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ABSTRACT

A series of research and service projects designed to better the condition of single male farmworkers in Stockton and Sacramento were sponsored by the Department of Applied Behavioral Sciences at the University of California, Davis. The Stockton Singlemen's Project, begun in January 1971, had two basic elements: (1) research and (2) community development. The research was conducted at locations such as public parks, privately owned gathering places, and offices of various social service organizations, with a day center called "The Place" as the focal point. Information was gathered through observations, conversations, staff impressions, but primarily through the in-culture research method which uses members of a culture or subculture in the process itself, from developing questionnaires to conducting and writing interviews. The research team completed 140 interviews. This report assists various public and private Stockton agencies in better dealing with these indigent single men. The research results which examine the subculture of single employable men, the community's role in their past and present lives, and the availability of public and private social services are presented. The four sections discuss: the availability, quality, and quantity of social services as well as the attitudes of the various agencies' employees; the role of the Skid Row community in the lives of these men; and characteristics of the Skid Row man. The conclusion examines the future of this subculture which has been rendered superfluous by progress. (NQ)

"WHO ARE THESE MEN?"

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Department of Applied Behavioral Sciences
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RESEARCH MONOGRAPH NO. 10

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INTRODUCTION

Presented herewith are the results of research on the subculture of single employable men, the role of their own community in their lives (both past and present), and the availability of public and private social services.

The study, called the Stockton Singlemen's Project, was conducted at several locations in the City of Stockton, County of San Joaquin. The focal point for the Inculture Research phase of the project was the day-center called "The Place," located at 901 East Main Street, Stockton, California. Also used in generating the information in this paper were public parks and privately owned gathering places (bars, cafés, etc.) in the central Stockton area. Interviews were also conducted in offices of various social-service organizations.

The study, begun in January 1971, was sponsored by the Department of Applied Behavioral Sciences, University of California, Davis campus. The project was coordinated by Bill Durant, assisted by Lester C. Adelman and Silas N. Ragster of the Department of Applied Behavioral Sciences. Also participating in the study was Paul Mapes, Director of University Extension's Stockton Community Education Project.

The information presented was gathered by a variety of methods, none of which can adequately be described as "standard" research methods. Information about the target population was gathered primarily through the "Inculture Research" method. This method uses members of a culture or subculture in the research process itself, from developing questionnaires to conducting and writing interviews. The philosophy of Inculture Research is that members of a subculture should be involved in gathering the information and that the information should be relevant to their needs as they perceive them.

It is important here to discuss why this particular method was selected and how it was implemented. The Stockton Singlemen's Project had two basic elements: 1) research; and 2) community development. Inculture Research had been used successfully in an earlier study on single men in Sacramento (HOUSING SACRAMENTO'S INVISIBLE MAN: FARM WORKERS, HUSTLERS, AND MISFITS, Department of Applied Behavioral Sciences; University of California, Davis Research Monograph, No. 9), and project staff saw

this approach as effective in developing information on a group from its own perspective and also in developing a "grass roots" community organization. It was felt that such an organization could use this information to develop programs relevant to its needs. The process involved in community development is essentially the same process involved in developing an Inculture Research project.

The Sacramento experience showed very definite movement on the part of the men involved. They became aware of themselves as worthwhile human beings yet of a subculture with needs largely ignored by the family-oriented dominant culture. For these reasons the Singlemen's Research Project cooperated with University Extension's Community Development Unit in this dual-focus project. This paper, however, deals only with the research aspects of the project. A future paper will cover the community-development process.

The Inculture Research was less defined and structured in this project than in Sacramento. Project staff members had few contacts with men on the streets of Stockton and were not keyed to the rhythms of the Stockton Skid Row community. Inculture Research demands participation of the target group throughout the process. To obtain that participation it was necessary to: 1) make contact with the target population on the streets; and 2) monitor the activities of the community. This background information was collected by a staff member who became a participant observer in the Skid Row community and kept a diary for six months. The "day haul"* was monitored, conversations with men on the streets recorded, and significant incidents documented. By November 1971, background data had been acquired necessary to giving the staff a fair idea of which problems needed to be resolved before an Inculture Research Team could be organized. With redevelopment and construction of a cross-town freeway under way, the physical community had disappeared. The only focal points left were two public parks: Independence Park, at Aurora and Market streets; and Washington Park, at Hunter and Washington Streets. The parks (adequate in summer) were not well suited to a winter project, so the project's two storefront offices were also used as a day-center for the men.

"The Place" opened on 29 November 1971 and operated seven days a week. The staff decided not to advertise the opening, instead relying on the street communication

* "Day haul": a centralized farm labor pick-up point where contractors pick up workers and transport them to the farms, bring them back, and pay them off.

system to get the word out. The first two weeks were slow, but as more street contacts came through and as the weather got wetter and colder, the population increased--to 75-100 men a day. The highest daily population (about 200 men when the weather was really bad) dropped off radically with good weather and available work.

Originally, it was thought that the Inculture Research Team could be organized with relative ease by many of the same techniques used in the Sacramento project: regular organized meetings and continuity of contact. In fact, the Sacramento center, being a housing facility, provided stability, whereas the situation in Stockton was radically different. There, the two small rooms known as "The Place" contained all the chaos, confusion, and brutality of the streets. Rather than hold meetings nobody would come to, the decision was made to hang butcher paper on the walls and ask the men to write (or have someone else write) questions for research. The staff then put some sample questions on the paper to "start the ball rolling." Two days later, with as much encouragement as the staff could provide, some of the men began to respond. Impromptu research meetings were held every time a group would gather around what came to be known as the "question paper." After about three weeks, many arguments, and innumerable fist fights, a team of three men was organized, and test interviews were put together. From these test interviews the team, with staff assistance, developed a standardized questionnaire. Two staff people continued to work closely with this team; they sat in on interviews and helped the men with write-ups. Inculture Team members were paid five dollars per interview, and men who gave information about themselves were paid three dollars. The Stockton team completed 140 usable interviews.

It is important that Inculture Research is a very subjective instrument. Some of the information quoted from the interviews may or may not be accurate as to specific facts but nevertheless <u>does</u> represent an accurate portrayal of the attitudes and feelings of the men this project dealt with. Much of the information presented on the target population is based on observations, conversations, and impressions of the staff, which spent a great deal of time talking to and listening to the men who came to "The Place." The staff also spent a great deal of time on the streets, and the background information collected before "The Place" was opened is cited extensively.

Information on the availability of social services was gathered primarily by

a staff member who acted as an advocate for the men. For example, if a man needed medical care, he was taken to the appropriate agency; the staff man took notes on the quality of service and the attitudes of agency personnel. This method was developed because of the many requests for help in dealing with various problems. The staff experienced social-service delivery systems--from the crowded waiting rooms to the interrogation type of interview which exists in some agencies. The staff felt that the men have a right to life-supporting social services and recognized that some agencies were eager to help but were unable to muster sufficient resources. At the same time, some agencies appeared simply unwilling to provide services to this population.

This paper is presented in four parts.

The first part is entitled "Social Services." The availability, quality, and quantity of services as well as the attitudes of those employed by the various agencies are viewed as good indicators of the overall community attitude toward these men. The men's use of these services indicates their isolation from this society.

The second part, entitled "Skid Row Community," discusses the role of the Skid Row community in the lives of these men. From the interviews of the Inculture Research, the Skid Row community of ten years ago has been reconstructed, and the positive and negative aspects of that community identified. From the Inculture Research and staff observations, the condition of Skid Row today has also been examined.

The third section, entitled "Tramps, Alcoholics, and Farmworkers," discusses the man of Skid Row. The names attached to him have led people to do nothing; his real identity has been covered, perhaps to make him a more acceptable candidate for help.

The fourth section is the conclusion.

This paper was put together by Lester C. Adelman, Bill Durant, and Silas Ragster. Pictures are provided by Paul Mapes. The picture presented here is being lived by: Johnny, Jack Applegate, Pat Crow, Baby Tramp, Mike Cordova, Wimpy, Con, Otis Carey, Louie, Oklahoma, Linda, Okie, Delbert Rakestraw, Red Lehman, Mr. Bronson, R. Dominguez, Jim Sparks, M. C. Weaver, Lupe, Brother Bob Wolgast, Woody, Sara, Bogart, Preacher, Leander Studwell, Carmen the Queen, Curly, Old Trigger, Baldie, Lander Frodge, Pig Meat, Ding Bat, Pig's Toe, Billy Joe Smith, Oly, Cherokee, Billy Vargus, Ray King, Jim Rise'n, Big Red, Hens, Oscar, George, Ringo, and Montana Slim. There are a lot of people on those streets.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Survival is a full-time job to the homeless men who inhabit downtown Stockton in winter. To a large degree, "making it" depends on a variety of the skills of the subculture: getting discarded food (produce from refuse, old bread, day-old plastic-wrapped sandwiches, nearly-soured cottage cheese, etc.); makeshift sleeping accommodations, various combinations of sleeping bags, blankets, tarpaulins, plastic sheeting, partially sheltered by weeds, walls, or sunken areas (Mormon Channel); also panhandling and, occasionally, outright stealing.

