

Old age (1952)

REPORT OF INSTITUTE ON

Problems of Older People

Held on March 20, 1952, at

Downtown Y.M.C.A., 304 Wood Street, Pittsburgh, Pa.

12:00 NOON to 4:30 P.M.

Sponsored by

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND RECREATION FOR OLDER PEOPLE

GROUP WORK DIVISION

HEALTH AND WELFARE FEDERATION OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY

200 ROSS STREET

PITTSBURGH 19, PENNSYLVANIA

INSTITUTE OF
INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

JUN 17 '53

INTRODUCTION

THIS REPORT contains a digest of presentations made at our Institute on "Problems of Older People" by leading authorities on the subject.

The Institute was planned and sponsored by the Committee on Education and Recreation for Older People of the Health and Welfare Federation's Group Work Division. Our committee, a representative group of citizens, feels that the project amply fulfilled the committee's intention—to bring to Pittsburgh and Allegheny County certain persons who, by virtue of study and experience, could describe the nature and extent of the problems facing older people today, as well as what other communities were doing about them.

Attendance at the sessions, both in number of people and in variety of organizations represented, testified to a great desire for information and exchange of experience on the needs of older people.

The committee hopes that the Institute will spur industries, labor unions, churches, schools, libraries, social agencies, adult education councils, and civic groups in their development of programs for older people.

The committee is happy that the Health and Welfare Federation has initiated its project on the aging, with staff made possible through a grant from the Howard Heinz Endowment. Gratifying too is the financial support from the Pitcairn-Crabbe Foundation which made the Institute possible.

F. E. SCHUCHMAN, *Chairman*

EMERY F. BACON, *Associate Chairman*

INSTITUTE LEADERSHIP

Session on: "*The Problems of Older People*" 12:00 NOON to 1:15 P. M.

Speaker: Dr. Clark Tibbitts, Chairman, Committee on Aging & Geriatrics,
Federal Security Agency, Washington, D. C.

Presiding: F. E. Schuchman, Chairman of the Institute;
President, Homestead Valve Manufacturing Company;
Member, Civic Club of Allegheny County

Workshop on: "*Preparation of Industrial Workers for Retirement*"

1:30-3:15 P. M.

Speaker: Arthur J. Noetzel, Associate Professor, School of Business Economics and Government, John Carroll University, Cleveland, Ohio

Chairman: John Feigel, President, Pittsburgh Central Labor Union
(A. F. of L.)

Recorder: Mrs. Edward T. Frankel, Editor of *Federation Notes*, Health and Welfare Federation of Allegheny County

Workshop on: "*Education and Aging*"

1:30-3:15 P. M.

Speaker: Wilma Donahue, Ph.D., Research Psychologist and Lecturer,
University of Michigan

Chairman: Rev. Francis G. Stewart, Adult Commission, Council of Churches
of Allegheny County

Recorder: Ralph Zahniser, Principal, Carrick Evening High School

Workshop on: "*Recreation for Older People*"

1:30-3:15 P. M.

Speaker: James H. Woods, Director, Recreation Project for Older People,
Welfare Federation of Cleveland

Chairman: Allen E. Risedorph, Superintendent, Bureau of Recreational Activities, City of Pittsburgh

Recorder: Mrs. Milton K. Susman, Past Chairman, Council Lounge for
Older People (Pittsburgh Section, National Council of Jewish Women)

Summary Session: "*Highlights of the Institute*"

3:30-4:30 P. M.

Speaker: Dr. Clark Tibbitts

Chairman: Emery F. Bacon, United Steelworkers of America

Workshop

Recorders: Mrs. Edward T. Frankel, Ralph Zahniser, and Mrs. Milton K. Susman

**Members of
Committee on Education and Recreation for Older People
Group Work Division of
HEALTH AND WELFARE FEDERATION OF
ALLEGHENY COUNTY**

Chairman: F. E. SCHUCHMAN, President, Homestead Valve Manufacturing Co.; Member, Civic Club of Allegheny County

Associate Chairman: EMERY F. BACON, United Steelworkers of America

Secretary: HARRY SEROTKIN, Secretary, Group Work Division

DR. A. W. BEATTIE, Allegheny County Schools

STANTON BELFOUR, Conservation, Recreation and Parks Council of Allegheny Conference on Community Development

