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Reimagining the Country: A Landscape of Children's Health and Wellbeing from 1875-1975

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Reimagining the Country: A landscape of children's health and wellbeing from 1875-1975

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Senior Honors Thesis

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INTRODUCTION

*Stars in the grass and roses dear,
Earth is full sweet, tho' heaven is near.*
-In the Garden, Eliza Sproat Turner¹

Contemporary psychology suggests that children don't spend enough time outside.² In 2005, Richard Louv coined the term "nature deficit disorder" as a metaphor for relating this lack of a connection to the outside to a medical condition. His use of a medical metaphor suggests that the relationship between people and nature ought to be considered as an embodied relationship, one that has tangible effects on people. Louv proposes that to treat nature deficit disorder, camps and out-of-school education are uniquely positioned to introduce children to the myriad benefits of a connection to nature.³ Studies show that these benefits include lower stress levels, better perspective of one's place in the world, and more positive social interactions, mental and spiritual health.⁴ Children's Country Week Association Paradise Farm camps exemplify this remedy by calling for the children of Philadelphia to spend time out in the countryside for a week each summer.

Despite the recency of published literatures on the "wired generation" and children's newly acquired "nature-deficit", organizations like CCWA Paradise Farm have been sending

¹Eliza Sproat Turner and J. B. Lippincott, *Out-of-Door Rhymes*, Philadelphia, 1903) 45. <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/nyp.33433074962592>.

² Martha Driessnack, "Children and Nature-Deficit Disorder," *Journal for Specialists in Pediatric Nursing* 14, no. 1 (2009), 73-75.

³ Richard Louv, *Last Child in the Woods : Saving our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder* (United States: 2005). <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/007145426>.

⁴ Howard Frumkin et al., "Nature Contact and Human Health: A Research Agenda," *Environmental Health Perspectives* 125, no. 7 (07 31, 2017), 075001. doi:10.1289/EHP1663.; Leyla E. McCurdy et al., "Using Nature and Outdoor Activity to Improve Children's Health," *Current Problems in Pediatric and Adolescent Health Care* 40, no. 5 (May, 2010), 102-117. doi:10.1016/j.cppeds.2010.02.003.; Dylan Fall, "Greener Spaces, Healthier Places: On the Restorative Health Effects of Nature Exposure", 2018), . doi:10.15781/T2RB6WK6W. <https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/handle/2152/65246>.

children out of the city to the country for over 100 years. So if the phenomenon of the “nature deficit disorder” is indeed a result of a recent loss of connection to nature, then why has CCWA Paradise Farm been sending children to the country since 1875? Both Louv and the founders of CCWA Paradise Farm would agree that there is something about the country that benefits children. Have the understandings of the importance of the country and nature always existed? What does it mean for to prioritize time away from whatever anxiety plagues society at a given time? This thesis argues that the country, not the city, is the environment in which people address these anxieties because of the imagined value that has always existed in the country. American people have maintained the value of the country as a healing space by describing its impact on the current concern of the time. This thesis uses the Children’s Country Week Association as a case study to understand how the country environment serves to ameliorate human problems even as those problems change dramatically.

The Children’s Country Week Association

The Children’s Country Week Association (CCWA) sent its first children to the country outside of Philadelphia in 1875.⁵ Founder and first President, Mrs. Eliza S. Turner invited “two little slum girls to her country home for two weeks” in the summer of 1875, and convinced other women to host children the following summer.⁶ In the 1870s, Mrs. Turner learned of organizations that sent children to the countryside and saw how easy it would be to invite two children to Wyntryst, her 700 acre estate outside of Philadelphia. Her small kindness to two young children living in the Philadelphia slum grew to impact thousands of children over the following century. In the early years of the CCWA, Mrs. Turner convinced friends of hers to

⁵Turner, *Out-of-Door Rhymes*, 10-13

⁶ 1960 Annual Report p. 5, Box 1, Children’s Country Week Association Records, Acc. 643, Special Collections Research Center, Temple University Libraries, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

“entertain” young guests from the Philadelphia lower classes. Her involvement with the young children of Philadelphia inspired the growth of the CCWA. People recognized the impact of a simple vacation for poor women and children. The CCWA measured success informally in the smiles and full bellies of the women and children they served.

Despite these humble beginnings, the organization expanded its efforts and earned a charter of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 1881. Along with its new official and state recognized status as a charitable organization, the CCWA declared its purposes: to “enable poor children and poor invalid adults of the city to spend a part of the warm months in the country,” “to provide free excursions for the poor of the city”, and “to secure permanent homes for the poor of the city.” The CCWA’s mission over the following century remained at its core to provide the poor children of Philadelphia with the opportunity to spend some weeks over the summer in the countryside.

As the CCWA grew, the organization became more structured in order to provide as many children with access to the country as possible. Children received “invitations” from the CCWA and went to the homes of families in the country (called “entertainers”) free of charge. Because of a lack of funding, most children paid a small fee to spend a few weeks in country boarding homes. Farmers and other families often served as these country boarding home hosts, and typically received no more than ten guests at a time. As demand for summer vacations grew to over 4,000 children and mothers by 1910, the CCWA instituted “homes of our own” to host more children by borrowing large homes in the country and staffing them with house mothers and other entertainers to care for children. In addition, the CCWA sponsored trips to seashore hospitals for children and mothers deemed too sick for visits to the country.

An important shift in programmatic structure occurred in 1912 when the CCWA purchased Paradise Farm in Downingtown, PA. The emphasis on intimate placements with families or family-like settings in the countryside faded as the camp setting replaced the country family as the unit of community that benefitted children. Unlike New York City's Fresh Air Fund, this switch in structure conformed with other camping organizations that usually served the children of upper or middle class urban families.⁷ Yet, unlike the majority of summer camps the CCWA maintained poor urban children as its target population.

By taking Philadelphia's CCWA as its focus this thesis contributes to several important academic conversations surrounding how health and well-being has been treated historically in the United States. Situated within the field of the history of medicine, this project advances the discourse surrounding how concepts about health and the body in specific environments evolved over time. It explores the relationship between the environment and health as it developed during and after the so-called "great revolution in medicine, known as 'germ theory.'"⁸

The tension between two different theories of disease causation impacted the ways in which people thought about disease, filth, and cities in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. These two approaches were the miasmatic theory of disease and the germ theory of disease.⁹ The public and experts in public health and sanitation grappled with the relatively new germ theory

⁷ Julia Guarneri, "Changing Strategies for Child Welfare, Enduring Beliefs about Childhood: The Fresh Air Fund, 1877—1926," *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 11, no. 1 (2012), 27-70. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23249057>.; Tobin Miller Shearer, *Two Weeks Every Summer: Fresh Air Children and the Problem of Race in America* (Cornell University Press, 2017).

⁸ National Research Council (US) Committee to Update Science, Medicine, "A Theory of Germs," *Science, Medicine, and Animals* (2004). <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK24649/>.

⁹ Here it would be useful to list sources that discuss the introduction of germ theory of disease and its influence on medical thinking.

of disease while also maintaining concern for the environmental impact on health in the years before the twentieth century.¹⁰

While the scientists debated the theory of disease causation, those in the field trying to keep children alive and well understood that preserving the public's health necessitated a compromise between new and old ideas about health.¹¹ Amidst all of this scientific uncertainty, people and organizations like the CCWA continued to care for the sick and worked to prevent disease based on an amalgamation of science and folk understanding of how to be well. The CCWA aimed to alleviate the suffering of those who would be affected by social ills like dirty, crowded streets, dark alleys, and poor sanitation that promoted transmission of disease. These ills mapped directly onto ideas about the ill health of the city.¹² The approach taken by the CCWA aligned with the idea that the purity of the countryside could treat the ill health, values, and citizenship that plagued the city.

Changes Over Time

The CCWA's approaches towards helping urban children provide a lens into the complex dynamics between philanthropic organizations and the people they served. Over the course of nearly one hundred years, the CCWA concerned itself with the physical, spiritual, moral, civic, and developmental health of the children they served. The priorities they emphasized depended on the changes in thinking about the value of the countryside in relation to the city.

In chapter one, I interrogate the emphasis on the physical health benefits of the countryside. The leadership of the CCWA and its patrons believed that the country lifestyle, with

¹⁰ David S. Barnes, *The Great Stink of Paris and the Nineteenth-Century Struggle Against Filth and Germs* (Baltimore, Md: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2006) 12-64.

¹¹ Anne Hardy, *The Epidemic Streets: Infectious Disease and the Rise of Preventative Medicine, 1856-1900* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) 6.

¹² Melanie A. Kiechle and Paul S. Sutter, *Smell Detectives : An Olfactory History of Nineteenth-Century Urban America* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017).

its abundance of nutritious foods and healthy sunshine impacted the physical well-being of the children hosted. The application of this particular wisdom of the times reflected a broader understanding of the influence of the environment on one's physical self.

Chapter two addresses the CCWA's increasing religious emphasis around the turn of the twentieth century. Focusing on the nourishment of spirit instead of the healing rays of sunshine, the CCWA responded to the increasing specialization in the field of medicine which focused more on scientific treatment by medical doctors and less on the influences of environment and family on children's health. Deep concern for the lives of the children served remained constant, however the justification for that concern shifted to one rooted in religious responsibility rather than rebuilding children's physical bodies.

Growing out of the concern for the spiritual lives of the children, the CCWA began focusing also on the civic health of its patrons. A well rounded child ought to grow into a well-rounded citizen. This third chapter explores the ways in which the countryside transformed from a space of healing to an environment that promoted civic duty and national pride. The influx of immigration, class dynamics, and the United States' position as a world power over the course of the two World Wars influenced the crucial introduction of citizenship in the CCWA. Concerns over the impact of immigration led to strictly limit the number of newly arrived immigrants and to the implementations of immigration quotas.¹³ Meanwhile institutions like the CCWA encouraged immigrants already living in the United States to abandon cultural divides and establish an American identity.

¹³A. Warner Parker, "The Quota Provisions of the Immigration Act of 1924," *American Journal of International Law* 18, no. 4 (/10, 1924), 737-754. doi:10.2307/2188847. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/american-journal-of-international-law/article/quota-provisions-of-the-immigration-act-of-1924/42EFC8301DF323DE226BEFE742211EC7>.

By the mid 20th century the CCWA's focus shifted once again, this time responding to a shift in priorities of the pediatric physicians and clinical psychologists who determined that childhood development ought to be granted more importance. Chapter four examines the impact of the newly formed field of pediatric psychology that developed in the 1950s and 1960s. Counselors reported camper behavior using report cards and commented on each camper's overall performance at the end of each session. These data explore themes of "normal" development and adult expectations of children. The CCWA's tools to measure childhood development represent the trend towards data-driven and scientific approaches towards childcare during the Cold War.