This report, however, deals with the availability of life-supporting resources provided by local public and private service agencies and demonstrates some obstacles to getting the services to the men and/or the men to the services.

The essential characteristic of civilized life would seem to be shelter--a place for repose, a place to stop having to keep on walking, the proverbial place to get out of the rain. The West End Redevelopment Project of the 1960's razed 64 hotels and rooming houses, leaving only two hotel-type facilities in that area, the Holiday Inn and the Lee Center. The 3,500 to 4,350 low-cost rooms in that area then have been replaced by 386 rooms at prices far beyond the reach of the population in question. "Downtown Stockton" today comprises only 37 hotels, offering 2,381 rooms at rates of $2.50 to $3.50 a day and $40-85 a month. A typical member of the single male population, about fifty years old, usually makes barely enough money doing piecework field labor to cover lodging, let alone other expenses. And during winter this kind of work diminishes nearly to zero: the day haul takes only a skeleton crew of "regulars" during most of November, December, January, and February.

As a result, a sizable number of men (at least 126 documented cases; 90% of the 140 men interviewed) cannot afford hotel rooms on a regular basis and therefore do their best to find a free place to sleep. Some choose the Stockton Gospel Rescue Mission, often referred to as "Carl's Mission" by the men. Carl Ellison, superintendent, describes his facility, at 229 East Church Street: "When a fellow gets his life straightened out with God, he won't have to travel and get drunk." Mr. Ellison, a reformed alcoholic, sees his operation as "Christian work." The Mission does provide shelter for the night, and some men indicate that sleeping on a tile floor

crowded with 80-100 bodies is preferable to sleeping outside. Many resent having to sit through a religious service before getting their bean dinner. They also complain about being awakened at 4:30 a.m. to be out by 5:00 a.m. The official reason is that the hall must be prepared for morning Bible-study services, but this early rising is also seen as presumably an incentive to look for work. Most often, in fact, the men spend the dank wee hours wandering around the downtown streets waiting for a cafe or some other establishment to open so they can get out of the cold. Men were often waiting at "The Place" (the University of California, Davis, Extension service center at 901-905 East Main Street) at 8:30 or 9:00 a.m. for someone to open the doors; and the only heat offered there was one small electric space heater for two large rooms, plus the sun shining through the front (south) windows, plus body heat.

Another alternative is the Salvation Army. The Salvation Army policy, like that of the Stockton Rescue Mission, is not to cater to transients, but rather to try to help wayward men find the path back to healthy living. Brigadier John Ritchie, director of the Salvation Army Men's Social Service Center, 1247 South Wilson Way, says: "This is not a sobering-up place. Within a week we find the phony." To gain admittance to the Army's 78 beds, a man must commit himself to the total program. He works in the Salvation Army store plant or shipping department five days a week, eight hours a day, and attends religious services (nondenominational) Sunday and Thursday evenings. It is called a work-therapy program; a man is paid, starting at one dollar a day or five dollars a week. As he establishes his reliability and consistency by staying on the job, his wage increases in five months to a maximum of $15 a week. It is a good opportunity to get three meals a day, clothing, a shower, and a bed, but the cost is high: many men dislike the religious obligation; they say they do not mind religion but do not like having someone else's religion forced on them. Once a man is "dishonorably discharged" from the program, or if he leaves without notifying the authorities, he will have trouble being readmitted. Furthermore, in the winter the service-center dormitory, in effect, is usually full. The Salvation Army, like Carl's Mission, makes a deal with the men: at the Mission you get a roof, a meal, and a floor to sleep on in exchange for praying; at the Salvation Army, you have to work as well as pray, but you get a bed instead of a floor. The superintendent of the Mission did not even mention the Salvation Army.

The secretary at the Salvation Army said she thought the Mission was not very clean and that the Salvation Army was beyond comparison with the Mission as a service to the men.

The third and final alternative for indigent men who want to sleep indoors is the Benton Hall Annex Dormitory, on the grounds of the San Joaquin General Hospital, about eight miles south of Stockton. This twin dormitory building, formerly known as the Singlemen's Camp, has 79 beds. Forty beds are allotted to Project Faith, the county alcoholic rehabilitation program. The rest are for indigents recuperating from illness or surgery who are no longer sick enough to require a hospital bed.

On 15 February 1972, after considerable pressure had been brought on the county by homeless men, their attorneys, and other advocates, the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors opened up 10 beds for able-bodied men who had no other place to sleep. In other words, men who had hitherto been referred to the Mission, the "Sally"*, or the weeds by the Department of Public Assistance-General Relief (DPA-GR), are now given an opportunity to stay at the Annex. This facility provides a homeless single man with a bed, clean clothes, a shower, and two good meals every day. Orville Byrd is the director of Benton Hall Annex; he is ambivalent toward the "drunks" who are not enrolled in the Project Faith program and feels that just giving them a place to sleep will not help them or anyone else. Although there are probably 300 men who have no other place to stay, there have never been more than six people filling the GR beds at BHA on a given night. The county cites this as evidence that no need exists for housing. Many men stay there for a few nights and then elect to go back to the Mission or the weeds. None ever complain about the food or facilities at BHA, but they do complain about its remote location. They feel that they want to be downtown with their friends, where many of them have lived for years. Even though "Skid Row" has been torn down, these men still consider downtown Stockton their home. Many refuse to go to BHA because they want to be downtown to report for agricultural work at the day-haul point (Commerce and Hazelton streets) at 4:30 the next morning. When advised that a bed was better than the Mission floor, one such man in his sixties refused to accept it: "I've made it

* "Sally": this is what the men call the Salvation Army

this long; another night on the Mission floor won't kill me." The county has since provided early-morning transport from BHA to the day haul, but the ten beds still go virtually unused. The men want a room downtown, convenient to friends and to the various resources of the area. Even with free transport, the men feel out of touch when they are housed out of town. Any man, whether he is on someone's program or not, can get a free breakfast at St. Mary's Dining Room, 204 East Washington Street, and many of them do. George Rice, the cook, reports that the dining room, run on donated food and money, serves 150-250 men per day, all year around. It is open Monday through Saturday from 9:00 to 10:30 a.m. There are no complaints about this place and it is one of the few local service outlets offering no forms and no strings: "They're good people."

Since there is almost no farm work available in the winter, it would seem logical for the men to apply for some kind of public assistance. Of 140 men questioned about welfare, a resounding 89% indicated they did not think there was any chance of obtaining help there. In San Joaquin County, welfare is administered by the Department of Public Assistance, 133 East Weber Avenue, Stockton, in the old Stockton Hotel, an impressive building with a Spanish motif and a red-tile roof. Although this is probably the most distinctive building in downtown Stockton and is probably viewed daily by a majority of the men, an astonishing number claim they do not know where the Welfare Department is. Clearly, welfare has not been incorporated into the "survival system" of the men.

There are four categories of need suppported by state and federal funds: Aid to the Totally and Permanently Disabled (ATD), Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), Aid to the Blind (AB), and Old Age Security (OAS). A fifth program, the State Medical Assistance Program (MEDI-CAL), was opened on 1 October 1971 to include medically indigent people who did not qualify for or who chose not to participate in the other programs.

AFDC supports families with dependent children. Since none of the men have any dependents, none qualify. AB supports only those whose vision is one-tenth normal (20/200) or less when corrected by the best possible lens. OAS is granted to any indigent who is 65 years old or more. ATD is granted only to a person whose disability is adjudged: 1) to be a major handicap; 2) to be likely to continue throughout his lifetime; and 3) to prevent him from engaging in any useful occupation.

Thus, a man who has no dependents, is less than 65, has some sight, and is not disabled cannot rely on the standard programs of the Welfare Department. If he is sick, Medi-Cal will help him survive (that is, prevent him from dying). If he is hungry, he can usually get the DPA-administered, USDA-donated foods at the Surplus Warehouse at 142 South Aurora Street.

