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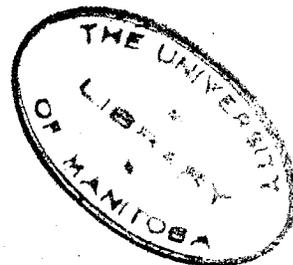
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

A STUDY  
OF LEISURE-TIME SERVICES  
FOR SENIOR CITIZENS IN WINNIPEG  
WITH AN ACCOUNT  
OF A GUIDED GROUP EXPERIENCE  
IN RECREATION FOR THE AGED  
IN THE C.P.R. - NOTRE DAME AREA

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A dissertation presented to the School of Social Work  
University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Social Work

June 1954



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## FOREWORD

One of the outstanding phenomena of the twentieth century, particularly from the point of view of those concerned with welfare, is a growing awareness of the needs and problems of the senior population, those over sixty-five years of age. As this population increases in volume, problems relating to employment, health, housing and recreation can increase in direct proportion, and are receiving a great deal of attention as a result of the concern of government officials, both elected and employed, medical practitioners, professional social workers, and volunteers.

Following a summary of the present situation and its causes and effects with reference to the social and emotional needs of the aged, it is the intention of this thesis to study and evaluate leisure-time services available to the senior population in the Winnipeg area. A report will be made on a questionnaire survey sent to a group of churches in Winnipeg as well as on clubs providing leisure-time services for the aged. There will also be an account of a model project undertaken in a neighborhood house, with special emphasis on the role of volunteers and a comparative study of the difference in focus and service when no professional guidance is given and when professionally trained and supervised personnel is provided.

It is hoped that an account of study and an evaluation of experience in this field will result in a contribution toward an understanding of some of the factors involved in provision of organized recreation services for senior citizens.

## CHAPTER I

### A REVIEW OF THE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF THE AGED

"Aging is continuous... It may be defined perhaps, as those changes which are introduced by the factor of time in living.<sup>1</sup> It must be emphasized that chronological or physical age and psychological age do not necessarily coincide, that there can be wide variations in alertness and activity and that actual age alone cannot be used as the measurement of usefulness or ability. Because of wide variations it is difficult to define specifically by age the concept of a senior citizen. For this study, we will for the most part use the term senior citizen as applying to those people sixty years and over unless otherwise specified. The term senior citizen is generally used by practitioners in the fields of recreation and group work as one which underlines the potentialities rather than the limitations which the terms 'old people', 'the elderly', 'aged citizens', 'old folks', or other names to describe this group infer. It is interesting that many senior citizen groups themselves prefer this definition, putting the emphasis on the golden age rather than the sunset or declining years.

This thesis will examine the extent and nature of recreational services for senior citizens in Winnipeg proper. In so doing an account will be given of a survey of recreational services for senior citizens provided by the churches of Winnipeg, a description of services provided by community and service clubs for senior citizens, and a description of the development of the programme for senior citizens at Logan Neighbourhood House in the C.P.R. - Notre Dame area of Winnipeg, including an examination of the role played by volunteers in this specific programme. The study of the city-wide programmes and of the group in a specific area of the city was made by the writer during her

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<sup>1</sup> Edward J. Stieglitz, M.S., M.D., F.A.C.P., Geriatric Medicine, "The Care of the Aging and the Aged", ch. I, sec. 1, p. 5

placement as a second year student for the period from October 1952 to May 1953.

However, before the programmes in Winnipeg are examined, the social and emotional needs of senior citizens will be discussed in order to see more clearly the purpose and need of the programmes to be described.

Recreation services for senior citizens have been defined by A. G. Brailey:

Senior citizen recreation should be that which leaves them with the deep conviction: I still belong to this community. I have friends here and I am needed here. I am respected by the members of this community both as a person and for the things which I do to make it a better community in which to live. 1

The above implies that our efforts to help senior citizens must focus on their capacities, their ability to broaden their scope of interest and to make use of the wealth of experience which in many cases is the sole profit of a long life.