Finally, chapter five focuses on the CCWA's decision to integrate Paradise Farm camps after the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* case declared school segregation unconstitutional in 1954.¹⁴ Unlike public schools and facilities, Paradise Farm had no legal obligation to desegregate. Their methods for researching the impact of desegregation and the discussions surrounding potential outcomes at a desegregated camp speak to the ways in which fear determined how "healthy" development for all campers and families came to be defined. The country environment served as a "safe" environment in which to test these theories. It stood in opposition to the hectic, unmanageable city, where racial tensions could prove disastrous.

The Imagined Country

But why did the CCWA continue to send children out of the city and into the country for over one hundred years? What was about this environment that was a place of healing and peace? There seems to be the ethos that some things can't be achieved when participating in city

¹⁴Ludy T. Benjamin Jr. and Ellen M. Crouse, "The American Psychological Association's Response to *Brown V. Board of Education: The Case of Kenneth B. Clark*," *American Psychologist* 57, no. 1 (2002), 38-50. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.57.1.38.

life. To leave is to search for introspection, deeper connection, and peace. But where does this urge to leave the city come from? Is the urge indeed as innate as some who abandon the city for the countryside claim?

Environmental historians argue that the pull towards mountains, countryside, and sea and away from the city reflects not a human instinct but instead an idea that Americans have cultivated and reinvented over and over again. While people may like to imagine that the “untouched nature” they yearn to experience away from urban life exists entirely apart from humankind, it is just that: imagined. Some scholars discuss the construction of “American nature” as largely a cultural innovation that culminated in the transcendentalist view of nature as a space where humans could behold the spectacle of nature and consider their place within it.¹⁵ Other scholars have similarly pointed to the shift in thinking about “nature” from one that first demonized and denounced spaces void of humans as “wastelands” to a way of thinking that embraced the untouched aspect of nature as “pristine”. “Untouched” nature functions both as something that humans cannot easily access, but simultaneously yearn to get close to in order to simplify their lives and lessen the burden of modern life.¹⁶ A number of fields rely on the culturally constructed value of nature—local and global conservation efforts depend on the political will of people to fight for places that stand in opposition to the urban centers where

¹⁵ William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness: Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," *Environmental History* 1, no. 1 (Jan 1, 1996) 3. doi:10.2307/3985059. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3985059>.

¹⁶ For more information on the transformation of the words and function used to describe “nature” and “wilderness” in American history see the following Kenneth R. Olwig, "Reinventing Common Nature: Yosemite and Mt. Rushmore--A Meandering Tale of Double Nature" Norton, May 24-28, 1995, 1995). Etienne, Benson. "From Wild Lives to Wildlife and Back," *Environmental History* 16, no. 3 (Jul 1, 2011), 418-422. doi:10.1093/envhis/emr039. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23049820>.

most people live.¹⁷ Concern over preservation of an “untouched wilderness” instigate debates over the impact of human consumption and activity on wild places (even when those places are designed for human entertainment).¹⁸

Others in the field of environmental history have pointed to the power of the distinctions we draw between the country and the city. Imagined as opposites, the country stands in position to solve the problems of the city. Indeed, scholars argue that the imagined value of the country served to ameliorate political tensions by treating the “country life” as a more natural way of living. This reimagined function dismisses the often harsh reality of country life in order to solve the human problems faced in densely populated urban centers.¹⁹ Some have even suggested that in order to understand the city, one must consider how it relates, defines, and is defined itself by the country.²⁰ This project endeavors to explore how people shape and reshape their ideas about the countryside as an environment of healing—in particular, healing the human maladies that seem ever present in the city.

This thesis contributes to these discussions by focusing on how perceptions of the environment’s importance contributes to people’s sense of health and wellbeing. It shows how the cultural construction of an “imagined” countryside exemplifies continued faith in the healing power of “natural” environments. Despite the countryside’s perseverance as a site of wellbeing, the ailments it purportedly heals change over time to fit the most immediate sources of angst.

¹⁷William M. Adams and Jon Hutton, "People, Parks and Poverty; Political Ecology and Biodiversity Conservation," *Conservation and Society* 5, no. 2 (2007), 147-183. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26392879>.

¹⁸Ann Greene, "Wolves in the Wissahickon," in *Nature's Entrepot: Philadelphia's Urban Sphere and its Environmental Thresholds*, eds. Michael J. Chiarappa and Brian C. Black (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012).

¹⁹Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City*, 1. publ. ed. (London: Hogarth Press, 1973).

²⁰William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, 1. Norton paperback ed. ed. (New York: Norton, 1992).

The Children's Country Week Association addresses children's health by keeping these concerns in mind; extrapolated to the general public, children serve as a proxy for the future that the CCWA and America hopes to build. Ultimately, both the folk and expert understandings of what makes a "healthy child" in large part respond to major societal concerns at the time—to look at the development of what it meant to support and create a "healthy child" is to interrogate how the environment interacts with particular societal angsts. The setting of the Children's Country Week Association serves as a backdrop on which we can analyze these interactions.

The CCWA altered its definition of "health" to fit both the shifting "country" environment they sent children to, and the dynamic understandings of children's health. This thesis makes clear that children's physical and spiritual health has been defined in relation to the predominant needs and concerns of the nation. Over time, these issues shifted from physical health concerns to worries over the health of an integrated America. Despite this change, the countryside environment remained one aspect of the solution. This thesis demonstrates that regardless of an era's most pressing anxieties, Americans have imagined the "country" as an environment that can be turned to in order to "restore" the sense of well-being that concerns over physical, moral, and developmental degeneracy threatened.

CHAPTER ONE: PHYSICAL HEALTH

In its early years, the Children's Country Week Association believed in the "healing ray" of the country sunshine as having a "material" impact on the physical health of children. The organization functioned within an existing framework of care that supported women and children in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by collaborating with various seashore institutions and emphasizing the importance of nutrition and clothing. Not quite mothers, certainly not physicians, the women and hostesses of the CCWA participated in "scientific motherhood" by acting as a go-between for scientific care and the poor urban mothers who couldn't provide a healing environment for their children themselves.

This chapter argues that by emerging in a society that embraced the influence of the environment on the health, the CCWA perpetuated cultural norms that declared the country to be a site of health and the city to be a site of affliction. The focus on improving children's physical health by sending them to the countryside demonstrates an attitude that physical health was intrinsically related to the health of the environment. Created shortly after the Industrial Revolution, the CCWA addressed concern over the impact of city life on the physical health of children and families by harkening back to a time when most people lived in the countryside.

The CCWA intervened by hosting the "deserving poor" in the healthful country or seaside homes for weeks at a time each summer. Mrs. Eliza S. Turner established the CCWA in 1875, around the same time as new ideas about physical health and medical care began to influence the landscape of health and approaches to improve physical well-being. This chapter considers the efforts of the Children's Country Week Association to address the physical health needs of the children under their care amidst this change by maintaining the positive role that the country environment could play in the physical health of mothers and children. The CCWA's role in improving the physical well-being of children and mothers remained a crucial component

of their work throughout its existence. In its beginnings, the CCWA saw the country as restorative—distinct from other environments that cured (the seashore) and infected (the city). The CCWA carved out a space for itself by focusing on the recuperative impact of the “country” on physical health, through their continued support for seashore hospitals, and by emphasizing the importance of scientific care in their efforts to improve the health of the people they served.

The Country as a Healing Environment

The Children’s Country Week Association sent children and mothers to the country and seashore because of the cultural belief that urban environments promoted poor physical health. This practice has a long history tied to epidemic disease. Fear of disease motivated many residents of Philadelphia and other American cities to relocate periodically during the nineteenth century. After the devastating Yellow Fever epidemic that hit Philadelphia in the summer 1793, it was customary for those who could afford it to abandon the city during the summer months to avoid the sickness that arrived with the warmer weather.²¹ While the establishment of the CCWA occurred nearly one hundred years after the 1793 Yellow Fever Epidemic, avoiding the city during the summer months remained common practice.

In last quarter of the nineteenth century, thinking about the physical health of people in urban settings begged the removal from that environment which was associated with illness. During this time the Children’s Country Week Association began its work to support the urban poor youth of Philadelphia. The CCWA undertook these relocation efforts because the women who organized the CCWA believed that children’s physical health would improve with the fresh air and sunshine in the country. This belief persisted despite competing ideas about disease and well-being that emerged in the twentieth century.

²¹ John Duffy, *Yellow Fever in the Continental United States during the Nineteenth Century**, Vol. 44, 1968), 687-701. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1750233/>.

In the early 19th century, “pediatrics” did not exist—the wellbeing of the child rested on the shoulders of mothers.²² Five years after the CCWA began sending children to the countryside, Abraham Jacobi instituted the Pediatric Section of the American Medical Association, establishing pediatrics as a specialty in American medicine.²³ The beginnings of American pediatrics saw concern primarily over childhood disease and infant feeding.²⁴

This changed as the specialty of pediatrics grew and physicians published materials providing mothers with “scientific” child rearing advice. In its infancy, the field of pediatrics both competed with and complimented other sources of information on child-care.²⁵ Indeed, the CCWA writes each year about their collaboration with physicians to ensure that each child and mother sent to the country was the right kind of unwell in order to benefit from their time. If they were too sick, they would be sent to the seashore; if they were contagious, they would be sent home.²⁶

Though the women running the program were not public health experts or medical professionals, their intervention aligned with public perception about the influence of environmental factors on health. Indeed, the 1895 Annual report released by the CCWA describes the environmental impact on the health of poor children in the following passage: “but we have no harvest to reap in great cities—back in little courts and alleys the foul air is stifling, reeking and the only harvest we find there is the harvest of death among the weak and the little

²² Rima D. Apple, *Perfect Motherhood* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2006) 3. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt5hjbkn>.

²³ A. R. Colón, *Nurturing Children : A History of Pediatrics* (United States: , 1999) 220. <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/004146986>.

²⁴ Sydney A. Halpern, *American Pediatrics: The Social Dynamics of Professionalism* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Pr, 1988) 51.

²⁵ Rima D. Apple, *Perfect Motherhood* 24-25

²⁶ 1886 Annual Report, Box 1, Children’s Country Week Association Records

children.”²⁷ This declaration assumes a relationship exists between the foul air and the death of children.²⁸ The virtue then, of sending children into the country assures that the fresh, country air is not only health-giving, but also life-saving.