Even that, however, was not possible as recently as December 1971. Mrs. Kathleen McNamara, supervisor of office services, in charge of distribution of USDA commodities in San Joaquin County, explained that it was impossible for the men to get this food because they had no cooking facilities. She referred to a handbook of the county's interpretation of the federal eligibility requirements and said: "To be eligible for donated foods, an applicant must have an address and cooking facilities." In other words, people with no place to live or to cook were, in effect, penalized for being too poor to qualify for the program. This policy led many men to forge rent receipts to try to get food. At one point, the staff considered looking into the possibility of getting "The Place" certified as a legitimate "cooking facility." It turned out that time and money limitations made it unfeasible to bring "The Place" up to the San Joaquin County Health Department's standards. The homeless indigents' current privilege to receive USDA-donated foods represents a liberalization of policy that dates from the same County Board of Supervisors' meeting which allotted the beds at BHA. Russell Gray, director of DPA, announced that the term "cooking facilities" was to be broadly interpreted to include outdoor stoves or any primitive cooking facility, and that "The Place" was to be designated as a legitimate "address." Today, a man will receive commodities if he words his request correctly, explaining that he has no permanent address in San Joaquin County but is a resident of "The Place." If he states he has a permanent address, he will receive no food until he produces a rent receipt as proof. The food order consists largely of flour, corn meal, dry milk, corn syrup, and other condiments more suited to cooking than to eating "as is." However, such items as canned meat, peanut butter, tomato juice, butter, and cheese make it worthwhile for the indigent single man to pick up his order once a month, eat what he can, give some to "The Place" for the daily "pot," and occasionally sell some of the higher-demand items in the park (illegal, but survival comes first).

Thus, minimal food, shelter, and medical care are technically available to

a man who is "down and out" in Stockton, but the delivery systems of these services are far from adequate. Food and shelter is obtained only after considerable interviews of the cross-examination type, and the Medi-Cal program, although more readily available, is useful only to people who are sick. The DPA fails miserably in terms of taking people who are on the skids and helping them get started again. Indigents who do not qualify for the categorical aids are supposedly supported and relieved by a county general relief program. For a single person, the county theoretically will pay up to $45 a month for a hotel room and supply $32 worth of food vouchers per month. Such has been county policy since 1966, but there is an unwritten law by which San Joaquin County and other counties have exempted themselves from helping single men, understood as follows: if a man is employable with no dependents, he should not get welfare. Perhaps this assumption was that no able-bodied single man is unable to support himself and that any such man who is laid off from work can collect unemployment or other work-related benefits until he gets another job. Therefore, Skid Row applicants historically never got any help from the county. Of course, those men, supported principally by agricultural work in summer, never had an unemployment compensation program like that of factory workers. Moreover, agricultural work is near a standstill in winter.

In April 1971, however, the California State Supreme Court handed down a decision that a jblesss person cannot be denied general-assistance welfare payments on the grounds that he is "employable" (Mooney v. Pickett; 4 C. 3d 669; 94 Cal Rptr. 279, 483 P. 2nd 1231). In the light of that decision, and of considerable pressure by Legal Aid and other advocates, the San Joaquin County DPA granted general relief (hotel and food) to a single employable male for the very first time on 27 January 1972. This was not the beginning of a new era. General Relief in San Joaquin County is still very tight; there remains an apparent contradiction between the very high-sounding and reasonable county guidelines and the arbitrary and often punitive manner in which the program is administered. Recently, a committee was formed to examine the problem of getting aid to indigents who do not fall into the standard categories. The committee consists of three members of the Stockton Welfare Rights Organization, two members of the County Board of Supervisors, and the County Administrator.

A single man's best chance of getting aid from the DPA is usually to attempt to qualify for ATD. The men balk, however, at claiming they are "disabled." The

case workers are generally very cooperative when men apply for this, largely because the grant, if approved, will come from the state. Even if a man is not approved for ATD, he can generally get a hotel room and food vouchers while his application is pending. Once again, the county is a little looser with its GR in this situation since, when and if the grant comes through (it usually does), the county reimburses itself from the first state check. Many men apply several times, pleading a new or worsened ailment each time. Although applying for ATD is easy compared with trying other programs, it is still difficult for the uninitiated, uncounseled single man. One remarked: "I get ATD; it's not much of a problem if you're half dead."

Actually, being half dead is only half of the problem. Mrs. Irene Hamilton, medical services coordinator at DPA, remarked that single men are notorious for getting lost when they are only half-processed, and therefore miss out on services they are eligible for. That happens as well to men who apply for a Medi-Cal card. Following procedures, keeping appointments, even remembering appointments--all are alien to the life-style of most of the men. And, since most of the men have no permanent address, it is next to impossible for the social workers to locate the missing ones. Mrs. Hamilton bemoaned the fact that the county can help only people who request help and follow through on their request. She also admitted that many of the social workers are not aware of all the services available to their clients. In addition, she added, the "low, low self-esteem" of the men often makes them particularly defensive and prone to chuck the whole thing if it begins to look too complicated.

Mrs. Hamilton's analysis is borne out in many instances where the men are dealing with agencies and services which clearly were not designed with them in mind. For instance, available for nonemergency medical care is the Pearl Sifford Clinic, 2226 South Airport Way. This facility, funded by the San Joaquin Medical Society, treats rashes and infections, redresses wounds, gives simple first aid, and the like. It is staffed by nurses full-time and doctors who "volunteer" their time (at twenty-five dollars an hour), mostly in the evenings. Appointments are advisable since an internist will be there one night, a dermatologist the next, a pediatrician the next, etc. In an effort to link up the men with this service, the staff of "The Place" arranged that any men who needed treatment be picked up by the Medical Society's "minibus" at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. About 10 men, a strong showing, went on the first Tuesday. The waiting room was small and the men did not blend

well with the mothers and children there. The doctor was not there; he had been called on an emergency. One man was referred by the nurse to the County Hospital. Most of the men began to grumble when they realized that they were stranded far from downtown and were going to miss the feed at Carl's Mission. A doctor who eventually did treat one of the men for lice later remarked that it was ridiculous to kill lice on a man who: 1) is not likely to be changing or washing his clothes in the near future; 2) has no access to bathing facilities; and 3) will in all likelihood be sleeping with other lice-infested men that night on the Mission floor.

The minibus, it turned out, could not continue to stop at "The Place" every Tuesday and Thursday and actually showed up only twice because it had to cover Tracy and Lodi as well as Stockton. The clinic staff said that if the men made appointments a day ahead of time, they would try to arrange transport. So much for the Pearl Sifford Clinic.

Then there is the San Joaquin Health District, at 1601 East Hazelton Street--60% local funds, 40% federal and state funds. In January, a staff member of "The Place" took a man with a mysterious rash for treatment there. The man agreed to submit to a blood test for veneral disease. Subsequently, the rash was diagnosed as scabies, and he was given a jar of salve. Treatment and service were excellent but this clinic had not been set up for such use. Norman Allred, director of health education, explained that the function of the Health District was "to keep people well." They dealt with the "promotion, maintenance, and control of community health." When asked about single men and their health problems, he confirmed that the District Clinic was equipped to handle lice problems and chest x-rays, but the crux of his message was, literally, "don't come here if you're sick."

So, here is a facility which is fine for middle-class or even low-income families who come for well-baby care, TB tests, VD control, and tetanus shots, but it surely does not suit the needs of homeless single men. A man who is living from hand to mouth is not likely to make a special effort to get to the Health District for his yearly chest x-ray. Mary Chamberlain, director of nursing for the Health District, was asked about the possibility of getting a nurse to come to "The Place" at specified times once or twice a week. While she sympathized with the problem of delivering health services to the men, she complained that she did not have the man/woman-power, that so many neighborhood centers needed nurses that supplying them all was

impossible. She promised to have her people stop by "The Place" whenever they could.

The San Joaquin Medical Society supports a migrant-worker health program at the labor camps during the summer and a Mobile Clinic which operates Monday evenings from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at Washington Park in front of St. Mary's Church. This clinic provides services similar to those at Pearl Sifford and also attempts to discover latent illnesses by use of the "multiphasic screening" technique; that is, a person is run through a series of diagnostic tests and is mailed the results. This system seldom works with a man of no permanent address although it is very effective in dealing with families.