#### The Extent and Nature of the Senior Population and Its Problems

Dr. Edward J. Stieglitz has suggested a reason for longevity in the world today and has presented it as a problem. According to Dr. Stieglitz:

The gradual control of infectious disease, the better understanding and application of nutrition as related to health, more science in agriculture, and the better transportation and storage of foods, rendering good foods more generally available, all contribute to the prolongation of the human life span, so that today, in our own and other equally fortunate lands, the percentage of men and women in our population from sixty to eighty years has become an important social, economic and medical problem. 2

Medical interest has been evidenced by the formation of geriatric committees, throughout Canada and the United States, to make studies of old age in

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1 Allen G. Brailey, M.D. "At Sixty Plus", Recreation, March 1952

2 Edward J. Stieglitz, M.S., M.D., F.A.C.P., The Second Forty Years, Foreword, p. ix

hospitals and university medical colleges. The increased financial assistance given to older people in Canada in 1950 and 1951, and the Social Security programme in the United States, indicate government awareness that it is advisable to increase the resources available to our senior population.

Concern around welfare service for the aged is indicated by the number of pamphlets on the subject which have been prepared and circulated. A great number have been issued by volunteer organizations such as the National Council of Jewish Women and public agencies like the Hennepin County Welfare Board in Minnesota. Records show that social agencies are confronted with thousands of senior citizens who need help in one or all areas of human relationships and endeavour.

This growing concern has been aroused by constantly increasing numbers of elderly citizens and the situation has been complicated by compulsory retirement which results in a large proportion of our population withdrawing from the competitive field and becoming economically dependent on the younger workers.

According to research in the United States, by Jerome Kaplan, as set forth in his book, "A Social Programme for Older People", it was discovered that:

At the time of the Roman Empire, the average life span was 23 years. In 1900 it was still only 47 years, but by 1940 it had attained 63 years. By 1960, the estimated average life expectancy should reach 75 years .... Between 1940 and 1950, the total population of the United States increased 14.5 per cent while the number of those 65 years and older grew 36.1 per cent. 1

In Canada too, we have evidence of an increase in our senior citizen population. In 1901, out of a population of 5,371,315, statistics show that

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1 Jerome Kaplan, A Social Programme for Older People, ch. 1, p. 4

413,379 were 60 years of age and over. In 1951, of the 14,009,429 people in Canada, 1,592,425 were 60 years of age and over,<sup>1</sup> as shown in the following breakdown:

POPULATION IN THOUSANDS AND IN PER CENT OF SENIOR CITIZENS IN CANADA  
BY AGE GROUPS FROM 1901 to 1951<sup>2</sup>

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>60-64</u>	<u>65-69</u>	<u>70 and over</u>
1901	5,371	2.6	2	3.1
1911	7,207	2.5	1.8	2.8
1921	8,788	2.7	2	2.8
1931	10,377	3.8	2.2	3.3
1941	11,507	3.5	2.7	4
1951	14,009	3.6	3.1	4.7

In England, according to a survey published by the Nuffield Foundation in 1947:

. . . it is estimated that by 1989 the number of persons of pensionable age will equal the number of children, while, by the same year, 1989, the number of persons of working age will be approximately 3,000,000 less than in 1941. 3

In Winnipeg today, there are 23,542 people over sixty-five years of age.

The following is a breakdown of population figures in Winnipeg, taken from

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<sup>1</sup> Dominion Bureau of Statistics, "Population by Age Groups", Bulletin I-II, Vol. 1, Ottawa, 1951, Introduction

<sup>2</sup> Dominion Bureau of Statistics, "Population by Age Groups", Bulletin I-II, Vol. 1, Ottawa, 1951, Introduction. Based on "Numerical and Percentage Distribution of the Population by 5 year age groups and Sex, Canada, 1901 - 1951"

<sup>3</sup> Seebohm Rowntree, C.H., LL.D., "Old People", Report of a Survey Committee on the Problems of Ageing and the Care of Old People, ch. I, p. 2

the 1951 Census.<sup>1</sup> Since one of the programmes to be examined in detail in this thesis serves a particular area, figures are included for this specific area, which consists of census tracts numbers nineteen, twenty-two, twenty-three and twenty-four.