The metaphor of children as a good to be harvested demonstrates the importance of environment and care in a child’s health. Without the proper amount of sunshine and nutrients, no harvest can thrive. The writers of the Annual Report did not specify the scientific mechanism that determines the exact nature of the relationship between the country and health, but social reformers at the time believed that healthy people required proper air and sunlight much like a healthy crop.²⁹ Donors to the CCWA cause responded to the association between the clean, fresh country air and health because of the arguments that the city itself promoted physical degradation. Indeed, social reform emphasized general environmental reform like the fight against overcrowding and darkness to reduce infant mortality rates in the mid to late 19th century.³⁰

Seashore Hospital Partnership

Embedded in the frameworks guiding the care of sick children was the notion that natural, and in particular seaside environments contained health-giving properties. If administered appropriately, people believed that seashore therapies were capable of treating a wide variety of illnesses.³¹ The Children’s Country Week Association was not a medical institution; however, when it came across people who might benefit from the seaside therapies, it

²⁷ 1895 Annual Report p. 5, Box 1, Children’s Country Week Association Records

²⁸ Kiechle, *Smell Detectives : An Olfactory History of Nineteenth-Century Urban America*

²⁹ Daniel Freund, *American Sunshine* (Chicago, Ill. [u.a.]: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2012).

³⁰ Richard A. Meckel, *Save the Babies* (Baltimore u.a: Johns Hopkins Univ. Pr, 1990).

³¹ Meghan Crnic, "Seeking the Salubrious Sea: The Health and Environments of Urban American Families, 1870-1930" University of Pennsylvania, 2013), 67-76.

<https://www.noexperiencenecessarybook.com/3jdlMW/seeking-the-salubrious-sea-the-health-and-environments-of-urban-american-families-1870-1930.html>.

provided funds for women and children to travel to and receive treatment from seashore hospitals. In 1904, the Children's Country Week Association described one such child:

Many of the cases which come to us are convalescents from typhoid fever and pneumonia and are recommended by physicians. These cases must go, and many of them to the seashore. The recommended cases are constantly increasing, but we regret to say that the contributions do not increase in proportion. One little girl, six years old, had been sick for some time, and had had hemorrhages. The doctor said she was incurable [...] About this time the Association heard of her case and sent her to the Children's Seashore House, Atlantic City, where she remained for several weeks, and returned entirely cured.³²

The CCWA's partnership with seaside hospitals demonstrate a few key things. Despite working separately from medical professionals to improve the physical health of children, the CCWA followed recommendations provided by physicians in choosing where to send the children they served. This collaboration between social and medical institutions show the fluidity which existed in the treatment of children.

There existed a give and take between the CCWA and the Children's Seashore House. One recommended the other in order to maximize the function of both organizations. The Children's Seashore House described the support provided by the CCWA: "The establishment of the [...] admirable Country Week Association, has relieved the Children's House of the care of many who would otherwise turn to it; and many more of the cases of simple debility [...] might be more economically and quite as beneficially cared for by (the CCWA)."³³ This excerpt from the Children's Seashore House's annual report in 1880 shows the ways in which the CCWA fit itself within a network of care that defined a spectrum of health and disease. Because the CCWA could handle cases of "simple debility", the Children's Seashore House became freer to focus their efforts on the actively sick. The CCWA acknowledged the limitations of its approaches by

³² 1904 Annual Report p. 7, Box 1, Children's Country Week Association Records

³³ 1880 Annual Report for the Children's Seashore House, p 10-11, written by the physician in charge

deferring to the doctors for children and mothers who would be better cared for at institutions like the Children's Seashore House.

The existence and success of these organizations in the late nineteenth century made it clear that physicians still believed in the value of seaside and country living as treatment. This example shows the need for these therapies as well as demonstrates the success of these programs with those deemed even by physicians as "incurable". Nature served as a last resort if other medical interventions in the city had failed. The CCWA describes the population deemed appropriate for a seashore intervention:

We were enabled to send to the seashore each week mothers and children who for some specific reason needed sea air. Women who were recovering from some serious operation or severe spell of sickness, and little children who, for lack of nourishing food and air, had failed to rally from some childish disease, were sent to the shore, where for one or two weeks, they enjoyed the comforts of this beautiful seaside home and the beneficial sea breeze.³⁴

The type of ill health differentiates those sent to the seaside and those recommended the country. Those suffering from more significant issues were sent to the sea. Children who were not sick, but were run down were sent to the country. This distinction remained important through the 1940s, with the number of women and children sent dwindling in the final years of the decade.³⁵ It demonstrates that the CCWA worked together with physicians and agreed upon a difference in treatment depending on the severity of the ill health. It is unclear from the annual reports and archival materials how exactly this distinction played itself out in determining specifically case by case who was to be sent to the seashore and who would go to the country.

Even so, the CCWA worked closely with several seashore institutions as a result of their particular role in addressing the spectrum of ill health from which children suffer. All those

³⁴ 1913 Annual Report, Box 1, Children's Country Week Association Records

³⁵ 1880 Annual Report, Box 1, Children's Country Week Association Records

providing transportation and care believed that women and children could benefit physically from the sea breeze and the country. The numbers support this claim—in 1912 alone, over 700 women and children were sponsored to go to Cape May Point and Atlantic City (locations of seashore hospitals).³⁶ The metric used to judge the efficacy of this intervention was based on Anecdotal feedback received by the CCWA served as the metric by which they judged the intervention’s efficacy—seashore hospital staff sent back overwhelmingly positive reports on guests behavior and improvement.³⁷

Scientific Care

Improving the physical health of these children meant addressing and improving their health with the most modern and up to date information. As was discussed earlier, reformers understood social factors like poverty, population density and poor nutrition to influence health. These children received insufficient nutrition at home. The Children’s Country Week Association stepped in to provide access to and education about health and nutrition.

In the late nineteenth century, good motherhood involved literate mothers educating themselves on the most modern methods of caring for their children. Physician-authored literature for mothers was the leading source of support for “scientific motherhood” in the latter half of the 19th century.³⁸ While not technically mothering they children they served, the women and hosts of the CCWA played a role in introducing scientific care for these young children. The CCWA as an institution positioned itself a source of information for the hosts and entertainers. The CCWA also emphasized the importance of providing the nutrition that these children were

³⁶ 1913 Annual Report p. 19, Box 1, Children’s Country Week Association Records

³⁷ 1913 Annual Report p. 19, Box 1, Children’s Country Week Association Records

³⁸ Rima D. Apple, *Perfect Motherhood* 13

not receiving in their homes.³⁹ By 1895, the Children's Country Week Association began publishing the requirements they had for both guests and hosts. Some of these guidelines specify the type of activities that the children may engage in, as well as requirements for the food prepared and accommodations hosts should provide.⁴⁰

One such recommendation involved the suggestion to encourage children to drink milk instead of tea or coffee. Urban milk quality in the United States was of great concern in the second half of the nineteenth century. Several prominent social reformers suggested that the cheap, easily accessible "swill milk" (milk given by cows fed mash from distilleries and altered to appear more healthful) produced by cows in urban areas caused higher rates of infant mortality.⁴¹ But milk in the country did not contain these impurities. So while urban mothers might not be capable financially of providing or preserving high quality milk, the hosts in the country could feed children milk from their own cows. Not only was the country environment healthier for the women and children staying there, but the quality of the products made in the country overall exceeded that of the dirty city. This provided yet another piece of evidence suggesting that the country surpassed the city in terms of physical health benefits.

The CCWA informally measured the success of its intent to improve the nutrition of the children they served. In the first years of the twentieth century, quantification and measurements of success were not the focus of the CCWA, but rather anecdotal accounts of full bellies and weight gained showed donors the benefit of wholesome country food. This is in keeping with the nineteenth century relationship between science and motherhood and the emergence of pediatrics

³⁹ 1880 Annual Report p. 5, Box 1, Children's Country Week Association Records

⁴⁰ 1895 Annual Report p. 14, Box 1, Children's Country Week Association Records

⁴¹ Michael Obladen, "From Swill Milk to Certified Milk: Progress in Cow's Milk Quality in the 19th Century," *Annals of Nutrition & Metabolism* 64, no. 1 (2014) 80-87.

doi:10.1159/000363069.

as a developing field. While experts encouraged mothers to remain up to date on modern childcare techniques, they did not suggest that mothers were to replace the physician as a source of legitimate knowledge. It would not have been necessary that the caretakers and hosts quantify weight gained or health improved. In this way, the CCWA participated in a similar relationship with caretaking and science. Their approaches were modern but they deferred to the physicians for more serious matters. The anecdotal evidence of the CCWA's success contributed to the creation of the imagined value of the country—it established a base for a narrative about the “health” of the countryside that persists for the next hundred years.

The CCWA also supported the provision of clothing for the children they served. In the twentieth century, women's groups hosted lectures educating other mothers on appropriate clothing because the field of children's hygiene emphasized the influence of clothes on health.⁴² In 1913, the CCWA provided over 118 packages of new or partly worn clothing to the children they served. Providing clothing to these children allowed them to go out of doors and receive the benefits of the country air and sun. Without “appropriate” clothing (which includes shoes), these children wouldn't be able to access the healing environment in the country.⁴³

Conclusion

The fresh air and sun in particular served as a most important component of the “treatment” a child would receive in the countryside. As was discussed in the introduction, the founding of the CCWA coincided with the emergence of the germ theory of disease. Although the bacteriological revolution might appear to contradict theories of health and disease that supported sunlight as treatment, it is important to consider that the ways of thinking about disease merged and changed over a period of decades. Indeed, many medical professionals

⁴² Rima D. Apple, *Perfect Motherhood*⁴³

⁴³ 1913 Annual Report p. 8, Box 1, Children's Country Week Association Records

agreed upon the restorative effects of sunshine on the physical body.⁴⁴ Considered ahistorically, the “science” of this time would be seen today as incorrect and worthless. However, as this chapter demonstrates, the interaction between the physical environment and the physical health of children remained important because of the concern over the impact of the dirty city on Philadelphia’s children. Children in the countryside smiled more, gained weight quickly, and grew strong. The work done by the early CCWA begins the narrative of physical improvement found in the country. As concerns change, the importance of the country as a healing space remains a foundational base in the fights to alleviate a multitude of anxieties.

The CCWA describes the children’s lives as ones that exist “amid the squalor and dirt (moral and physical) of some dark alley or court”.⁴⁵ By removing these children from the dark and bringing them into the light, the CCWA aimed to directly impact the physical health of their wards. As environment of the restoration of health, the country could reverse the malignant effects of the city. The CCWA supported the healing spaces for those who needed the restoration of the country sun and air, as well as for those who required the curative influence of the seashore.