When the migrant-workers program was started, nine years ago, by Dr. Virgil Gianelli of the Medical Society, and the target population was concentrated in Stockton's "West End," the Clinic had a good flow of customers. In 1972, with Skid Row gone, the population shifted, and increased fear to walk the streets at night, use of this facility was so sparse that operations were suspended for two weeks in February. The Clinic is functioning once again at the same location; consideration of moving it further east to "follow the population" has been shelved for the moment. This mobile facility is by far the most useful and used medical resource for the men downtown but still falls short of the mark. As Dr. Gianelli himself pointed out, in 1968: "The physicians of San Joaquin County are concerned that transient single male workers constitute the one population group for which adequate medical services are not readily available . . . the transient single male is not accustomed to seeking medical care for what may initially appear to be minor illness" (Lucile Wirth Report, March 1972, following Hedrick's Budget).

For the standard fare of life on the streets--gashes, fractures, abrasions from fights and falls, and rashes, VD, TB, and emphysema from malnutrition, exposure, and lack of general hygiene--the rule is still to wait for the ailment, whatever it is, to heal, go away, or become integrated into the tolerable woes of existence, or for the subject to become frightened by pain and imminent death and call an ambulance or a policeman for transport to the County Hospital.

There exists in Stockton the joint federal/county-funded North San Joaquin Comprehensive Health Planning Association, whose purpose is to "enhance, encourage, and support the voluntary action of consumers and health professionals in the health planning process." This agency publishes reports on the functioning and coordination

of the various health authorities in the area in an effort to promote cooperation and prevent duplication. In the process of making evaluations and suggestions, the Association has inexorably come to clash politically with other elements of the local health establishment and has subsequently become part of the problem it is to study.

Whether in retaliation or cooperation, the Medical Society has recently acquired funds to form Health Services Research, Inc., whose function is to assess community health needs and match them with services. Their method is to do surveys to find out which people are lacking which health services.

All these programs are laudable, but the net result for the single men is the predicament of always falling through the same hole in each elaborately woven net. Despite all the competing health agencies and associations, men still walk around with broken bones, infected wounds, rashes, and respiratory and digestive ailments, endangering their own lives and the community's health. It is common to ask a man how he is feeling and have him insist after a prolonged tubercular coughing spell: "I feel just fine."

If a man is willing to admit or decide that alcoholism is really his problem, he can enroll in Project Faith (Further Alcoholics Interest Toward Health), the county alcoholic program run by Dr. Robert O'Briant, director of addictive services. Project Faith is not designed for men who want to dry out and start drinking again. To be accepted into the program, "A person must display a desire to get better," according to Don McKinley, a counselor for the program. McKinley, like most of the Faith staff, is a reformed alcoholic. Usually, the Project Faith enrollee will start the program by spending a few days in the detoxification ward at the San Joaquin General Hospital to have his system cleaned out with various drugs and therapy. From there, he is transported to Bret Harte Hospital, an old TB sanitarium in Murphys, Calaveras County (in the Mother Lode country). There, in an idyllic and peaceful atmosphere, alcoholics talk to each other and to counselors every day in group sessions of about 20 people each. Good food is available 24 hours a day. Seventy-five beds at the hospital are allotted to Project Faith, and the population is continually rotating, the average stay being three to four weeks. According to McKinley: "Men are not rehabilitated there, but reborn." The philosophy is similar to that of Alcoholics Anonymous: the alcoholic must come to terms with his problem and realize

that "social drinking" is not possible to him. Skid Row and middle-class alcoholics mingle at Bret Harte; those who can afford it, pay; the others are supported by the county. Dr. O'Briant addresses the group every other Tuesday, describing the scourge of alcohol from both physiological and sociological standpoints. Each man is assigned an individual counselor to help him work out his own individual problems. At the end of his stay, the patient, equipped with a Faith membership card (complete with "before" and "after" pictures of himself), returns to live at San Joaquin General Hospital's Benton Hall Annex dormitory, there to spend as much time as necessary to find work and figure out a way of re-entering society.

The program is excellent for the man who has a family and/or a job to return to. For the Skid Row alcoholic, however, for whom drinking is an integral part of his survival system, the chances of staying sober after returning home are slim. About half of the men interviewed had heard of Project Faith; many of these were graduates (some several times) but, as in job-training programs leading to the reality of unemployment, a rehabilitation program for alcoholics that returns the men to a depressed Skid Row life is only a partial solution at best.

The Starting Point, at 701 East Park Street, is another county-financed alcoholic service, opened in March of 1972. This is mostly a stop-gap facility, a place downtown where intoxicated persons can dry out. Most of the referrals to this twenty-bed unit are from the police department, although some men do come in on their own. Mrs. Ida Hales, supervisor of The Starting Point, explained that her operation is very simple: they have "a couch, a shower, pajamas, bed, two meals a day, delousing (with a shampoo called "Kwell"), clean clothes, haircut and shave, and some jobs." There are always at least two counselors on the premises, and, as in Project Faith, all the staff members are "sober alcoholics." Serious cases, men on the verge of "delirium tremens," are sent to the County Hospital. The rest are treated right there, without medication. Mrs. Hales claims that recovery (sobering up) is quicker without the drugs.

The newness of this facility makes it difficult to assess its effectiveness. A Skid Row man will usually find his way to this place assisted by the police, who are not allowed to arrest a man for merely being drunk since the state law was changed a year ago. Today, an officer who finds a harmless drunk is required to take him to a "civil detention" medical facility if one is available rather than automatically

taking him to the 'drunk tank' at the county jail (California Penal Code, Section 647ff). Men who are still able to walk around will generally not consider themselves ill enough to seek help. By the time they ask for help, they usually have to be taken to San Joaquin General Hospital.

A third county alcoholic program is the Alcoholic Rehabilitation Clinic, at 540 North California Street. This is a jacket-and-tie operation, dealing with alcoholism as an out-patient kind of disease. Their clientele is made up primarily of working alcoholics who would like to overcome their problem in much the same way that any other kind of emotionally-disturbed but functioning person would in utilizing the services of a psychiatrist. Leonard Glass, the director, has a master's degree in social work, and his staff consists exclusively of "professional-type" people. Group therapy is conducted by the staff in the downtown office. Very rarely does a Skid Row person find his way into this facility.

The law-enforcement agencies play an important role in the lives of the men. The Police Department provides a good percentage of the transport the men use within the city, and the Sheriff's Department provides the housing (i.e., county jail) for many of the homeless people of Skid Row. Captain E. T. Nagel, head of the Uniformed Division of the Stockton Police Department, told me that drunk arrests are almost nonexistent today, and that intoxicated persons are locked up only if they are endangering their own safety or that of someone else. The Captain confirmed that the police do make extensive use of Starting Point as a repository for nondangerous drunks. In the days when the old Skid Row was standing, wholesale arrests of drunks were commonplace. Ten years ago, according to Nagel's office, the police arrested "as many in one shift as they do in a week now." While drunk arrests are down, all other crime downtown is on the rise. In 1971, six of the twenty murders in the whole city were in the downtown area. The Captain agreed that Skid Row murders are the hardest to solve. Downtown crime is attributable largely to 'jackrollers' and others preying on defenseless elderly pensioners and other men, and to the lack of a Skid Row community to monitor what is happening on the streets. Jess Delaney, Chief of Police, corroborated stories of pensioners getting rolled in their rooms for their newly-arrived checks. Captain Nagel mentioned that it is difficult to get witnesses or even victims to press charges in connection with these violent crimes. He said the Police Department is willing to help and is anxious to provide

services to the men. They even have a "very small fund" to help indigents, he said.

It is true that most of the men do not think of the police as a resource, though most agree that the police treat them better now than they did ten years ago. The problem of pressing charges is akin to filling out forms at the Welfare Department. Most of the men just will not tolerate any semblance of bureaucratic hassle, so if getting police help means reporting to the station and filling out a form, they probably will not pursue it.

When a man is taken into custody, the Stockton police turn him over to the San Joaquin County Jail, in French Camp, just south of the County Hospital. During the past winters, men were not particularly despondent at drawing a 180-day sentence for drunkenness or disturbing the peace; many had regular jobs as inmates--bankers, tailors, etc.--and welcomed the security and balanced "army-barracks" style of living that the county jail offered as an alternative to the streets. Captain Oliver B. Bailey, chief officer at the jail, said there are many fewer drunks populating the jail now than there were just a few years ago. Ten years ago, 60% were drunks; today, only 20%. The Honor Farm, the minimum-security facility where these men are housed, used to accommodate as many as 500 men; now the population seldom exceeds 150-200. Those who are arrested for drunkenness are booked into the drunk tank until sober and are taken to court within 72 hours. The average term for those sentenced is about 60 days. Captain Bailey did not feel that many men actually got arrested on purpose just to get into jail, but agreed that being jailed was "part of their life-style" and that most of them are not much surprised when they end up there.