Table 2

POPULATION BY SPECIFIED AGE GROUPS, FOR CENSUS METROPOLITAN AREAS, 1951<sup>2</sup>

	<u>WINNIPEG PROPER</u>	<u>C.P.R. - NOTRE DAME AREA</u>
Total population	235,710	17,553
65 to 69 years	10,241	746
70 years and over	13,301	1,021
65 years and over	23,542	1,767

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In spite of the growing number of senior citizens and early retirement programmes the services and facilities for occupying the abundance of leisure time of these people have not kept pace with the medical advances or the increasing population. The field has been one of experiment rather than of experience. Experiments to try and find an adequate leisure-time programme for senior citizens in Canada and the United States have been carried out, notably in Toronto, with the "Second Mile Club", in Vancouver, at Gordon Neighbourhood House, in New York, at "Hodson Centre", in Chicago, Cleveland, and Minneapolis, by organizations of all kinds, public and private, such as the Hennepin County Welfare Board in Minnesota, and the National Council of Jewish Women who sponsor Golden Age Clubs throughout North America.

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<sup>1</sup> Ninth Census of Canada, 1951, "Population, General Characteristics" Vol. I, Table 25, p. 25-4

Dominion Bureau of Statistics, "Winnipeg", Bulletin CT-8 Ottawa, 1951, Based on Table 1, pp. 4-5

<sup>2</sup> Dominion Bureau of Statistics, loc. cit. p. 5

A large proportion of the world population is involved when we speak of senior citizens. This group comprises many people whose waking hours are spent in idleness, loneliness and boredom, rather than in useful occupation. This growing minority group can no longer be ignored, nor can it be pretended that because they have reached the age of sixty or sixty-five and have been forced to retire they may also be forgotten. It has become a group which by virtue of its size alone demands our immediate and serious consideration. One writer puts it this way. "The numerical power of a rapidly aging population in our country with its attendant sociological warning signals is forcing us to change our thinking." 1

As a contribution to one aspect of the problem, we are concerned primarily in this thesis with leisure-time and recreational activities for our senior citizens. Provision for these activities is a vital need for a large percentage of this group, who have an almost unlimited supply of leisure time, and who need a particular kind of recreation if they are to be reasonably useful, happy and content in their declining years.

In order to understand the emotional and social needs of senior citizens more clearly and how a certain type of recreation may enable the individual to be happier, it is necessary to consider the development of the normal personality and point out how any deviations from such normal development can cause permanent emotional disturbances that may carry through life and become exaggerated in the period of old age. The viewpoint summarized below represents thinking upon which there is fairly wide agreement among social workers, who have taken over these concepts from allied fields of psychiatry and psychology.

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1 Jerome Kaplan, "The Role of the Public Welfare Agency in Meeting the needs of the Older Person", Public Welfare, November 1951

### The Particular Needs of Senior Citizens

Common human needs exist from the moment of entrance into this world. The satisfactory or the neglectful fulfillment of these has a lasting effect on the development of personality. A brief review of the development of normal personality may contribute to an understanding of how so many difficulties of the older person are symptomatic of flaws in personality structure.

The first stage of development is one of dependence, where the individual must be completely reliant on the love, affection and protection of the parent for survival. From this gradually develops, in approximately the second year of life, satisfactions which at this age are purely physical and not inclusive of sexual activity per se; these are the primary sensuous satisfactions. As these two threads develop the child develops a degree of aggression, a desire and ability to make an impact on others. These phases do not appear spontaneously but develop gradually and strengthen with age. The important factor, however, is that unless any specific stage, involving certain needs, has become developed to the point where the individual feels safe operating at that level, he cannot proceed to the next stage of development. Although we are all dependent to a certain extent, we are able to assume a great deal of independence if we have been able to be self-reliant sufficiently long and in a strong enough relationship to be secure in taking on new experiences that involve more responsibility on our part. Some people have never been able to actually enjoy a sufficiently long or strong enough period of dependence, sensuousness or aggression and therefore, because of a basic insecurity have had to employ one of several defence mechanisms to be able to operate in a competitive world. An article in the Journal of Social Casework states that some of these mechanisms may be repression, turning against

self, projection, regression or sublimation.<sup>1</sup> Other writers include also rationalization, aggression, identification, over-compensation, day dreaming or symptom formation.