In the following decades, the importance of the physical impact of the countryside diminished as the medical community distanced itself from an environmental focus of care. The following chapter addresses how the priorities of the CCWA shifted in response to this development.

⁴⁴ Freund, *American Sunshine* 15

⁴⁵ 1913 Annual Report p. 10, Box 1, Children’s Country Week Association Records

CHAPTER TWO: SPIRITUAL AND MORAL HEALTH

Keep close to Nature's heart... and break clear away, once in a while, and climb a mountain or spend a week in the woods. Wash your spirit clean.

-John Muir⁴⁶

Not only concerned with filling the physical bellies of the children it hosted, the CCWA set out to give children a holistic healthful experience in the country. Their spiritual bellies also needed nourishment. By the 1900s, health according to the CCWA grew to encompass not only physical well-being, but also spiritual health. Cultural icon John Muir wrote in 1915 that one's spirit could be cleansed by spending time "close to Nature's heart". Between 1895 and 1930, the CCWA claimed that children benefited from a spiritually healthy connection with nature. By 1905, that connection became as important if not more, than the physical benefits of spending time in the country.

With the rise of bacteriology and scientific medicine, physical health increasingly became the domain of specialists in hospitals. So the CCWA took on the task of caring for the spiritual and moral health of children by reconstructing the utility of the countryside. While still engaging in essentially the same practices of sending children from the city to the country, a new logic drove people to escape. The women of the CCWA wished to save children not only from the diseased city but also from the morally corrupting city. The CCWA saw the country as a refuge in which children could grow spiritually and morally. This attitude about the "spirituality" of place was not unique to the CCWA. Indeed, notions of purity in "nature" versus the moral decrepitude of the "city" existed in many forms during the nineteenth century.⁴⁷ This chapter

⁴⁶ John Muir and Samuel Hall Young, *Alaska Days with John Muir*, 1915).

⁴⁷ For more on this distinction, see *The Country and the City* by Raymond Williams. This cultural analysis of the representation of the city and the country in English literature proposes

argues that the status granted the countryside did not change as a result of advances in medical and scientific knowledge—instead the country earned its status as an important place for children because of its connection to spiritual and moral uplift. This first major shift in the logic behind the CCWA’s continued existence demonstrates how the “healthy” environment could remain unchanged, while the rationale for the “health” of the country shifted to suit the science and culture of the time.

Cultural Importance of Nature as a Spiritual Place

Around 1875, at the time of the founding of the Children’s Country Week Association, the country experienced a cultural shift that informed the ways in which people were thinking about spirituality and man’s role in the world around him. Thoreau had recently published his book, *Walden* espousing ideas of the importance of simplicity and self-reliance in a “natural” place in order to pursue spiritual awakening.⁴⁸ The cultural understanding of the “wild” was undergoing a shift from one that considered wilderness to be unsavory and untamed to one that exalted the power and sublimity of God’s work in the natural world.⁴⁹ The United States’ agrarian roots reinforced the exaltation of nature as uniquely American.⁵⁰ The American notion of the “frontier” became ingrained in the fabric of American pride, meanwhile the frontier itself

that the city and the country have become symbols for the impact of modernity and a bygone moral purity, respectively. Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City*, 1. publ. ed. (London: Hogarth Press, 1973).

⁴⁸ Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (New York: Burt, 1902).

⁴⁹ Roderick Nash and Char Miller, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 5. ed. ed. (New Haven, Conn. [u.a.]: Yale Univ. Press, 2014) 46. While this project concerns itself primarily with the country, there has been much scholarship dedicated to understanding “wilderness” as an evolving concept in the American psyche. For more information on American Wilderness, see “Wilderness and the American Mind”, Peter Coates, *Nature: Western Attitudes since Ancient Times* John Wiley & Sons, 2013).; Gregg Mitman, *The State of Nature: Ecology, Community, and American Social Thought, 1900-1950* University of Chicago Press, 1992).

⁵⁰ Robin Bachin, "Cultivating Unity: The Changing Role of Parks in Urban America," *Places: Forum of Design for the Public Realm* 15, no. 3 (2003).

became more and more mythologized as people began moving to cities.⁵¹ The relationship between landscape and the American identity produced experts in the fields of city planning and architecture who aimed to provide the public with the opportunity to engage with nature.

Landscape architecture emphasized the importance of maintaining nature as wild because they believed in the physical and spiritual benefits that could be derived from natural beauty. In the second half of the nineteenth century, people designing parks emphasized the use of native plants and “natural” features. Experts like Frank Olmstead, a prolific national park designer in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries believed that contact with the nature of a place improved the mind, body, and spirit. The choice to highlight “pure” nature, that is, nature that was native to the area and celebrated the natural beauty of a place, reflected the cultural value that tied nature to spirituality.⁵²

Nature and Spirituality in the CCWA

In conjunction with this cultural shift in thinking about the utility of nature, the CCWA’s justification for its existence evolved to include the spiritual and moral benefit received by children from their time in the countryside.⁵³ The evolution of language used to describe the purpose of the CCWA aligned with the decline in emphasizing those physical benefits of the countryside discussed in the previous chapter. Although the CCWA was a Christian

⁵¹ *Frederick Jackson Turner Comments on the American Frontier, 1893* (Gale: , 1893).
<http://proxy.library.upenn.edu:2084/apps/doc/XBOMPF889482840/UHIC?sid=googlescholar>.

⁵² Anne Whiston Spirn, "Constructing Nature: The Legacy of Frank Law Olmstead," in *Uncommon Ground*, ed. William Cronon (New York, NY [u.a.]: Norton, 1996).

⁵³ The concept of spirituality and its connection to American nature can be found in the histories of the American National Parks Systems as well as the history of the conservation movement. While this project does not get into these histories in great detail, see for more information the following books: Samuel P. Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency* (Pittsburgh, Pa: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 1999).; Kerry Mitchell, *Spirituality and the State: Making Nature and Experience in America's National Parks* (New York: NYU Press, 2016).

organization, in early annual reports, very little mention is made of “god” or “morals.”⁵⁴ In fact, in the 1895 Annual report lays out plainly one expectation of the guests and hosts regarding spirituality and religion: “Guests will not be taken to church except as a favor, and at the convenience of the hostess.”⁵⁵ In a clear effort to lessen the burden on hostesses, this rule indicates that the primary focus of the time spent in the country was not religious in nature. At least not at first.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the rhetoric of the CCWA described with more detail the less tangible benefits that children would receive as a result of spending a week in the country. In the 1904 Annual Report, the writers exclaimed, “What an awakening for a child who is sent away for the first time.”⁵⁶ There is something about removal from the city environment to a countryside almost oasis that “awakens” the child. In addition to the nutritious foods and fresh air that improve the physical health of the child, the country and hosts who lived there provided a “good moral atmosphere.”⁵⁷ By the beginning of the second decade of the twentieth century, the Children’s Country Week Association made note of the spiritually and morally strong people involved in the care for children.⁵⁸

The structure of the program shifted dramatically in 1912, when the CCWA purchased land. Naming this land “Paradise Farm,” the organization began consolidating its many rented or borrowed homes into several camps, which they segregated by race, sex, and religion. The

⁵⁴ "The New Century." *The Epoch* December 7, 1888.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=jnk4AQAAMAAJ&pg=PA320#v=onepage&q=turner&f=false>.

⁵⁵ 1895 Annual Report p. 16, Box 1, Children’s Country Week Association Records; It is important there to clarify that there were separate rules for “country boarders” and “children going to the country”. It is slightly unclear as to what is the difference between the two populations served by the CCWA.

⁵⁶ 1904 Annual Report p. 7, Box 1, Children’s Country Week Association Records

⁵⁷ 1904 Annual Report p. 7, Box 1, Children’s Country Week Association Records

⁵⁸ 1913 Annual Report, Box 1, Children’s Country Week Association Records

organization went from sending children to country host families to creating “homes of our own” by temporarily borrowing homes, to purchasing a single property. By consolidating its programming, the CCWA established more control over the spiritual experiences of its campers. After 1912, the newly restructured CCWA camps included time for prayer, reflection and singing hymns. The eventual construction of physical chapels demonstrates a marked departure in the types of services offered to children from poor, urban backgrounds. The camp itself became a community in which spiritual growth was encouraged. The unit shifted from the family to the camp.

Spirituality gained increasing importance to the structure of the CCWA program as the moralizing effect of the countryside on children and their families replaced the physical health benefits of the countryside. The CCWA continued to serve the children of Philadelphia after nature therapies fell out of the spotlight in the medical community (though seashore hospitals continued to serve children well into the twentieth century). The children served by the CCWA began receiving care for their physical health from the increasingly professionalized field of pediatrics. Yet, the work done by the CCWA offered children the opportunity to become more spiritually connected in the countryside, a place better suited for reflection and moral well-being.

Reviving the Child’s Spirit

Early in the existence of the CCWA, those running the organization recognized the multi-faceted benefits conferred onto those children who spent a week in the country. According to the CCWA, the countryside encouraged hard work and dutifulness, which in turn promoted spiritual improvement. This “revival of [a child’s] spirit” was unlikely to occur in the urban environment from which these children came because of the amorality of the place itself. Social reformers

relied on the same lines of argument that supported the promotion of sunshine and space in cities to imply the moral decrepitude of the dark city.⁵⁹

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the CCWA argued that the weeks spent in the country with hosts and entertainers were not solely to aid in the child's physical improvement, but in the improvement of their "spirits." These argument existed even at the beginning of the CCWA. In 1880, the Annual Report suggests that the children served were "overweari ed little ones who have grown morbid amid their hopeless surroundings, and will not see at first the brightness even of the green fields and blue skies."⁶⁰ The work required patience, for the morale of these children was often so low that they could not at first respond to the benefits of the countryside. Yet hope needed not be lost—the entertainers hosting these "overweari ed little ones" "taught many acts of kindness that must make a lasting impression for good."⁶¹ The influence of the wholesome country family conferred lessons of good will and compassion upon the children of the CCWA. The environment of the country family home, as well as the nature surrounding it, contributed to the revival of children's spirits.