CARMEN BOSCO, Allegheny County Department of Parks

MISS EUGENIA BRUNOT, Carnegie Library, Homewood Branch

DR. DORA CAPWELL, Allegheny Vocational Counseling Center

DR. MERRILL B. CONOVER, School of Social Work, University of Pittsburgh

MRS. ELEANOR DORNENBERG, Conference of Catholic Charities

RICHARD CLAIR, University of Pittsburgh

JOHN FEIGEL, Pittsburgh Central Labor Union

REV. JOSEPH G. FINDLAN, Diocesan Charities

DONALD J. HOWARD, Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce

R. H. JANDORF, Pittsburgh Junior Chamber of Commerce

MRS. CHRISTINA F. JEFFRIES, Urban League of Pittsburgh

DR. L. A. KALASSAY, Y.M.C.A. of McKeesport

MISS KATE KOLISH, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

EDWARD B. LIVINGSTON, Retail Merchants Association

MRS. IRA W. MARSHALL, Civic Leader

WAYNE MASON, McKeesport Recreation Commission

F. H. REMALEY, retired, Allegheny County Schools

ALLEN E. RISEDORPH, Bureau of Recreational Activities, Pittsburgh

HERBERT ROBERTS, Pittsburgh Board of Education

JOHN SEDDON, United Mine Workers

DR. HARRY SNYDER, Pittsburgh Council on Adult Education

MRS. MILTON K. SUSMAN, Council of Jewish Women, Pittsburgh Section

MEYER SCHWARTZ, Federation of Jewish Philanthropies

REV. FRANCIS G. STEWART, Council of Churches of Allegheny County

MICHAEL VINOVERSKI, United Mine Workers

BERNARD WARACH, Irene Kaufmann Settlement

MICHAEL WARGO, Recreation Department, City of Clairton

RALPH ZAHNISER, Carrick High School

L. H. ZONGE, H. J. Heinz Company

Ex-officio

DR. L. B. MOSELEY, President, Health and Welfare Federation of Allegheny County

G. A. PALMER, Chairman, Group Work Division

MISS ISABEL P. KENNEDY, Executive Secretary, Health and Welfare Federation

OPENING ADDRESS

Session on: "THE PROBLEMS OF OLDER PEOPLE"

Speaker: DR. CLARK TIBBITTS, Chairman, Committee on Aging and Geriatrics, Federal Security Agency, Washington, D. C.

Presiding: F. E. SCHUCHMAN, Chairman of the Institute; President, Homestead Valve Manufacturing Company; Member, Civic Club of Allegheny County

The following is a digest of remarks made by Dr. Tibbitts:

We have a large and growing number of older people in the United States. The opinion of psychiatrists, clinicians, adult educators and social workers is that we have millions of people in this stage of life who are bewildered; in forced retirement and unhappy about it; with incomes not adequate to purchase the necessities of life; in homes which do not meet the needs of people of their ages; and that there are tens of thousands who are in mental hospitals but should not be. They are there because there is no other way to take care of them.

Aging is an extremely complex process. Biologically, it is characterized by slow decline in energy reserve, in slow recovery from illness and in decline of hearing, vision and the other senses. Psychologically, there are declines in motor coordination and speed of learning but increase in maturity and judgment. Sociologically, aging begins in middle life when the size of the family begins to decline. Most American families see their last child leave home by the time the parents are between 45 and 55 years of age. The parents have then completed the primary contribution of early adulthood.

Socially, there is also the fact of the increase in leisure time, as a result of increased production per worker hour and as a result of retirement from work. Other characteristics of aging are loss of husband or wife or close relatives, changes in appearance and onset of long term illnesses.

The cumulative effect of these changes is found in loss of useful roles in society, feeling of unwantedness, terrific loneliness, sense of inferiority, appearance of psychosomatic illness, and physical and mental deterioration induced by inactivity.

Aging need not be this way, however. Completion of the family may be looked upon as the beginning of a period in which we may expect newer and broader responsibilities in the community. We have the leisure, we have the physical capacity and we still have not reached full mental maturity. The challenge to the community is to provide opportunities for usefulness, for activities, for making new friendships that will mark the latter half of life as a period of growth and development. Every field of activity is challenged: management, labor, government, welfare work, recreation, education and religion.

WORKSHOP I.

PREPARATION OF INDUSTRIAL WORKERS FOR RETIREMENT

WHAT ARE INDUSTRY AND LABOR DOING, generally and locally, to prepare present employees for retirement; what are they offering in the way of education and recreation to retired employees?