Involved in the development of the individual is the organization of the ego and the super-ego. The process of suggestibility and identification at an early age contributes to the development of a strong or weak ego and super-ego. When the development at these different stages is unhealthy the result unless corrected will be an unhealthy personality throughout life. Any of the defence mechanisms are able only to compensate partially and for only a period of time. When the mechanism fails to work or life circumstances place too much stress on the personality the individual is unable to carry on in a normally acceptable manner. Then the individual regresses to a period of development where he has felt security. When this happens the result can be the exhibiting of immature and irrational behaviour which in the case of an adult and especially a senior citizen presents a very unhappy situation leading to complex problems.

According to Dr. Hollender:

Physical and mental limitations, retirement, and the loss of relatives and friends most often produce their effects in two important emotional areas; self-esteem and dependency (one's needs for emotional sustenance). When latent but intense conflicts about self-esteem or dependence are mobilized by stress, a serious emotional upheaval may result. When, on the other hand, these areas are not unduly vulnerable, the reaction to the stress may be appropriate and relatively mild. 2

If the senior citizen has been able to develop normally and strongly in early life at these different stages he will be able to with-

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1 Rosemary Reynolds, Amy S. Powell, Morris Zelditch, "Symposium: Casework and the Aging Population", Journal of Social Casework, Vol. XXX, No. 2, February 1949

2 Marc H. Hollender, M.D., "Individualizing the Aged", Social Casework, October 1952

stand the stress of old age. If however, he had insufficient security in these areas he will only be able to obtain security by regressing to an early stage of development, through, for example, becoming a hypochondriac, as only in this dependent relationship of being cared for can he be in any way secure.

There is a considerable emphasis at the present time on needs of senior citizens in the emotional realm. Conditions in the modern world have changed radically in the last fifty or seventy-five years. Half a century ago, particularly on this continent, the foundation of society was primarily agricultural; overflowing cities and modern industry were only beginning to develop. At that time people were individuals rather than "cogs in the wheels" of modern mechanized society. There was a greater opportunity for independence in seeking a living, with less dependence on salaries and less competition. With the development of the fast moving modern age with its emphasis on competition and desire to get the greatest possible production from the most skillful workers available, living conditions changed. Retirement age limits were arbitrarily determined as it seemed that industry could not wait for the older person's necessary gradual slowing up. Experience was discounted in favour of output, leaving many who still had the capacity to contribute to society and the working world without jobs and with only time on their hands.

In former times, especially in rural or semi-rural communities, the family home was a large one and the grandparents had a place to live and retained an honourable position in the home. They were still useful, needed and wanted. With the general exodus from rural to urban living the family home became smaller, there was no room in the home for the

grandparents and a situation arose tending to produce a feeling of rejection and of being unneeded. These two sociological factors have contributed to putting a great number of senior citizens in a regrettable position of dependence and have contributed to great loss of self-esteem. Those whose working days may have, in addition to their economic function, provided substitute satisfactions as a compensation for unhealthy development, suffer greatly and are unable to carry on happily in their old age. It is with this latter type of individual that the thesis is concerned particularly.

Writers discussing the problems of old age are constantly using these terms to describe the unhappy lot of many of our senior citizens; that they are lonely, feel unwanted, lack interests and new experiences, bored with idleness, dejected and depressed.

Our world is a 'youth-minded' one. Concentration of problems and needs of youth has left a great deal of preparatory fact-finding still to be done in investigating the real needs of senior citizens and in finding adequate ways of meeting them more fully.

An apt definition of basic human needs has been given by Florence Vickery when she writes, "By needs, we mean those human experiences and relationships with our fellows which must be satisfied in a measure if we are to be happy in our social relationships."<sup>1</sup> A senior citizen has the same basic needs as a member of any other age group, with the probable unfortunate addition, that they can easily become exaggerated and intensified once he has been set aside by busy society.

