have ended and most of them have spent all of June working on their annual progress reports--hardly indicative of a normal month.

It seems that most of the clerical work is done by the clerks. "A clerk spends half of a 7-hour day behind the scenes preparing books, reports, circulation counts, counting money and taking care of the mail. There are many things the clerks have to do. You know we have to send in the daily, weekly and monthly reports to the central office. It takes a great deal of our time."

I asked the project director about the rest of the staff. The trainees do both clerical and program work. The staff seems to devote most of their time to the people using the library. "When the project began I was very anxious that we give the people coming the best possible service. We had to work very hard at the beginning to draw everyone together. I wanted a staff that did not look upon itself as belonging to either the project or to the branch. The problems of coordinating both groups was very hard but I think we have succeed. But you know, I can go out there any time and see most of the staff helping someone and still there are people who need assistance. People walk around looking like they know what they are doing. Actually it usually turns out that they have no idea what they are up to. In many cases it's their 1st time in the library so they put up a facade. The older clerks posed the only problem in working together. The newer clerks are both younger and recently trained by us. The older ones sometimes grumble about why they have to do something that we have insisted on with the project. They complain that it never was that way before."

I then discussed the future of the library programs with the project director telling him that some of the staff hoped to continue most of their former work despite the cut in their staff. "It has to be less. No amount of organization can make up for the need for a large staff in an operation like this. Anyway the branch librarian has said that there can only be one activity a month next year. With only 12 people I guess it has to be, but it's going to be terrible. Last night there was a jazz program. We forgot to tell you about it, but I'm glad you weren't there. It was awfully noisy. It was

an avant, avant, avant garde jazz program. The auditorium was filled. At intermission half of the audience walked out. They couldn't stand it. They wanted something more melodious. Then another 50 percent came in. We had 200 people here last night all together. After the program some black nationalists dressed in their long flowing robes-- came up to me and asked how come a movie shown at the last minute last weekend wasn't advertised. I assured them that it could be shown again at any time. But with only one program allowed each month this kind of thing can't be done. In the past we have always reshowed a movie if it is requested and at all sorts of times. All of this will have to stop now."

Finally I discussed Schomburg with the project director. "I worked in Schomburg for a year before I took over the project so I understand many of the problems they face and know how they work. They are very weak in group work or programs. It is very difficult to dramatize plain books. That is why I put such emphasis on audio-visual aids, exhibits and programs. All of them bring people into the library and they become acquainted with materials as a result. In Schomburg there is no group room so the staff never can sit down together and talk. I felt that it was important for them to be able to use our rooms. However we have to have complete respect for each others collections. We never borrow a book from their collection. Schomburg is staffed by people dedicated to archival research. When the project began I knew we had to have at least one outgoing reference librarian there--someone who could reach people and work with groups. We had two wonderful project librarians there. Those women worked beautifully

with the teenagers in the neighborhood. They really did wonders with all the groups but now they are gone. They gave the tours there in the past."

END

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