The strength of children's spirit mattered to the CCWA in part because that strength led to the improvement of the workforce. The workforce required healthy spirits in order to support productive workers. In the early years of the twentieth century, child labor was still a common practice.⁶² Although members of the CCWA would likely have been opposed to child labor practices, they recognized with pragmatism that work was a reality for many of the children they served. Their approaches were forward looking, however, because by instilling moral and

⁵⁹ Freund, *American Sunshine*

⁶⁰ 1880 Annual Report p. 6, Box 1, Children's Country Week Association Records

⁶¹ 1895 Annual Report p. 11, Box 1, Children's Country Week Association Records

⁶² Marco Manacorda, "Child Labor and the Labor Supply of Other Household Members: Evidence from 1920 America," *American Economic Review* 96, no. 5 (2006), 1788-1801.

spiritual values in these children, the CCWA engaged in promoting the Protestant Work ethic.⁶³ This ethic promoted the idea that if children could achieve success by working hard and maintaining a spiritual connection to God, it was a sign that they would be saved.

Although the women of the CCWA did not set out to “save” children in a religious sense of the word, this prevailing ethos implicitly impacted the work they did. The women of the CCWA attempted to alleviate the suffering of these child workers through what they deemed to be the spiritually uplifting nature of the country. The CCWA’s 1880 Annual Report acknowledges the position of the children they serve, “Many of these children are employed all the rest of the year as cash boys and cash girls and as factory children, and to them a country holiday in their week of vacation is not only a luxury, but often a necessity to renew their exhausted powers and strengthen them for their winter’s work.”⁶⁴ The CCWA saw itself as an organization which helped to revitalize these children’s energy by providing for them a “country holiday”. In addition to the physical benefits reaped from weeks at play in the countryside, the children benefited from the structure of CCWA programming designed to improve their spiritual lives.

The CCWA adopted an evening-time vespers ritual in order to provide concrete space and time for the spiritual growth of its campers. Many camps like the CCWA engaged in religious activities involving informal services centered mostly around Christian tradition.⁶⁵ At Paradise Farm, the ritual of prayers and vespers at night was tied to the natural setting: “Just as God’s sun sinks in the west and leaves its gorgeous afterglow, so Country Week closes its day

⁶³ James Hill and Sebastian Guzman, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Milton: Macat Library, 2017).

⁶⁴ 1880 Annual Report p. 7, Box 1, Children’s Country Week Association Records

⁶⁵ Hallie E. Bond, Leslie Paris and Joan Jacobs Brumberg, *“A Paradise for Boys and Girls” : Children’s Camps in the Adirondacks* (United States: The Adirondack Museum/Syracuse University Press, 2006). <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/005263224>.

with vespers and prayers, leaving in the hearts of these little children a beautiful afterglow that can never be effaced.”⁶⁶ In the same way that the day concluded with a beautiful, reflective sunset, the children mimicked that sense of closure through prayer. This ritual allowed children to experience spirituality in a permanent, consistent way. The prayers at Paradise Farm could be done in conjunction with the natural beauty of the physical landscape. According to the CCWA, this experience left an indelible mark on the children as they prayed. The CCWA constructed of the natural landscape of camps as a spiritual place of healing. They reimagined its value from a physical health perspective to a spiritual one.

The spiritual connection described above between children and nature can be seen in social reform efforts that occurred at the same time. In designing parks, city planners recognized the same principles that guided the CCWA in establishing camps. While some believed that the park was a place where the working class could recuperate and re-energize, concern for the morality of leisure time also influenced the design of recreational spaces. A visit to Paradise Farms was an extended stay in a reflective, spiritually engaging environment. Parks were miniature versions of that same environment, situated within the city. Certainly, reformers focused on the impact of parks on the physical health of patrons, but like at Paradise Farm, the working class could also receive the spiritual benefits of reconnecting to a “nature” not often found in the urban environment. Urban parks served a variety of functions for those that utilized them. At parks, people could play, relax, exercise, build community, and gain spiritual insight through a connection with nature.⁶⁷ Children who benefited from the spiritual uplifting found in parks could then return to work refreshed and ultimately more productive.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ 1930 Annual Report, Box 1, Children’s Country Week Association Records

⁶⁷ Robin Bachin, "Cultivating Unity: The Changing Role of Parks in Urban America," *Places: Forum of Design for the Public Realm* 15, no. 3 (2003). The history of urban parks in America is pg. 29

Influencing Families

Beyond impacting the children who boarded the “Paradise Special”, the CCWA train to the countryside each Thursday in the summer months, the CCWA aimed to bring about broader change by serving entire communities. They found success in two ways. First, the children they hosted would return home with renewed energy and teach their families the lessons they have learned. Second, in an effort to increase community outreach, they began hosting mothers and children for one-day picnics in order to provide them with a dose of the reenergizing benefits of nature. In order to maximize their impact, the CCWA relied on the children they served to act as stewards of moral and spiritual influence. They aimed to equip as many families as possible with the moral and spiritual betterment that could be found in the countryside.

The influence of the upstanding host families reached beyond the children they hosted. In 1895, the Annual Report cites one child’s experience after returning home from the countryside: “Another child, on her return from a minister’s family, wanted to ask a blessing, but her father cursed her. That night she taught the little ones their prayers for the first time; her father and mother were drunkards; her visit to the country was the means of reforming the family.”⁶⁹ In keeping with the tradition of social work in the nineteenth century, the family was a site of much social reform. The CCWA showed that they participated in the betterment of not only the child, but also their families. By virtue of one week with a minister’s family, an entire

a well-documented field. For more information on the development and purposes for urban parks, please see Galen Cranz, "The Politics of Park Design. A History of Urban Parks in America." *The Politics of Park Design. A History of Urban Parks in America.* (1982). Roy Rosenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar, *The Park and the People: A History of Central Park* (Cornell University Press, 1992). Dorceta E. Taylor, "Central Park as a Model for Social Control: Urban Parks, Social Class and Leisure Behavior in Nineteenth-Century America," *Journal of Leisure Research* 31, no. 4 (1999), 420-477.

⁶⁸ George Torkildsen, *Leisure and Recreation Management*, 5. ed. ed. (London: Routledge, 2005) 72.

⁶⁹ 1895 Annual Report p. 9, Box 1, Children’s Country Week Association Records

family of siblings gained a spiritual connection to God. More than expecting the lessons learned in the country to trickle down to their families, the CCWA wanted to provide similar experiences to as many families as possible.

The Children's Country Week Association faced the challenge of high demand for their program and insufficient funding to expand it. In response to this growing demand, the CCWA partnered with several churches and communities over the years in order to host one-day picnics for mothers and children. For these families, the CCWA imagined that a picnic away from the city was akin to heaven. This is clear in a poem cited in the 1920 Annual Report:

To one who has been long in the city pent
Tis very sweet to look into the fair
And open face of heaven, to breathe a prayer
Full in the smile of the blue firmament
-Keats⁷⁰

The picnics provided relief to families “in the city pent” because of the connection between the country sky and the heavens above. Without this implicit relationship between nature and spirituality, such trips would have lacked the nobility of cause that justifies the expense.

The CCWA hosted these picnics in order to provide an event that both uplifted families, as well as to promoted a sense of community. The CCWA also spread “Christmas Cheer during the holiday season.”⁷¹ By providing assistance to families over the holidays, those families would be able to focus on celebrating the holidays instead of thinking about where to buy presents and or a Christmas dinner. The CCWA wanted to make life easier and more enjoyable for the families it served. By ensuring that families would be fed and supplied with gifts, the CCWA supported family efforts to celebrate and reflect during the holiday season.

Conclusion

⁷⁰ 1920 Annual Report, Box 1, Children's Country Week Association Records

⁷¹ 1930 Annual Report p. 11, Box 1, Children's Country Week Association Records

As an organization, the CCWA did not promote one religion or practice of spirituality over another—it served as a space for spiritual growth and connection for many children in its care. In redefining the value of the country as a site for spiritual and moral development, the CCWA responded to changing ideas about children’s health needs. The CCWA leaned into the cultural notion of the benefits of a spiritual life in nature, drawing on ideas about the value of the Protestant work ethic and the importance of helping children engage in morally and spiritually sound lives.

The country remained at the center of the model used by the CCWA—even in a time of great transition, from the family structure to the camp structure, the ability to escape the city retained its importance. Yet the Annual Report writers made clear that the value of the country lay in its ability to strengthen children spiritually. The country’s importance evolved from its origins in addressing primarily the physical health of the children served to assisting in the development of children’s spiritual health.

Later on, the CCWA’s focus grew to encompass the production of strong, American citizens. The lessons taught about nature’s connection to spirituality and morality became absorbed into the conversations about what it means to build a strong American citizen out of these poor, hodge-podge groups of children.

CHAPTER THREE: CIVIC HEALTH

Around the beginning of the twentieth century, at the same time as the CCWA began focusing on the spiritual development of the children it served, it also began to prepare children for their role in a nation that was in the midst of establishing itself as an important player on the global stage. In the United States, anxieties abounded over immigration, the economy, and the United States' political role on the global stage. This fear fostered the creation of a set of cultural values that lead many organizations, including the CCWA, to emphasize morality and strong citizenship in their programming. Strong, moral children would grow into strong, moral adults. The CCWA used their camp environment as the tool by which children could learn how to participate as the kind of upstanding, unified Americans that adults hoped to create.

This chapter argues that the concern over national cohesion and fortitude in the first half of the 20th century expanded the definitions of “health”. By increasingly emphasizing the importance of strong, American value-driven citizenship, the CCWA joined a cohort of camps, organizations, and public planners who aimed to mold America through a uniquely “American” relationship with the outdoors. In order to address fears that America lacked civically minded citizens, organizations like the CCWA altered the way they talked about the health benefits of spending time in the countryside. Critically, these organizations exposed children to the country because of the civic benefits found in a relationship with the great outdoors. This association between citizenship and the American countryside has its roots in the promotion of a frontier ideology that praised the people who forged their way through the uniquely American natural landscape.

Creating a Stronger America

The Children's Country Week Association was not alone in its endeavors to support children in their development as strong and value-driven members of society. Along with organizations like the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) and the Boy Scouts of America, the founding members of the CCWA believed in establishing their work in the spirit of social duty. These organizations subscribed to the same notion that both competence in "outdoor life" and a strong set of morals were critical in the formation of stronger citizens.