Fifty-nine percent of the men interviewed are veterans, and some receive veterans' benefits for service-connected disabilities. Any veteran over 65 years old can apply for a pension at the Veterans Services Office in the County Courthouse. All veterans can get hospital benefits, which, in the case of the Skid Row men, means that during a prolonged illness they are transferred from the County Hospital in French Camp to the Veterans Administration Hospital in Livermore, their expenses being picked up by the federal government rather than the county. There is also a VA alcoholic facility in Palo Alto, but most Stockton men would use Project Faith if they enrolled in any alcoholic program. The main function of the Stockton VA Office is to help men get their discharge papers reissued if they have been lost.

Mr. David Bruno, who is in charge of this office, expressed his attitude toward the men's rights to medical services when he said: "We'd like to weed out those who are unworthy." He did not like "con men" and "winos."

The Social Security Office, 826 North California Street, is well known to most of the men as someplace they will have to find when they reach age sixty-two. If they survive that long, they will be assured of a monthly check. Many of them still have a long wait.

SKID ROW COMMUNITY

For all intents and purposes, survival in Skid Row was, and remains, a free-enterprise affair. Public social-service delivery systems, readily available in other low-income communities, are, as a practical matter, nonexistent. The reason for this lack of community concern is typical of the way Skid Row is viewed throughout this country. People do not see Skid Row as a community which plays the same roles our community plays in our own lives. It has more typically been described as the "blight that erodes civic pride and deters investment of external capital in the community" (STOCKTON RECORD, 31 May 1961, pg. 14). If one relied on statistical data on Skid Row as grounds for one's opinion, one would have had little trouble supporting the above statement:

1,960 human residents (forty-seven families)

279 businesses, including:

- 6 pool halls
- 21 barber shops
- 4 card rooms
- 1 beauty salon
- 5 shoe-repair shops
- 4 garages
- 8 second-hand shops
- 6 pawn shops
- 12 laundry and cleaning shops
- 10 food-broker firms
- 6 drug stores
- 3 theaters
- 49 bars
- 7 liquor stores
- 48 cafes and restaurants
- 64 hotels and rooming houses
- 48 vacant buildings, including a mammoth 40-unit brothel built in 1905

Comprising 5.3% of Stockton's gross area and 12% of its population, this tract accounted for:

- 19% of the infant mortality
- 65% of the tuberculosis deaths
- 24% of the juvenile delinquency
- 82% of the adult arrests
- 37% of the dependent children, and

38% of the building fires

(John C. Lilly, MISSION REPORT. City of Stockton, California; July 1956, pg. 9)

Skid Row was an eyesore; there is little doubt of that. What is important, and what seems to have been neglected, is that Skid Row was more than a human garbage can. Businessmen made money providing for the needs of Skid Row inhabitants. Those living in Skid Row worked at various casual labor jobs, but they worked: "I have been a working man all my life am sixty-three years old throwed money right and left on Skid Row now they treat me like a broke sick dog." Eighty-four percent of the men interviewed in Stockton considered themselves able-bodied workers; work appears to be an important part of their self-image. Given the values of mainstream society, this is a definite "plus" for Skid Row people. Work was abundant 10 years ago. According to the men interviewed, 57% thought Skid Row was a better place to live then because of the availability of work and "cheap living." Work was the primary survival system in the Skid Row community. Only 19% of the men interviewed thought Skid Row had not changed in the last 10 years, indicating that they used the "bum," "frisco circle," and the missions then just as they do now. The Stockton Branch of the American Association of University Women's Social and Economic Issues Committee made a statement in a 1961 report endorsing redevelopment which supports the idea that work is the primary attraction and survival system in the Skid Row community: "During the summer, our (Stockton's) Skid Row population is larger than that of San Francisco and Los Angeles." This is a fact because agricultural work is at its peak in the summer. It seems unlikely that hundreds of men would migrate to Stockton in the summer just to get drunk or "jackroll" with their friends.

Not only did the Skid Row community support its inhabitants by providing a central focus for casual labor hiring, but it also supported this community during some of the leaner winter months. Merchants recognized the Skid Rower as a worker, and willingly extended credit to him. Some hotels in the downtown area still provide credit to farm workers. A 1971 survey of housing in downtown Stockton by the UCD Singlemen's Research Project indicated that 14 of the 37 hotels surveyed would provide credit, depending on the worker. According to the men interviewed, this credit system was much more liberal and widespread ten years ago. Following is a description of how that system probably operated: "Say you need a room then you go to this hotel

where you stay before and tell the man you got to have a room. He would look at you and say or think here's a man looks like a workin' man. He could tell by my boots, they was the only thing that I had usually that was new or in good shape. Then he say to you, ok, you got a room and then would phone around to fine me a job so he get his money and have himself a paying man for the next time." This system worked because the men worked and the merchants knew it.

Responses were interesting to the questions "How were you treated by police and merchants ten years ago?" and "How do these people treat you today?" Seventy-two percent felt that the police harrassed them ten years ago: "they would arrest you for bein' sober." The merchants, on the other hand, were seen as friendly then: "Those peoples treated men just fine but I had doe-ray-me back then. I was younger and there was work and they knowed it." In contrast, 62% feel the police now treat them fair to excellent, primarily because the change in the drunk law allows the police to take a man to an alcoholic program rather than jail.

The merchants in the central city, particularly on Main Street, do not see these men as an economic resource and would like them to disappear. For example, a small restaurant located on Main Street charges 21¢ for a cup of coffee with no refill. According to the waitress, this is to keep the "creatures" (single men) out. A survey of Main Street merchants revealed the following:

1) If the business is women's apparel, the presence of these men is more likely to be felt,

2) Businessmen on Main Street feel that the men themselves are not a problem, but that their mere presence in the downtown area has created a "false" image of downtown as a Skid Row jungle, an "image" that is bad for business,

3) Mechants of east Main Street, in contrast, feel the problem is a reality rather than merely a matter of "image." The Skid Row atmosphere is obvious to even the most casual observer of east Main Street. The credit manager of a furniture and appliance store had this comment: "I call the police three or four times a week. People are afraid. The 600-700 blocks are dangerous. If I was a customer I wouldn't come down here." Just how dangerous it is on the streets is open to question, but the atmosphere is not conducive to casual window shopping,

4) All but one or two merchants agreed that something had to be done. Although they are supportive of police activities in the area, they do not see that as the

answer. The building of a central housing facility is supported but is not seen as a total solution either; the owner of a small women's apparel shop threw up his hands and said: "Since they tore down Skid Row they come here." It appears that the image or stereotype of the Skid Rower has immobilized the whole town, because, as everyone will tell you: "You can't do anything about these winos."

The Skid Row community provided for needs other than work, housing, and food; it provided recreational facilities and meeting places for social contacts--it was the place "you belonged to." Most men felt Skid Row was safer ten years ago: "On Skid Row where there use to be everything you needed, and it was cheap enough that you could afford it. Such as a room, eats, and you could even buy a piece of a-- for two dollars. So you kinda had a family in Skid Row."

It is a well-documented fact that housing in Skid Row was within the price range of the Skid Rower. With daily and weekly rentals predominant, rates ranged from 50¢ a night to $10 a week. The 1971 survey indicated a total of 2,381 hotel rooms, of which 1,263 cost $60-85 per month and the remaining 1,118 cost $40-55 per month. All hotels indicated a preference for residents receiving a pension, disability insurance, or welfare in order to have a year-around occupancy, and it was obvious their rates had been adjusted accordingly (the minimum welfare rent payment is $45). Eight hotels indicated that their regular clientele included farm workers, and they showed rentals by day, week, or month. Elimination of the Skid Row community drastically altered the housing situation for the Skid Rower. Ten years ago there were more than 4,350 rooms, whereas today only 1,118 rooms come anywhere near his price range.

Recreation in Skid Row was centered in forty-nine bars, seven liquor stores, six pool halls, four card rooms, and the area's whorehouses. The only publicly-supported recreation facilities available now are Washington Park and Independence Park, in which the primary activities were and still are drinking, talking, sleeping, and dominoes. Skid Row has traditionally been alcohol-oriented; in the old days it was a form of recreation, and some status appears to be attached to the machismo implications of the "two-fisted drinking man," not unlike the cowboy of the old West. Skid Row was a s----kicking, honky-tonk life as described by an ex-Skid Row bartender: "The boys would go out, pick up some work, then come back to town. Sometimes they would get paid off in the bars then everyone would be a big spender.