Speaker: ARTHUR J. NOETZEL, Associate Professor, School of Business Economics and Government, John Carroll University, Cleveland, Ohio

Chairman: JOHN A. FEIGEL, President, Pittsburgh Central Labor Union (A. F. of L.)

Recorder: MRS. EDWARD T. FRANKEL, Editor of *Federation Notes*, Health and Welfare Federation of Allegheny County

The following is a digest of remarks made by Mr. Noetzel:

Factors in Retirement Adjustment: To solve the problem, consideration must be given to the complex human elements involved in retirement. These are:

1. The balance between financial resources and needs.
2. The quality of health, physical stamina, energy, and vitality.
3. The character of mental health; the attitudes, anticipations, and aspirations of a person; his flexibility of habits and behavior; his devotion to religion and attitude toward death.
4. The meaning of work to the individual.
5. The need for recreation and companionship and interest in creative or avocational activities.
6. The impact of retirement upon the social role of an individual, upon his status and participation in family and community groups.
7. The abruptness of the change from employment to retirement.
8. The ability of an individual to adjust his goals and values to the formalities and rigidities imposed by employment and retirement rules.
9. The degree of adequate, realistic planning prior to the date of retirement.

The problem of the "job-centered" employee may be briefly sketched. To this employee, work may have one or more of the following meanings: (a) the foundation of self-respect and a sense of worth; (b) a source of prestige and recognition; (c) a means of social participation; (d) an opportunity to be creative and of attaining intrinsic satisfaction; and (e) a way of being of service to others.

It seems that any type of program must seriously recognize four principles:

1. The factors—economic, social, physiological, and psychological—

involved in adjusting to retirement are closely interrelated in their effects.

2. No two people react in a similar manner to retirement.
3. The fundamental needs of older persons are essentially the same as those of other age groups. Elderly people, too, desire security, new experience, affection, and recognition.
4. The longer the delay in planning and preparing for retirement, the more difficult the adjustment becomes for the individual.

Industrial Programs

PROGRAMS TO STIMULATE THE WORKER to plan for his retirement do, and will, vary from organization to organization. Every company or union will want to work out its own approach. The methods of conditioning employees to retirement may be classified as: (1) indirect approaches, (2) guidance and counseling, (3) educational programs, and (4) work modification procedures. These classes are not mutually exclusive. A company may combine various aspects of each of the four methods into its own specific program. Some programs are loosely organized; others are quite formalized; some have evolved from other personnel practices, while others have been specifically developed. Some programs are largely concerned with the years prior to retirement, while a growing number are also interested in the post-retirement problems of employees.

An indirect method of preparing workers for retirement may include one or more of the following practices:

1. Savings and profit-sharing plans for the encouragement of thrift.
2. Articles in the company paper or magazine on the problems of aging, health and nutrition, hobbies, and activities of retired employees.
3. Recreation programs which expose the employees to as many interests, hobbies, and skills as possible, which would be usable after retirement.
4. Hobby shows to stimulate interest in avocations.
5. Periodic physical examinations and medical consultations for the early detection of physiological and mental deterioration.
6. Service clubs.
7. Dinners, gifts, and congratulatory programs at the time of retirement.
8. Permitting executives to give full time to various civic activities.
9. Honorary life membership in employee clubs or company clubs, or in the union.
10. Invitations to attend the organization's social affairs and the organization of special affairs—picnics, dinners, and meetings—for pensioners.
11. Mailing all company and employee notices and publications to retired employees.
12. Continuation of various employee services and benefits to retired members.

Six Questions

A REVIEW OF ACTUAL AND PROPOSED PLANS in industry indicates that any organization contemplating the establishment and operation of a program of preparation for retirement adjustment must find answers to six questions which relate particularly to the older members of that organization. These questions are: Why? Who? When? Where? How? What?

Why? Why should an organization have an interest in such a program? What are the relative responsibilities of the individual, the company, the union, and the community agencies in the preparation for retirement? What should be the objective of the program? Can these objectives be justified? Will the objectives be mutually acceptable both to the individual and to the organization? After the program has been in operation some time, how will an organization be able to measure its progress toward the goals of the plan?

Who? For whom is the program designed? Will it be open to all employees, regardless of their position in the organization? Will the program include the spouse of the employee? How large a group will retire each year? What does the organization know about the retiring members as individuals and what additional information must be acquired?