All three of these institutions valued life in camp as a means for character-building for children.⁷² The founder and first Chief Scout of the Boy Scouts Robert Baden-Powell suggested that the demise of every great empire can be attributed to the lack of "good citizenship."⁷³ Juliette Low, founder of the Girl Scouts of America believed that in order partake in the betterment of society, girls must lead fulfilling lives outside their homes.⁷⁴ The sentiment held by many within the Girl Scouts of America during its early years was that a relationship with nature fostered a connection with the greater whole of the world. Further, the girl scouts believed that the ability to form positive relationships with nature demonstrated one's own character; interactions with nature served as a moral measuring stick.⁷⁵

In 1912, The Children's Country Week Association succinctly described itself as "a corporation whose assets are fresh air and sunshine; whose output is healthy happy childhood,

⁷² The Young Men's Christian Association originally did not serve children, however at the beginning of the twentieth century, efforts to include boys in their work to aid in the development of strong Christian men began with the establishment of camps, wherein morals and values were instilled by way of outdoor life. For more information see, Pamela Bayless, *The YMCA at 150 : A History of the YMCA of Greater New York, 1852-2002* (United States: , 2002) 84-86. <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/004303926>.

⁷³ Brad Beaven, *Leisure, Citizenship and Working-Class Men in Britain, 1850-1945* (Manchester: Manchester University Press 97.

⁷⁴ Girl Scouts of the, USA and Betty Christiansen, *Girl Scouts : A Celebration of 100 Trailblazing Years* (New York: Abrams, 2011). [https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/\[SITE_ID\]/detail.action?docID=5184811](https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/[SITE_ID]/detail.action?docID=5184811).

⁷⁵ Susan A. Miller, *Growing Girls* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers Univ. Press, 2007) 130-131.

remade by contact with Nature.”⁷⁶ The CCWA’s claim that Nature “remade” children into healthier, happier versions of themselves indicates that there is a process at work which produces children with improved character. This remolding process at camp fits within a broader cultural trend towards “Americanizing” that occurred due to fears that immigrants wouldn’t assimilate in a variety of institutions at the time.⁷⁷ Literally, the countryside acts here as a tool by which children are remade. Writers of the Annual Report contribute to the reimagination of the countryside as a site on which children could learn to embed American values in their very core. According to Book Two of the Practical Health Series published in 1925, “One of the best things about camping is its lesson of self-reliance. Camping teaches one to be inventive, to get along, and to overcome difficulties.”⁷⁸ By camping, children learned to value the characteristics that made for good citizens.

The CCWA distinguished itself from the boy and girls scouts in an important way—while those organizations emphasized the survival and wilderness aspects of nature, Paradise Farm camps would be an intermediary between civilization and the wild. It would be a place to grow a community of better Americans. By 1920, the CCWA articulated the impact of they hoped to achieve in their work: “Healthy happy children are the greatest assets any community can possess.”⁷⁹ This change in language demonstrates that by 1920, the CCWA believed its work contributed directly to the asset development of communities. Before, the logic underlying the Children’s Country Week Association’s work was one of providing for the less fortunate because of a sense of moral duty. In the early twentieth century, this logic became intertwined with ideas about a social responsibility to create a population of strong American citizens out of all

⁷⁶ 1913 Annual Report p. 11, Box 1, Children’s Country Week Association Records

⁷⁷ Leslie Paris, *Children's Nature* (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 376..

⁷⁸ J. Mace 1881-1942 Address, *Health and Good Citizenship* (United States: , 1925) 2.

⁷⁹ 1920 Annual Report p. 6, Box 1, Children’s Country Week Association Records

children, not just those children belonging to the upper and middle classes. Unlike children in the middle and upper classes, the children served by the CCWA needed help to find their way to the countryside because they both couldn't afford to go on their own and because they needed to learn to establish civic values like loyalty, pride, and duty to country apart from the urban environments where life was too segmented (physically and culturally).

The work of building stronger citizens did not only occur in institutions like the YMCA, the CCWA, and the Scouts. Urban planners designed city space in order to encourage American pride and values. More than just trying to revive the spirit of park-goers, cities and park designers worked together to create and maintain parks that provided city-dwellers some of the moral civic benefits that were enshrined at the founding of the nation.⁸⁰ The CCWA's work aligned with the goals of urban parks because it shared a foundational belief in nature's ability to promote civic pride and democracy. Parks and country living contributed to the creation of a unified, value-driven group of American children.

The purchase of Paradise Farms and subsequent establishment of several permanent camps permitted an important transition to occur. Before the formation of these camps, it would have been challenging to forge a strong sense of community. Entertainers who hosted children lived in homes spread out across the Delaware Valley Region surrounding Philadelphia and the capacity for even the "houses of our own" or rented boarding homes run by the CCWA would have been small and impermanent. The recreation that children engaged in while at camp greatly influenced their experience. A description of a day at camp is described in the 1930 Annual Report: "Such full days—drills, swimming, games, stunts, camp fires, treasure hunts, music,

⁸⁰ Bachin, "Cultivating Unity: The Changing Role of Parks in Urban America,"

stories—what developing influences!”⁸¹ These activities are a part of the “ideal camp atmosphere”⁸² that the CCWA provided for children. This marks an important transition in the environment that contributes to well-being. Recall that the CCWA purchased Paradise Farms nearly two decades before. The camp environment replaced country homes as the “ideal” location for the molding of future Americans. While still emphasizing the restorative power of nature, the CCWA also pointed specifically to the invigorating impact of camp as “the best of mental and moral influence, marvelous daily routine—out in the sunshine, a body builder and a spiritual awakener.”⁸³ The confluence of routine, mental and moral influence, and sunshine created the specific camp environment in which children thrived. With two weeks in the sunshine at camp, children could expect to find themselves holistically better than they were when they first arrived.

After Paradise Farms began operations in the 1910s, the writers of the Annual Reports could more accurately describe the ways in which their services were contributing to the children’s ability to participate in community. Children functioned not simply as an economic asset, but also as a cultural asset that promoted American ideals in the second half of the century during the interwar period. The health of the citizen became civic duty as well as a social concern. According to experts on public health in the 1920s, good citizenship entailed caring for one’s health: “Ex-President Taft once said that it was the first duty of a citizen to be healthy. This is a new thought about citizenship. [...] We now know that one of the duties and opportunities of citizenship is to be healthy and to promote the health of home, community, city

⁸¹ 1930 Annual Report p. 12, Box 1, Children’s Country Week Association Records

⁸² 1930 Annual Report p. 9, Box 1, Children’s Country Week Association Records

⁸³ 1930 Annual Report p. 9, Box 1, Children’s Country Week Association Records

and state.”⁸⁴ The community at Paradise Farm camps took on the opportunity to produce good citizens by attending to the physical health of its campers as well as by instilling American values in them. The establishment and maintenance of the camp community could only occur in the country because of the imagined “American-ness” of the country. In order to create solid American workers for the cities, the CCWA needed to help them become good “American” citizens. This work occurred through these communities because they encouraged children to be cooperative, self-reliant, and healthy.

The Children’s Country Week Association saw itself as providing children the skills they needed in order to become better community members and citizens. After winning World War II, the United States had established itself securely as a major world power. Concerns over maintaining that world order manifested themselves at the Children’s Country Week Association when it responded by promoting about American identity and unity. At this point in time, for example, the CCWA wrote :

The boys and girls of today need to be trained to live together in the community, to respect the rights of others, to learn the value of community property, to cooperate with fellow students or campers for the common good... in other words to learn something of the ideals which made America great in the past, and to try, as they grow older, to rekindle that spirit for the America of today.⁸⁵

The work done by the Children’s Country Week Association to revive the children’s spirits would be conferred to the nation as a whole because of what those children learned at camp. Harkening to some unspecified past, this rhetoric demonstrates the concern over maintaining American “greatness”. And according to the CCWA, this greatness can be achieved by bolstering the economy and nation with a citizenry who retain the “spirit of America”.

⁸⁴ Address, *Health and Good Citizenship*

⁸⁵ 1953 Annual Report, Box 1, Children’s Country Week Association Records

The CCWA and organizations like it believed that camp created strong, cooperative, and moral children. Implicit in this belief was that the children wouldn't live together well without the training they received at camp. The camp administrators harkened back to some glorified past in which there was a spirit of America—those running Paradise Farm saw themselves as a crucial component to the fight to “rekindle the spirit of America.” Indeed, it took “men of vision who, in the short time these children are under their care, seek to establish a pattern for living” to direct camp activities.⁸⁶ Counselors selected to work at Paradise Farms were young people who provided a “fine example of leadership.” Not only were these people well-qualified to work with children, they exhibited the very same qualities that they hoped the children would adopt as a result of their time at Paradise Farms.

The CCWA demonstrated their role in the creation of upstanding citizens by following up with campers a number of years after they attended Paradise Farms. In introducing these Paradise Farms alumni, the editors of the 1968 annual report write “Here are just a few of many who have found their place in the world and are productive citizens.”⁸⁷ The Children's Country Week Association measured its program's success by the productivity and evidence of good citizenship of former Paradise Farms campers.

Conclusion

The Children's Country Week Association “had one object—to provide vacations for the children of Philadelphia who needed them most.”⁸⁸ Those children needed more than nutritious food, fresh air, and exercise. They needed strong American guidance. The Children's Country Week Association saw itself as shaping the well-being of children in order to produce a specific

⁸⁶ 1953 Annual Report, Box 1, Children's Country Week Association Records

⁸⁷ 1968 Annual Report, Box 1, Children's Country Week Association Records

⁸⁸ 1947 Annual Report, Box 1, Children's Country Week Association Records

type of citizen who would contribute to American well-being and prosperity. A key shift in the interpretation of the benefits of the country environment occurred after the 1912 purchase of Paradise Farm. Organizations believed that nature and the countryside could still contribute to the construction of healthy children, but the benefits conferred onto children had to do with the creation of better citizens.

Organizations like the Children's Country Week Association carved out roles for themselves in aiding the well-being of children. Without instilling strong American values in children, the United States might not have maintained its position as world superpower. So while treatment of children's physical health in the medical sense became a highly specialized, narrowly focused field, it is important to recognize that organizations like the CCWA were expanding definitions of health and well-being to include the health of the citizen. The specific environment in which one could become "American" mattered: the country and the camp environment encouraged children to work together. It fostered a community that promoted civic duty and duty to fellow man. The CCWA and other organizations figuratively reconstructed the American countryside in order to address fear that the changing American populace would not be strong enough to withstand the demands of a changing world. The country became a place where communities could build good citizens.

CHAPTER FOUR: PSYCHOSOCIAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL HEALTH

In the second half of the twentieth century, the CCWA approached children's health by redefining their emphasis from the morality of children to one that prioritized developmentally sound children. This pivot occurred at the same time that the field of pediatrics and the scientific community began to emphasize psychosocial development in the care of children. Coined "the new pediatrics" by academics in newly emerging field of pediatric psychology, this movement situated research on and attention to childhood social and psychological development within the broader goals of the field of pediatrics.⁸⁹ As the objectives of the field of pediatrics and those of camps like the CCWA became more closely aligned, the CCWA attempted to quantify children's development. This focus on producing a record of measurements shows how the CCWA saw itself functioning as complementary to pediatric developmental interventions.