When everyone gets about half drunk, the fights start, especially in some of the Okie bars I worked. It just went on like that all the time everyone had some money. Back then it seems like they done more punching than stabbin'; today seems like they do more stabbin' than punchin'."

The bars provided a place where the workers found companionship, both male and female. About the only other recreation besides drinking was three movie theaters in the area. Where work could be a positive element in Skid Row life, alcohol is probably the most negative element in the eyes of the rest of this society. Of the adult arrests made in the area, the majority were for drunkenness. Alcohol is still important in this subculture but serves a different purpose now.

For the Skid Rower, safety in the streets of downtown Stockton is a major concern today--more than ever in the past. That is not to say that Skid Row was a great place where all men were brothers, because it was not--it was a tough place. Because Skid Row was a 24-hour community where men were made welcome, a rhythm developed which cut down on opportunities to be "jackrolled." It was alive; a man who felt that he was in danger could step inside a building with other people. The system was one of self-policing (the same system that operates in any community). When you are in danger, run to where there are other people, not to an empty street or park. If a man can afford to sleep inside, he is less likely to be beat up by kids "just having some fun." The men interviewed were asked what they would do in Stockton if they had the power to change things. One man said: "Catch up all those little punks who are beating up on tramps and beat their brains out." Although this response was not typical, it indicates a problem which they live with every day. The staff at "The Place" saw men who had literally had the s--- kicked out of them by kids, for no reason.

Youth was also a contributing factor to the relative safety of Skid Row streets ten years ago. The average age of the men interviewed was 48.8 years. They lived the "sportin' life" most of those years and, as a result, look older than their age. They were asked about the Skid Row of ten years ago, when they were 38.8 years. Most drank less then, so were probably in better shape to defend themselves. They had to defend and police themselves because, even today, it is almost impossible to get a man to go to the police for help: "Don't no one like a snitch."

Skid Row is described in a lot of different ways, and most of these have

come from people who have never lived in Skid Row and see it as nothing more than an eyesore filled with doctors, lawyers, and college professors who went to one cocktail party too many and ended up on the skids.

A more accurate description of Skid Row was made in 1953 by Joseph T. Bill, Executive Director of the Sacramento Redevelopment Agency: "Skid Row is an amazingly self-contained community . . . ." Although he was speaking specifically of Sacramento's Skid Row, his description is also true of Stockton's Skid Row ten years ago. Today, Skid Row is less a place than a state of mind. The sense one gets from the men on the streets is one of confusion--not quite sure of what or where they are supposed to be. The primary survival system, work, is no longer operative, especially in the winter. Although the California Department of Human Resources' figures indicates a year-around day haul in Stockton, most of the men we contacted did not make the bus. In some cases, HRD's figures resemble Vietnam body counts in terms of their accuracy:

DAY HAUL FROM COMMERCE AND HAZELTON STREETS

1971	Monthly total bussed	Maximum daily work orders	Men bussed	Number of men short
January	1,339	112	112	0
February	1,963	118	118	0
March	1,213	98	98	0
April	3,126	210	210	0
May	6,781	479	416	63
June	11,744	774	474	300
July	11,166	630	535	95
August	14,238	1,326	683	646
September	9,042	910	373	537
October	7,746	854	355	502
November	1,874	303	199	104
December	1,260	130	101	29

The amount of work available has been greatly reduced. The work a man can get does not pay enough for his basic needs at current market prices, particularly in winter: January 6, 1971; talked to a guy at day haul: "I went out the other day. Got out about 4:00 a.m. Didn't get in until 9:00 p.m. Guess what the top

made?" I guessed. "Wrong, he made eight dollars. I figured it all out after I got back. That man was only makin' 47 cents per hour. Why they was just payin' eight cents a bag." Then he measured how far he had to go to fill a bag. "They plow those type of potatoes under in Oregon. I spent five years there. That's where I am headed right now. Me and my buddy were getting dirty face, and getting the h--- back to Oregon (sic)."

This man was leaving-town, but he is the exception. Ninety-four percent of the men interviewed consider Stockton their home base, with 12.9 years the average length of residence. Thirty-seven percent stated specifically that they stay because they feel they have a better chance to find work. Forty-three percent consider Stockton to be home because they know the town and have friends there.

Reduction in work and low wages are only part of the reason why men find it hard to get out on the day haul. Age is an important factor. Age discrimination does exist, as pointed out in the "REVIEW OF RURAL MANPOWER SERVICE," United States Department of Labor, Manpower Administration Special Review Staff, 1972. From 1 January 1971 to 1 July 1971, a staff member monitored the day haul; it was obvious that the older men were the last to go out except during peak harvest time.

Life on Skid Row is a hard life, becoming even harder in the last ten years; the men have gotten older and drink more now than they did in the past: Thursday, May 1971, "I went out for cherries the other day. Boy! Those d--- trees, tall as that building. H--- the man gave me a f------ forty-foot ladder, he says 'well, are you ready?' I said, man, I am not going up on that f---in' ladder, s--- no! I f---ed around and made some money, but not as much as I use to. You climb up and down that ladder a few times, S-*-*-*! You've had it, I ain't no young man. I don't know what they can do about all this, but I wish they would do something."

Today there was a fair-size day haul; cherries, and short-handle hoe, weeding. Most of the guys made it. Blacks and mostly older whites; the ones that were left were some who had gone out the day before. One of these guys told me: "H---, yes, I had to go out, but them d--- young Mexicans, runs like a bunch of fools out there, and the West Coast shorty, I just can't take that s--- any more but I got to eat."

Everybody waits for work. Men were asked what they worry about first when they get up in the morning; after eating and a safe place to sleep for that night, came work, followed closely by a drink. They were also asked what is great about

themselves; 56% think their ability to do hard manual labor is their outstanding quality. The remainder did not answer the question or said they do not think there is anything great about themselves.

It is amazing to find such a high percentage of men who are able to maintain a certain dignity and independence in their situation. Where ten years ago they were living in hotels, today they are living in the weeds or the missions; few business establishments welcome them, and their primary source of income is hustling on the streets, selling whatever they can get their hands on, begging, or (if strong enough) knocking off a pensioner on the first and fifteenth of every month. The missions, merchants, and outside community reinforce the "bad men" image. Where alcohol was once a form of recreation, today it is the opiate which makes it possible to make it. The "Tokay Blanket" is a reality, and survival is the name of the game. Everyone has one goal: "I got to make it one more year. They have moved out all the whores, flops, and there use to be theaters a man could go to. This use to be a good town. But it's gone down to nothing now. Where do they expect us tramps to go? I am not going to leave though. Even the cops ain't goin' to run me out. When I get my check coming in (pension check, social security), I know it's goin' to take about all to find me a room, but if I can have enough left to put me some can goods up, and buy me a little wine once in a while, I'll make it. I'll go on day haul a day or so, and maybe make enough to get a half gallon. And get me a little woman in my room, and have her call me Pappy!"

In the old days a man could pick when he would work; the average man interviewed had been out of work 3.3 months. Although the Skid Row worker has always been a member of the economic underground in this country, at least in his community he was a man; today he is excess baggage, a "non-producer." But it is interesting that when the weather changes and the work starts up again, "The Place" begins to empty. Today when it is open, it is nearly empty except for a few pensioners and alcoholics. The winter-time winos turn into single farm workers.

Everything positive about the Skid Row community is gone--its work ethic, its "free-enterprise" systems, its housing and eateries. Left behind is a large population of men whose primary survival system, especially in winter, is the "Tokay Blanket," street hustling, missions, and "jackrolling." Everything negative from the old Skid Row is all that remains in Stockton's fast-developing new Skid Row.

TRAMPS, ALCOHOLICS, AND FARMWORKERS

The purpose of this report is to assist various public and private agencies of Stockton to deal better with the indigent single men who populate the downtown streets. Most of the agencies, however well intentioned, have failed to deliver the necessary life-supporting services to these people. The major stumbling block is a nearly universal misapprehension as to who these men are. The various agencies' approaches are well suited to the needs of people who fit into groups "X, Y, or Z," but the downtown men do not really fit into any of the standardized categories.

In the majority of the agencies, people respond to any discussion of the single men with puzzlement at first and then with a comfortable glint of understanding that says, "Oh, yes, you mean the alcoholics downtown."