Who will conduct the program? What is the role of the supervisor, the steward, the industrial physician, the personnel department, the union, in the plan? Are persons and agencies outside the organization to be employed? What training and experience will be required of the counselors and conference leaders?

When? When will the program begin—ten, five, or one year before retirement? How frequently will the employees meet in interviews or conferences? Will there be a follow-up program for post-retirement years?

Where? Will the programs be held in the plant on company time? Will special rooms and particular facilities be required? Will the program be held in places outside the plant, centrally located with respect to the home areas of the employees? Will community agency buildings and facilities be used?

How? Which type or combination of types of programs will be operated? What media will be used? What employee services and benefits will continue into the years of retirement?

What? What will be the specific content of the program? How well does the content of the program relate to the needs of the employee? In the conferences, interviews, and articles in the house organ, what topics will be considered? Will hobby and craft shops be maintained? Will a post-retirement employment service be provided?

The experience of various companies planning such programs indicates that executive thinking goes through three phases: an immediate reaction, often characterized by high enthusiasm and the desire for a quick installation for a formal plan; secondly, a period of deliberation

and exploration, when there is a desire to proceed slowly and to study the problems involved; and, lastly, the installation of some program fitted to the organization or the complete rejection of any program.

Most organizations feel a strong responsibility toward the retired worker. Sincere, constructive analysis of the opportunity and problems of retirement is necessary if the worker's last years are not to become "mere oblivion."

WORKSHOP II.

EDUCATION AND AGING

WHAT PROGRAMS OR PLANS do educational institutions such as schools, churches, group work agencies, adult education groups, etc., have, generally and locally, for older people and in preparation of younger people for retirement?

Speaker: WILMA DONAHUE, PH.D., Research Psychologist and Lecturer, University of Michigan

Chairman: REV. FRANCIS G. STEWART, Adult Commission, Council of Churches of Allegheny County

Recorder: RALPH ZAHNISER, Principal, Carrick Evening High School

The following is a digest of remarks made by Dr. Donahue:

Education is the most potent weapon we have against aging. The educator today has the responsibility, whether he is at the elementary, secondary, or higher educational level, of reviewing his educational offerings in light of this tremendous change which is taking place in the structure of our population. Therein lies our power to equip people with the things which they need to meet the changes—and the problems—which are associated with aging, whether they be psychological, sociological, chronological or physiological. It is within our power to help those people who are now older to find ways to express themselves. We should not talk about what we are doing for older people; we should be creating opportunities for them and motivating them to expend their own energies to achieve their own solutions to their problems. Education has the responsibility for equipping them with the tools, helping the community to find ways to make the opportunities, and, then, for the older people to take advantage of them.

Education has a further effectiveness in relation to preventing aging—especially psychological aging—because there is every evidence that using the mind and using the nerve tissues keeps those tissues in much better health, keeps them functional, keeps them able to carry out complicated thinking processes; this is quite contradictory to the old assumption that older people could not learn and could not think.

One of the major problems is enrolling the older adult in adult education courses. This may mean that the courses offered do not appeal to them or meet their needs, that no special effort has been made to determine what those specific needs are. One of the real

reasons which keeps older people from taking these courses is that most of them have not had as much as a high school education; it was not traditional to go to school.

Another problem is designing of educational programs. Existing curricula at all school levels should be examined and modified to provide an interpretation to all ages of the potentialities and roles of older people in contemporary life, and to assist the young person to evaluate the requirements for living as a member of an aging population. There should be introduced in the curricula some information on what it is like to grow older in terms of hygiene, social studies, biology and family relationships, and, because surveys indicate that people in their later years are pursuing hobbies they learned before they were 16 years old, it is important to include the types of hobbies they might want when they are older.

Actually, not much is known about the techniques and materials to be used. Much experimentation is needed just to know the simple details of technique. Moreover, there are few materials available. We need materials on course syllabi, program manuals, visual aids, documentary films, and literature. A correspondence course might be developed since many older people are not able to get out. Someday it is hoped that there will be a great television club of older people, with stimulating programs which put a positive accent on aging people—their usefulness, their fineness and dignity, and their human rights.

The problem of financing educational programs for the aging is certainly going to determine, in part, what can be done. Fortunately, many older people can provide programs for themselves. They can pay tuitions; to develop programs, however, takes money and sometimes educational systems experience difficulty in finding such funds. The New York State Legislature has passed a law which makes it possible for school systems to be subsidized for the setting up of golden-age clubs, counseling and retraining, providing they have some educational, as well as recreational, aspects to their program.