The CCWA occupied a unique position in serving as a conduit for the scientific approaches to childhood development specifically for the children of the urban poor because they worked not in the home and not in the doctor's office. By adopting the language and practices of the "new pediatrics", the CCWA presented itself as an important component of the systems that provided for the care and development of children. The second half of the twentieth century saw the CCWA reimagining the country as place where ideas about children's psychological development and social group dynamics could be examined. As an environment, camp lent itself well to the development of these ideas because the limited temporal intervention combined with the intensity of the experience allowed the CCWA to capture a vast amount of data in a brief amount of time. This alignment between the "new pediatrics" and camp life is

⁸⁹ Dorothy Pawluch, *The New Pediatrics* (Taylor and Francis, 2017).

evidenced by the CCWA's collection of information on the families they served, the evaluation and comments on children's performance at camp, and the restructuring of camp programming.

This chapter makes the argument that with the advent of developmental pediatrics and the rise of quantification in medicine, "health" expanded to include the social wellbeing. As a case study, the Children's Country Week Association demonstrates how the trend towards measurement influenced the ways in which authority figures (like camp directors) evaluated children. With new tools like standardized surveys and ideas about childhood development emerging, non-medical professionals could access "health" expertise. The country environment remained at the center of this new observation—with the social and developmental growth of children best supported away from the city. Amidst a new emphasis on scientific methodology and data, the country retained its inherent value as it continued to foster communities where children established relationships, senses of self, and ultimately developed into socially competent and healthy individuals.

"The New Pediatrics"

Starting in the early 1960s, the "new pediatrics" movement emerged, emphasizing the importance of the study of children's social and psychological development as a subset of the field of pediatrics. Around the middle of the twentieth century, this movement gained momentum amongst pediatric academics. Though the name suggests otherwise, the "new pediatrics" described a return to the roots of pediatrics by focusing on childhood development as opposed to something entirely "new."⁹⁰ Also called ambulatory pediatrics or psychosocial

⁹⁰ Sydney A. Halpern, *American Pediatrics: The Social Dynamics of Professionalism* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Pr, 1988) 128-148.

pediatrics, this emerging movement reinforced child psychology as a critical component of children's health.⁹¹

The emergence of child psychology in the field of pediatrics in the 1960s helped to bridge the gap between psychology and pediatrics that began to grow in the beginning of the twentieth century. Early on, pediatrics as a specialty focused on very concrete applications of laboratory research to improve the physical health of infants and children. Pediatricians and public health experts focused on scientific feeding schedules and milk quality in the early twentieth century.⁹² There was no room for child psychology in such a field. Yet, by the middle of the twentieth century, the field of pediatrics responded favorably towards the psychological emphasis on the importance of "normal" behaviors and development.⁹³ The medical field grew to encompass more actors in the field of child health, like family practitioners. When birth rates began falling in the second half of the 20th century, pediatricians faced lack of work as a larger variety of professionals entered the field to perform more some of the tasks previously reserved for pediatricians. In response, pediatricians needed something else to specialize in. This shift in demand encouraged the field of pediatrics to expand its efforts to include developmental care.⁹⁴ Thus, the "new pediatrics" paved the way for the field writ large to incorporate emphasis on the psychosocial development of children in both research and practice.

⁹¹ Lara M. Genik, Jeffery Yen and C. Meghan McMurtry, "Historical Analysis in Pediatric Psychology: The Influence of Societal and Professional Conditions on Two Early Pediatric Psychology Articles and the Field's Subsequent Development," *Journal of Pediatric Psychology* 40, no. 2 (/03/01, 2015) 167-174. doi:10.1093/jpepsy/jsu084 . <https://academic.oup.com/jpepsy/article/40/2/167/2951780>.

⁹² Alice Boardman Smuts, "Scientific Child Rearing, Organized Motherhood, and Parent Education," in *Science in the Service of Children* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2005) 52.

⁹³ Lizette Peterson and Cynthia Harbeck, *The Pediatric Psychologist : Issues in Professional Development and Practice* (United States: Research Press, 1988) 8-10. <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001550396>.

⁹⁴ Dorothy Pawluch, *The New Pediatrics* 61

The field of pediatrics was not alone in focusing in on children's development. As we have seen throughout the history of the case study of the CCWA, other social institutions approached children's health with a more flexible mindset than the medical community. Environments and the countryside maintained their relevance at Paradise Farm because the CCWA reimagined its influence on helping children to regain their health and remain well, regardless of the major threats posed by society at the time. As the field of pediatrics expanded to include child psychology, camps like the CCWA reframed the work they did in order to address issues of behavior and "normal" development in the children they served, always using the camp environment as the space in which issues could be addressed.

Evaluation Cards: How to be "good"

The Children's Country Week Association kept extensive records on the children who attended their camps. After each child left Paradise Farm, their counselors filled out a double-sided evaluation card that scored children on a wide range of characteristics, ranging from obedient to quarrelsome. Each quality received a grade: "E" for excellent, "G" for good, "F" for fair, or "P" for poor. After rating each child on fifteen qualities or behaviors, the counselors then gave the child an overall rating and a recommendation for whether or not they ought to be invited back to camp the following year.⁹⁵ In addition to these ratings, counselors often made comments on the reverse side of the evaluation card. The commentary on camper behavior provides a lens through which ideas about children's value can be better understood. The counselors wrote stories and anecdotes that clearly show favoritism for some campers over

⁹⁵ These behaviors and qualities included cooperation, adaptability, cheerfulness, leadership, sportsmanship, sociability, worker at camp, obedience, enuresis (bed-wetting), bad language, quarrelsome, aggressiveness, accepts responsibility, destructive, and lies.

others. Even so, the characteristics which counselors praised tell an important story about what constituted a “good” child at Paradise Farm in the sixties and seventies.

In the eyes of the counselors, there was a fine line that children walked between being “good” and “goody-goody.” Helpfulness was praised, but only if it was respected by one’s peers. The distinction between what was praised and what was denigrated by the counselors was not always clear. Counselors, not childhood development professionals, wrote these evaluations and comments. Camp director Buster Petey⁹⁶ describes his hiring process in a 1959 report: “we have endeavored to employ people of excellent character. This is an important factor since the camper is under the personal influence of his counsellors twenty-four hours each day.”⁹⁷ The trust Mr. Petey placed in the counselors legitimize these evaluations to help understand how camps perceived the children in their care. Although the evaluation cards themselves were standardized, the comments left by counselors lacked uniformity in length and judgement. Even so, these cards lent legitimacy to counselor judgement on camper behavior.

One of the most common traits, obedience, emerged in many of the comments on camper behavior. Obedience as a characteristic is useful case study in understanding the nuance of expectation and evaluation of the children. While in some cases, obedience and respect for authority are considered one and the same, in others, overly obedient children are accused of being “goody goody.” One counselor wrote about this when describing one of her campers: “The thought foremost in her mind was to please the counselors. She was always willing to work and usually did a good job. Her obvious attempts to impress the counselors were cute at times but she

⁹⁶ This name has been changed to protect anonymity.

⁹⁷ 1959 Report of the Director of Paradise Farm 1959, p. 1, Box 2, Children’s Country Week Association Records

was also a tattler and tried to be a ‘goody goody.’”⁹⁸ While this counselor recognizes the camper for her work ethic, her counselor admonishes the camper’s motives. It is not sufficient to demonstrate good traits. A strong work ethic must be internally motivated.

This attitude towards obedience indicates that the field of childhood development served as a catalyst to shift expectations of children to more broadly include not only specific behaviors, but motivation and values that promote those behaviors. According to a parenting book published in the late 1930s:

Obedience is not responsible behavior. [...] The ‘goody goody’ child who always obeys and who never does anything wrong is not dependable; he is an irresponsible weakling with no ideas of his own and no courage. Put him in an unexpected situation where he has to think quickly and act on his own judgement, and he will show anything but adequate behavior.⁹⁹

The author, a psychologist and child welfare professional, denounces obedience for obedience’s sake. Children who are obedient are not leaders. The book where this passage appears describes in its preface its intent to describe normal behavioral development of children. This type of work supports the emergence of the “new pediatrics” by providing parents with advice on how to support their child to develop healthy normal behaviors. This advice aligns with the theory underlying the recommendations given by Dr. Spock, a well-regarded childhood behavior specialist and author who became popular after World War II. Dr. Spock promoted a vision of childhood development that encouraged challenges to authority, and denounced adherence to strict expectations of behaviors. His advice reflected the broader change in thinking about psychosocial development in post-war America.¹⁰⁰ The Children’s Country Week Association

⁹⁸ Registration and Evaluation Cards, Box 23-26, Children’s Country Week Association Records

⁹⁹ Harold H. Anderson, *Children in the Family* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company Incorporated, 1937) 60.

¹⁰⁰ Rima D. Apple, *Perfect Motherhood* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2006) 107-134. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt5hjbkn>.

builds off of this advice in praising children who are not necessarily the types of campers who obey without question.

The nuance of balancing obedience and leadership becomes further complicated by acknowledging the gendered nature of the evaluations and expectations for campers. Being “good” or better yet “excellent” meant something different for girls than it did for boys. One boy is given a “good” rating despite creating “problems in the cabin by ‘cutting up’ with the other boys.”¹⁰¹ Boys displaying “manly” qualities receive praise despite the destructive nature of their behavior. On the other hand, girls received the same rating but had to demonstrate few if any problematic behaviors. One female camper’s rating included the following comments: “She gets things done quickly and quietly. She seldom has to be told what to do.”¹⁰² Counselors lauded girls who displayed virtues like efficiency and silence, while they praised boys as leaders when they demonstrated rambunctious behaviors. Boys and girls did not attend the same camps at Paradise Farm—yet even freed from the influence of the opposite sex, gendered ideas about what characteristics were appropriate for boys and girls persisted.¹⁰³

Despite these differences, as boys and girls grew older, expectations for their behaviors at camp changed to reflect ideas surrounding childhood developmental stages. According to the evaluation cards, older campers were more likely to demonstrate leadership qualities. In part, this reflects the realities of a self-selecting group of older campers who were accustomed to camp life, and thus more capable of demonstrating the qualities that counselors praised.