A social worker at DPA said, "I have the greatest sympathy for alcoholics; I've had them in my family." A Veteran's Service officer did not mind getting discharge papers for veterans but didn't like to deal with "drunks." And, of course, officials in the various alcoholic services see their clientele as "alcoholics."

It is extraordinary to observe here an entire class of people who are described in terms of a disease. The only other examples that come to mind are lepers and, perhaps, in the wards of state hospitals, psychotics, schizophrenics, etc. But a man with a chronic heart problem who applies for ATD is not described by a social worker as a "cardio-vasculite." Nor does a man with a positive reaction to a tuberculin test enter the society of "tuberculants." And a person with terminal cancer is never described as a "malignant." Most people, social workers included, insist on referring to the downtown men as alcoholics. That is apparently because drunkenness is seen as the most prominent and outstanding characteristic of this subculture.

Merchants of downtown Stockton commonly refer to the men as bums, winos, and transients, and see them as a problem for the image of downtown. Uptown ladies do not want to shop there any more. They do not even like to walk on Main Street, let alone browse and windowshop. One shopkeeper reported difficulty in hiring a young woman--they don't want to work downtown. An ex-mayor of Stockton, talking to one of the merchants during an interview, thought the elimination of the old Skid Row was ill-planned and had brought about problems for downtown. The men

from Skid Row, once confined to their own area, are now in evidence around women's apparel stores.

In a meeting concerning proposed single-men's housing, a county supervisor cautioned the research team to be aware of the distinction between "single farm workers" and "bums."

The men themselves, revealing a curious combination of stiffened pride and self-contempt, generally feel worthless, useless, and powerless, but are anxious to be recognized for loyalty to their friends: "Friendship is the most important thing," and "I try to treat everybody o.k.," and "We help each other."

The question "Do you drink?" is universally answered "Yes." The question "Why do you drink?" was answered "Loneliness," or "Nothing else to do," or:

"Yes, when I ain't got nothing else to do";

"Yes, I drink when I'm idle to forget my worries";

"Yes, I like it";

"H---, yes, can't explain";

"Yes. Because I like it";

"Yes, I drink when I'm idle";

"Yes, to settle nerves";

"Helps me forget my troubles";

"Need a Tokay Blanket to keep warm."

But only 4% consider themselves to be alcoholics. Other studies have documented the fact that only a small percentage are alcoholics.[1]

When public and government officials refer to these men, they do not seek to define an illness or to isolate a condition; rather, they want to classify a phenomenon which they do not understand--so the favorite word is alcoholic. This term supposedly explains who they are, what their problem is, what is wrong with them, why they are a nuisance, and why they are worthy of contempt. Rational people understand that alcoholism is a disease, that the issue is one of body chemistry rather than

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[1] See Padfield, Harland and Martin, William E., Farmers, Workers, and Machines (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1965), and

Spradley, James P., You Owe Yourself A Drunk (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1970).

personal morality. But emotionally the community, by and large, sees the Skid Row wino as a man who could not face life, sought to escape reality, and ended up as an alcoholic.

This self-deception is pervasive and significant. Here is a "problem" of homeless men which seems to lack the moral and political clout necessary to force society to mobilize itself and effect a solution. The choice was to ignore the problem, but completely denying the existence of the predicament is impossible: "Why won't you let your wife go downtown?"

> "It seems I can't walk downtown without having some bum asking for a handout";
>
> "This new mall is real pretty, too bad all those derelicts hang around here."

So the men are labeled alcoholics and dealt with as such. The programs designed for them are alcoholic programs, yet unsightly men remain ubiquitous on the downtown streets. The issue is not one of semantics, but rather of self-deception. Alcoholism is there, but alcoholism is not the only "issue," not even the principal one. Public agencies, reflecting the attitudes of society at large, have failed at accurate identification of the significant characteristics of this subculture.

Academics, church members, City and County planners, and other "liberals" have a different label for this elusive population--single farm workers. And it is true. Most do farm work when it is available; 79% gain their subsistence this way. Men who always look intoxicated in winter are seen on the streets in late afternoons in summer, exhausted and thoroughly cooked by the sun, but unmistakably sober. Hence they are farmworkers, and these professional people choose to define them in terms of occupation rather than by their predominant illness.

To describe these men as farmworkers implies that they have arrived at the occupation of farmworker in the same way a person decides or is led to become a lawyer or a plumber or a fireman or a sanitation worker. Again, cheating on the labeling has the effect of conveying an entirely erroneous picture of the population in question and impedes any effort to deal with the social, economic, and health problems that exist in downtown Stockton.

Some typical interviews:

Is farm work a good way to make a living?

"No, there's no work in the winter," or;

"Agricultural work is more plentiful--it is not a good way to make a living because wages are too low," or;

"The only thing I could get at the time. Can't make much money but it's a way to exist";

"Nothing else to do";

"It's all I've ever done."

It is inaccurate to define a group of people by the subsistence labor that they do not because they like it, or pay is good, or because it's steady, but because it is the only work available to them, just as it is inexcusable to classify a group of men as alcoholics because drinking is the only recreation and escape available to them.

How, then, do we define these men? What are the characteristics that would accurately define this group for the purpose of dealing more realistically with each individual as a human being.

Poverty

1. Almost all were born poor. The Bowery in New York might have fallen lawyers, but we have yet to find one in Stockton. The typical man[1] was born fifty years ago somewhere toward the East and South of the United States. Had he stayed home, he would be poor and sedentary today. But he then had the choice of staying on the dirt farm or opting for:

Mobility

2. Moving around didn't guarantee striking it rich, but it surely seemed to be a lot more interesting for a depressed teenager in the most depressed part of the country to hop on a train or thumb a ride toward somewhere else, hoping to escape the Depression. He was eventually attracted to some kind of job on a federal project (or sometimes with a private contractor), working on a dam or

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[1] The "typical man" is the composite interviewee (see accompanying data).

something, and learned:

A Trade

3. on the job. He was inevitably far away from home when this happened. Changing from location to location while keeping the same job, but generally working on projects--impermanent jobs with long and irregular hours, it seemed as if the kid was holding his own, becoming an accepted member of the:

Casual Labor Force

4. Through this mode of work--from dam to dam, from one lumber job to the next, from one mine to the next--a lifestyle was established. A man works long and hard for an unspecified length of time, the job ends, there is money in his pocket, and he takes some time off until the next job comes along and he doesn't feel the least bit guilty about not working when he has plenty of money. He has no dependents, he has usually remained:

Single

5. Because he has not "settled down"; that's not the way the life rhythms of this man have evolved. Actually, he probably did get married once or twice, but it didn't last. He had become permanently restless, one of the boys, and the likelihood of any one woman keeping him tied down to one location was dubious at best. There was mainly one thing that did interfere with his life's patterns when he was still a young man, and that was:

Military Service

6. He served in World War II and maybe in Korea, but he wasn't about to be a career army man, so he got out as soon as he could, and while other GI's went to work in factories to celebrate the new boom in consumer production, our man sought to go back to the kinds of jobs that he did before. But it was getting rough. The old casual labor market was drying up. The federal dam projects were completed. The upheaval and instability of the pre-war days were over, and most jobs were steady full-time jobs. He just wasn't going to make it in that kind of job. To stay in the casual labor lifestyle, he had

no choice but to become a:

Farm Worker

7. Getting back to the soil, as when he was a kid back East. He followed the crops from Mexico to Canada, learning the various crops, working with Braceros and migrants. He made friends; and the male subculture of the work projects was transplanted to the "labor market areas" of the various agricultural centers up and down the fertile valleys of the West Coast. When the Bracero program ended, on December 31, 1964 (PL 88-203), agricultural businessmen, realizing that American farm workers would be demanding higher wages, accelerated the automation of their industry with the help of university research and development teams. By the middle 1960's, the moribund "labor-market areas" were removed by redevelopment and urban renewal projects--casual labor, opportunities even in agriculture, were no longer available in the volumes that they once were. His neighborhood gone, his source of work greatly diminished, no family, no place to live, the casual laborer, now declared excess baggage, became:

A Drunk

8. or at least that's what everyone called him now. Not that he didn't ever get plastered out of his mind before. That "labor market" had been a pretty wild place. Even if it was rather degenerate and garish, it was lively. And if our man didn't have money one day, then one of his friends surely did. And there were lots of good fights, too. But there was a community there. Life there hadn't been all that good. It was sordid and depressing sometimes, and the "labor market" reeked with every kind of exploitation of body and soul. But it was a life--a reeling raucous carnival of mayhem.