There are many excellent examples of such programs. The Los Angeles city school program has one of the best. New York has an excellent one. The University of Michigan has several courses. There are some industrial programs in which educators participate. Older people are finding a great deal of satisfaction and opportunity in church, institutional, and library programs. Older people are eager to have practical suggestions in their courses.

It is important that educators sit in on every program which is developed in the community—in welfare, recreation, vocational or employment programs, because in the last analysis, it becomes the responsibility of the educators to transmit and interpret to the individual and to the community at large.

A final suggestion is that members of organizations, groups, or clubs, should stimulate their organizations to take part in all such activities which are going to bring about a greater appreciation for the problems which are faced by the aging population and do something about them.

WORKSHOP III.

RECREATION FOR OLDER PEOPLE

WHAT ARE ORGANIZATIONS which are primarily interested in recreation and informal educational activities, doing or planning, generally and locally, to provide services of recreation and informal education to older people?

Speaker: JAMES H. WOODS, Director, Recreation Project for Older People, Welfare Federation of Cleveland

Chairman: ALLEN E. RISEDORPH, Superintendent, Bureau of Recreational Activities, City of Pittsburgh

Recorder: MRS. MILTON K. SUSMAN, Past Chairman, Council Lounge for Older People (Pittsburgh Section, National Council of Jewish Women)

The following is a digest of remarks made by Mr. Woods:

Who can start activities for older people? The beauty about this kind of work is that a wide variety of people can initiate it. I have seen a Golden Age Club start because a neighborhood housewife felt that her aging mother would benefit from such a group. She then interested key people in her particular neighborhood. Some clubs start because an agency executive sees the need in his neighborhood and assigns one of his staff members to do the job. A church group in other cases may take the initiative. Most of the people who appreciate the need for such activities need some expert advice on their method of procedure. In most cases, they are volunteers and are a little uncertain about the steps that are necessary to organize such a project.

What programs are successful? The most successful recreation activity for older people is the Golden Age Club. Most clubs meet one afternoon a week. The programs in such clubs are determined by the neighborhood, the agency, and the background of life experiences of the club members. If the members do not have a good time, they will not come. The program should be a varied one and include a wide range of interests. As in all democratic planning for groups, the club members should take a prominent part in determining what the program will be. For some people, craft programs are highly important, but, of course, only a small minority of people are craft-minded. We feel that our Golden Age Camp program has been extremely successful and valuable. The annual Hobby Show as a short-term project serves to educate the whole community and produces very valuable results. In Cleveland, the Jewish community has an all day lounge and we are working to establish a large lounge to serve the non-Jewish older people.

What expenses are apt to be involved? The expense of operating Golden Age Clubs is very small. Most clubs have to be endowed for three or four weeks, but if they are skillfully advised, they can and should be able to maintain themselves. If the club leader is a professional staff person, his or her time is an expense item. Most agencies are perfectly willing to donate space for club meetings of

older people. When you get into operation of a Golden Age Camp or a daily center for older people, you must begin to think in terms of big money. Our Cleveland Golden Age Camp is subsidized to a large extent by the City of Cleveland. Private agencies furnish the services of two staff people and approximately \$600. The City furnishes the facilities and the cost of food.

What attitudes should be taken towards the development of such programs? I believe that there will be much greater development if there is a particular person who is given this responsibility and has the necessary skill to carry it through. This was one of the conclusions of the Chicago study. When Cleveland started its program in 1940, it was necessary to set up some demonstration programs. These pilot projects illustrated that when such services are provided, the older people respond enthusiastically with very valuable personal and social results.

SUMMARY SESSION

Presiding: EMERY F. BACON

A SUMMARY SESSION concluded the Institute. Dr. Tibbitts commented on the outstanding points he had heard discussed in his visits to each of the three workshops, which were being held concurrently (from 1:30 to 3:15 P. M.)

Following Dr. Tibbitts' remarks, the three recorders—Mrs. Edward T. Frankel, Mrs. Milton K. Susman, and Ralph Zahniser—reported highlights of the talks given by the workshop leaders on Industry-Labor, Education, and Recreation.

The Summary Session closed at 4:30 P. M. and the Institute was then adjourned.