Based on the conclusions of leading authorities on the subject in a variety of articles and pamphlets, the following is a discussion of

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<sup>1</sup> Florence E. Vickery, "A Place in the Sun for the Aged", The Group, January 1952, Vol. 14, No. 2

the suggested principal needs of senior citizens in the social and emotional area.

A primary need is one of security, not only of finance and health, but of social life. Our older people need to feel they have a place in a group, a feeling of belonging to give them the status so necessary to retain their sense of human dignity. They also need recognition, for their physical and mental accomplishments, for contributing to their community, and for still being able to plan and care for themselves. They do not want to have the right to make decisions taken completely out of their hands. Society today seems to want to provide completely for senior citizens rather than to allow them to participate responsibly in planning their lives. This tendency has been well described by Allen Brailey, who says:

It (society) has tended to adopt a viewpoint that the most delectable state for any man is one of idleness, that the goal of one's active years is finally to be supported in idleness, that a grown, mature adult can again be happy in the condition of the infant wherein he receives all of his needs from society but no longer makes any contribution thereto. <sup>1</sup>

Senior citizens want and need new experiences. It is wrong to say that they are incapable of growth or that they are too old to learn new things or revise their opinions. They are not necessarily rigid and inflexible.

Senior citizens' need for an opportunity for self-expression is a universal need. It is an emotional satisfaction which might perhaps become exaggerated because so many satisfactions may be taken away from them upon retirement. The time formerly spent at work is now simply time to be filled.

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<sup>1</sup> Allen B. Brailey, M.D., op. cit. p. 2

Leisure time has become a twenty-four hour a day problem, as many of our senior citizens, in their younger days, did not take time or realize the need to plan for the advent of a completely idle old age. As a result, they are at the mercy of the community or interested people to help them fill in their time and feel important again by making a useful contribution to society. Many writers stress the need for study, research and planning for a fuller life for the senior citizen and the value of self-expression as a result of planned recreation is one aspect of the problem on which there is general agreement.

Another important need is the universal desire to love and be loved. Older people may need more open manifestations of this because they may be haunted by feelings of rejection, both by the competitive world and by their families. No longer allowed employment, many are still able to make definite and valuable contributions if they are given the opportunity. The three-generation home unit has almost disappeared, and grandparents have to seek housing on their own rather than remain with their families. In such circumstances they often feel rejected and unhappy and so need understanding and friendliness.

Under these conditions, senior citizens may suffer a great deal from loss of dignity as a member of society. He may no longer be able to maintain his place in the mainstream of life due to lack of finances. His attitudes and opinions are often ridiculed. He can so easily lose his self-respect and let his appearance and temper slip with the resulting loss in respect and deference by those around him.

The centre for satisfying human relationships is a social group, and without positive relationships, which such groups can provide, the personality shrivels up and life does not seem worthwhile.

According to the current practice in our society, the majority of employees are expected to retire at a definite age, usually at sixty-five years. Until this stage in their lives, their business, family and neighbours have provided the natural social groups from which they derive the necessary satisfactions to be happy. After retirement they are often robbed of this natural outlet by no longer being employable; they no longer have the regular daily routine of their job; they are often forced to live away from their families; their old friends die or move away. It is often necessary therefore, deliberately to produce a group to supply what has been taken away. This responsibility may be assumed by the community and the church. Social clubs and organized recreational activities for older people are now appearing in many communities. The indications are that this trend will increase in the future.

Churches have and to a considerable extent recognize a responsibility towards their senior congregation. "The stake of the Church in this national problem is high because those of older age have an increased sense of the importance of spiritual values."<sup>1</sup>

This study is of guided group experiences for senior citizens, of attempts to provide for senior citizens on a planned basis an opportunity for the kind of social satisfactions that are a necessary part of social living.

In view of the importance of social groups and guided group experiences, let us look briefly at what group work is and what it can do to help old people to be happier. According to Alan F. Klein, a noted authority on the subject:

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<sup>1</sup> Charles E. Reed, "America Alerts Her Senior Citizens", Recreation, May 1952