Today our man is fifty (48.7 average) and decrepit and has nowhere to go and gets drunk almost all winter and works as much as he can in the fields during the summer.

But he's not an alcoholic, wino, or bum. He might have these qualities, but that's not what he is.

And he's not a single farm worker. He might make some money by working in

the fields, and this might be the only way he can make money these days, but that's not his identity.

He is today what he has been ever since the day that poor, hungry, dusty kid hit the road, back during the Depression:

He's a tramp.

CONCLUSION

Once upon a time, the American economy required a work force of tramps. Now that era is past and the homeless men are the fossils.

The word "tramp" has a negative nuance to it, and liberals might find that it sticks in their throats. But the tramp lifestyle was a legitimate and necessary mode in the days when a ready supply of casual labor was essential to the railroad and to operation of the lumber, mining, and agricultural industries. As we have seen, a special class of people pursued this style, led to it by their background and inclinations. They were, in a sense, the spiritual descendents of those men who went West to be ranch hands or miners, or joined the United States Army in the second half of the nineteenth century. These were not family men, but rough tough adventurers; on the road, on the move, looking for a job, looking for a drink, looking for a woman, looking for a fight. These people are culture heroes today on television. What could be more American than the legendary wild West?

But, somehow, the tramps are not seen as model Americans. Just as Jesus Christ, translated into the Twentieth Century, would be scorned by the pious as a "hippy freak," so the members of the colorful tramp labor force are today despised as winos, transients, and bums.

Whether the tramp "could ever make it as a family man" is irrelevant. In a free-enterprise system, each person "makes it" the best way he or she can. Every individual chooses, or is forced to settle for, whichever way is best for him--married or single, white collar or blue, one job or many jobs, one home or many homes, drinking or teetotaling. So, the man downtown in the dirty clothes, walking nowhere in particular while the rest of society scurries by, is a tramp. And only when everyone realizes who the tramps are and what a tramp is, will it be possible to initiate valid tramp programs. Then and only then can this obsolete population be reintegrated into the flow of the American economy.

Name-calling and phony categories cannot obscure the fact that tramps are members of a legitimate subculture and cannot be written off as an aggregation of socially aberrant individuals. The test is simple. Skid Row is a community with a distinctive set of social norms. The men ought not to be treated as sick people but, instead,

should be recognized as members of a subculture rendered superfluous by progress. The tramps have been relegated to society's junk heap. The metaphor is familiar (it is the American dream, the Kleenex philosophy): if it's too old, used up, or doesn't work any more--throw it away, cut it out, incinerate it. Whether it's a question of people, natural resources, buildings, or entire cities, the practice has been to exploit "it" for short-term gains and let someone else worry about the consequences.

While the "tramp issue" may seem trivial when measured against other social inequities of our time, it is not atypical. In fact, it is among the most visible symptoms of a malfunctioning society which holds people subservient to the dictates of the economy, rather than producing goods and services to meet real human needs:

Nonwhite Americans are welcomed into the job market during boom times; when there is a lag these people become surplus, potential disrupters of the civil order. Society doesn't know what to do with them . . .

The economy produces automobiles which pollute the air, then offers the consumer the privilege of buying more expensive gasoline to "do his part" in saving the environment . . .

Universities produce record numbers of Ph.D's even though the market is already flooded . . .

Most social and economic disequilibria can be glossed over with reports and statistics. Not so with tramps:

"Buddy, can you help me out, can you spare a dime?"

The "typical man" is the composite interviewee. While no individual conforms exactly to the patterns described here, the hypothetical life itinerary is not far off the mark for any of the men. This account is drawn from impressions gathered while watching and listening to the street rhythms, and from informal chatting with the men, as well as hard data garnered from the in-culture research.

1. Poverty--Alabama, Georgia, Texas, Virginia, and Kentucky are all mentioned as places from where men came, but Oklahoma was far and away the champion of all places for someone to be from, both in number of native sons and in prestige. One man suggested to me that when I finish my job in Stockton, I ought to "go back to Oklahoma and work in the oil industry, in a white-collar job since you've got a college education." I told the man I was from Massachusetts, but he apparently believed that everyone originated in Oklahoma and ought to go back there. "From dust ye came, and to dust shall ye return."
   Thirty percent of the men reported that they were born on farms, which helped explain their opting for agricultural casual labor rather than higher-paying work in a more urban setting.
2. Mobility--The average length of time in Stockton for all the men was 12.9 years. Almost none had been in Stockton for that entire time, but they did consider Stockton to be their home base, the place "where all my friends are." But even at the composite age of 48.7 years, the population was visibly mobile, even during the short interval that "The Place" was in operation, from November 1971 to May 1972. There was a core of regulars, but for the most part men would disappear and reappear in cycles varying from a couple of weeks to a couple of months. Travel by rail is still a reality, and the men would compare stories about which trains and which places were the best for making connections.
3. A Trade--Fifty-three percent of the men interviewed had mastered what they considered to be a "skilled trade." The breakdown is as follows:

12 tractor drivers	2 bricklayers
8 truck drivers	1 bell hop

6 painters
5 mechanics
4 welders
3 construction workers
2 artists
2 janitors
2 cooks
2 ministers
3 cement finishers
2 musicians
2 foundry workers
1 dental technician
1 furniture mover
1 landscape gardener
1 body and fender man
1 machinist
1 carpenter
1 upholsterer
1 yacht finisher
1 miner
1 sheep shearer
1 cosmetologist
1 sheet-metal worker
1 barber
1 gambler
1 pipeline worker
1 electrician
1 forklift operator
1 roofer

Obviously, very few were able to find work in their preferred line, usually because such work was not available; less often, because they were too old or unpresentable to get hired, or because they could not afford to pay their union's high initiation fee to get back into the job market. To the question, "Do you consider yourself a working man now?", 84% said "Yes," and 16% said "No" (mostly disabled).

4. Casual Labor Force--Countless stories were told about working on dams in the Sierra foothills, or driving a catskinner, or working on the railroad; of fantastic sums of money made in a few months' time, of itinerant bartenders and sheep shearers, of work in the lumber business, of following the crops. No matter what the job entailed, the common pattern was to amass money and coast between jobs. A man's situation fell into two categories: 1) I've got plenty of money, why should I work?; or 2) I'm broke, I've got to find some work. This attitude is certainly out of step with the acquisitive and accumulative predisposition of society at large.

5. Single--Thirty-five percent of the men had never married; the rest had been married at some time; only a few are currently married. Many many tales of

woe flowed from the men's recollections of their women--ranging from one man's story of imprisonment for emasculating his wife's lover with a shotgun; to the man who always apologizes that he's a "little cuckoo" since he lost his wife in 1957 (she left him); to the man who was a member of the road crew that pulled his dying wife from a wreck. I know all this sounds implausible, but it's all true.

6. Military Service--Fifty-nine percent of the men are veterans. None that I spoke to spent any significant amount of time talking about this period in their lives. Some learned mechanical skills in the service, but for most it was just a couple of years deducted from their opportunities to hustle and make a living in their own way.

7. Farm Worker--Seventy-nine percent of the men have been gaining their subsistence through farm work for the last ten years. They gave the following reasons for choosing farm work:

Like it	18%
Nothing else to do	39%
Born on farm	30%
No education	6%
Just fell into it	7%

(Translate: 18% like it; 82% have found nothing else)

Asked if it is a good way to make a living, they responded:

Good living	32%
No good	32%
Not any more	12%
Survival	23%

(Translate: two-thirds, no; one-third, yes)

Once a casual laborer decides to live in Stockton, his range of employment opportunities is very limited, mostly to farm work. There is no doubt that the same men who get drunk and hang around in winter are farm laborers when the crops are ready. The evidence is that in winter "The Place" was packed (with up to 200) whether it was raining or not. On the sunnier days, the nearby parks were also filled with men. By the time May rolled around, there were hardly any men at all in "The Place" (five or six a day), and very few

in the parks. If they did not go to work, where did they go?

8. A Drunk--To the question "Do you drink?", the response was:

Yes	66%
No	6%
Sometimes	24%
Alcoholic	4%

(Translate: 94% admit drinking)

The men's choice of terms indicated a preference for "I am a drinking man" when asked by their peers. If a staff person was nearby, the term "alcoholic" was more likely to be used. There is no doubt that alcohol is currently an integral part of the single-man's culture. It offers recreation in dingy surroundings, security in a world where death is always imminent, a tonic to fill the ever-lonelier void, and a fire to warm the body that sleeps out in the rain. The "Mick" (a bottle of Port) is about the only thing a man can really depend on.