¹⁰¹ 1967 Registration and Evaluation Cards, Box 23-26, Children’s Country Week Association Records

¹⁰² 1972 Registration and Evaluation Cards, Box 23-26, Children’s Country Week Association Records

¹⁰³ Abigail A. Van Slyck, *Manufactured Wilderness, A : Summer Camps and the Shaping of American Youth, 1890-1960*, NED - New edition ed. Univ Of Minnesota Press, 2006) 11. doi:10.5749/j.cttttgx6. <http://lib.myilibrary.com?ID=523161>.

Class entered the conversation when discussing the development of children served by the CCWA. The children who attended Paradise Farm camps were public school attendees from Philadelphia who demonstrated some sort of financial need. In addressing previous and potentially future donors, the CCWA co-opted the language of politics in order to justify their cause:

This is our, and your, war on poverty, fought in the minds of youngsters. We win a battle every year when these young people return home from camp with a better sense of sportsmanship, more able to take care of themselves and their belongings and inspired by the fine example of leadership of their counselors. Our supply lines being in the hearts of our many friends. You, and others, provide the monetary ammunition to keep our arsenal supplied with adequate good food, an exciting schedule of activities and young leaders devoted to the care and happiness of their charges.¹⁰⁴

Referring to President Johnson's "war on poverty" introduced in his State of the Union address in 1964, this excerpt shows the CCWA capitalizing on the national attention that social issues like poverty was getting in the sixties.¹⁰⁵ The politicization of the CCWA's appeals for donations aligns with a shift in national priorities. Before the war, the CCWA relied on appeals to people's sense of religious and moral obligation, whereas by the 1960s, social pressure to improve the conditions of the poor in America motivated donors.

Throughout its history, the CCWA distinguished its work by the socioeconomic status of the children it served. Although it strived to provide just as high quality programming as private camps, there were some key differences that existed as a result of this distinction. Supporters of the CCWA recognized the challenges faced by the population of children they served. Private

¹⁰⁴ 1968 Annual Report, Box 1, Children's Country Week Association Records

¹⁰⁵ President Johnson's establishment of social programs to alleviate and prevent poverty were a part of his broader vision to create a "Great Society" in the United States. For more information on the social policies enacted by the federal government, see Annelise Orleck and Lisa Hazirjian, *War on Poverty, the: A New Grassroots History, 1964-1980* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011). <http://lib.myilibrary.com?ID=326791>; Martha J. Bailey and Sheldon Danziger, *Legacies of the War on Poverty* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2013). doi:10.7758/9781610448147. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7758/9781610448147>.

camps also evaluated behavior and focused on the development of their campers.¹⁰⁶ Even so, the socioeconomic status of its campers required the CCWA to consider how its campers might benefit from tailored programming and initiatives. CCWA provided programming to encourage camper to complete high school because it recognized the value of education as a social equalizer. Supporters of the CCWA spoke at conferences lauding these efforts on behalf of Paradise Farm camps. In describing one purpose of camp programming, a supporter wrote that the CCWA aimed “to encourage these youngsters to express themselves in a group, and more importantly, to urge them to carry their education as far forward as they possibly can, sure through high school.”¹⁰⁷ The programming provided to the young adults in their care emphasized group sharing and continuing education because according to the popular interpretation of developmental psychology, those were the things that would help them develop into productive and healthy adults.

Changing Structure of Camp Life

In addition to programming centered on the developmental growth of children, the CCWA concerned itself with structuring the entire camp experience around the promotion of healthy development. From seemingly small choices about procedural aspects of camp life to the physical architecture and structural choices made about the camp environment, camp administrators and Board members handled each decision with special considerations paid to how camp life best supported camper development.

In the 1960s, the CCWA considered meals and structure around them as critical for children’s social development. This harkens back to the history of the CCWA, when in the late

¹⁰⁶ Van Slyck, *Manufactured Wilderness, A : Summer Camps and the Shaping of American Youth, 1890-1960* xxviii

¹⁰⁷ New Century Guild Celebration Speech 1963, Box 2, Children’s Country Week Association Records

nineteenth century, the emphasis on nutritious family style meals was a signature programmatic component of a child's experience in the country. When confronted with a potential method for expediting meals by instituting a new line-based procedure, members of the board objected. They were concerned that "a cafeteria line promotes shoving, pushing, and cooling food because children will not move along as quickly as adults."¹⁰⁸ Board members cited the social benefits to a family-style meal procedure, pointing to the values of sharing and cooperation instilled at mealtimes.

In addition to considering procedural shifts with an eye towards their impact on the psychosocial development of children, the physical architecture of Paradise Farm camps developed in a way that supported the social and personal growth of its campers. Many camps at this time established a standard for camp architecture that supported the goals of American camps. These goals included the formation of strong community bonds and values, supported by centrally located dining and activity halls and group living cabins.¹⁰⁹ The CCWA began updating its facilities with a mind towards the explicit uses of these structures. For example, the new recreation center that was built in 1959 served to shelter children in the event of poor weather. The capacity to continue programming despite inclement weather or darkness allowed further regulation of programming: "Soon plans and schedules were necessary so that it could be available for big boys, smaller boys, or the girls. [...] This major undertaking has been an outstanding contribution to the well-being of the Paradise Farm boys and girls."¹¹⁰ This addition to the camp is not "natural", but instead, it is a part of camp life that has come to replace the

¹⁰⁸ Paradise Farm Camp Committee April 5, 1960 Meeting Minutes, Box 2, Children's Country Week Association Records

¹⁰⁹ For more information on the influence of camp architecture, see Van Slyck, *Manufactured Wilderness, A : Summer Camps and the Shaping of American Youth, 1890-1960*

¹¹⁰ 1960 Annual Report, p. 8, Box 1, Children's Country Week Association Records

natural environment as an appropriate site for psychosocial development. The recreation center provides a central location in which programming designed to support the growth of campers can occur.

In addition to the physical structures at camp, programmatic camp structures surrounding leadership developed and were invented as a way for the campers to connect to the nature around them. In Paradise Farm camps and other private camps, adults encouraged children to demonstrate leadership by competing for various coveted awards. Native American culture is used at camp as an example of how to live in and with nature: at one Paradise Farm camp, the award of best camper is called the “Wa Wo Kiye” which means “one who helps.”¹¹¹ The appropriation of “Indian lore” functions to celebrate the accomplishments (largely based on their behavior and agreeability) of the children. The “Indian lore” also reimagines the value of the country—as a site of honor and tradition and mythical “otherness” the nature at camp deserves acknowledgment as a place where children can become the best versions of themselves. Tying ideas about “normal” development to an imagined Native American culture allows for that development to be rewarded in a way that would not be possible anywhere besides camp.

Conclusion

By embracing the developments in pediatric psychology, the CCWA proved its usefulness in contributing to the health of the city’s poor youth. The alignment of the medical and scientific community and the efforts on behalf of the CCWA shows the growing sense of importance of the work that the CCWA did for children. Instead of appealing to donors’ hearts for money, the CCWA adopted the rhetoric of the national agenda to end poverty. By using the

¹¹¹ Julian Harris Salomon, *The Book of Indian Crafts and Indian Lore* (Courier Corporation, 2000).

language of science and psychology, the CCWA proved its value as a site of development for the poor of Philadelphia in the 1960s and 1970s.

Camp administrators and board members imagined the camp environment to be both a site of development for campers as well as a site in which the evaluation of that development proved increasingly important to ensure the smooth operation of camp life. The evaluation taking place at camp could only take place because the children were able to form a community in the countryside in a way that they couldn't in the city. As a site of development, the country allowed evaluators to see children engaging with each other and with authority in a space that would promote social bonds and community engagement. A far cry from the country as a physically healthy environment, the justification for the continued existence of the country week lay in the country's imagined ability to provide spaces for careful and full development to occur.

CHAPTER FIVE: INTEGRATION AT CAMP

Amidst concern about “normal” development for children, the civil rights movement gained momentum in no small part due to the influence of social psychology on perceptions of equality and justice. The infamous “doll studies” conducted by Kenneth and Mamie Clark helped the prosecution win the now landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) in Topeka, Kansas.¹¹² As the realities of integration swept the country, the CCWA grappled with the implications that such a change would have on its programming. Careful to declare this move as not one legally required, the CCWA made the decision to integrate its camps in 1967.¹¹³

The process by which the CCWA integrated serves as a case study by which issues of race, psychosocial development, and organizational change can be better understood in the context of the 1960s. The CCWA’s process of integration both reflected and assuaged the fears of white camp administrators and parents through extensive analysis and planning in order to protect the white camper experience. Their efforts to protect the white camper experience

¹¹² The “doll studies” describe research done primarily by Kenneth Clark which ultimately showed that the “separate but equal” logic did not hold up to rigorous scientific testing. Black children demonstrated internalized racism through low self-esteem when presented with white dolls and black dolls. This research provided the evidence needed to overturn the decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson*. For more information on the process of researching this, see Ludy T. Benjamin Jr. and Ellen M. Crouse, "The American Psychological Association's Response to Brown V. Board of Education: The Case of Kenneth B. Clark," *American Psychologist* 57, no. 1 (2002) 39. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.57.1.38.

¹¹³ Director’s report 1964; The histories of desegregation in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s are well-documented. Acknowledging the wealth of literature on this topic, this chapter focuses on the work of the CCWA in response to the cultural and legal context in which it changed its policies. For more information on the desegregation of schools, see *The Desegregation of Southern Schools: A Psychiatric Study* Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith., Charles T. Clotfelter, *After Brown* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004), 297., Philip T. K. Daniel, "The Not so Strange Path of Desegregation in America's Public Schools," *The Negro Educational Review* 56, no. 1 (Jan, 2005), 57-66.

http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&res_dat=xri:bsc:&rft_dat=xri:bsc:rec:iibp:00240408.

manifested itself as an effort to manage the “natural” balance in the camp environment that the process of integration threatened.

In keeping with the increasing reliance on scientific evidence behind programming for children in schools and camps, the Supreme Court used scientific evidence in its majority opinion for *Brown v. Board*. For the first time, the courts relied on science, instead of legal precedent, in order to overturn a previous decision. *Plessy v. Ferguson*, decided in 1896, permitted segregation by declaring the possibility of “separate but equal” facilities, opportunities, and schools.¹¹⁴ In overturning this decision, *Brown v. Board*, in addition to many other factors, set in motion the social forces that ultimately resulted in the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.¹¹⁵ Though not the first Civil Rights Act, this 1964 iteration did the most in terms of legislation designed to end segregation by outlawing discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, or national origin.

As the national discourse shifted towards not tolerating discriminatory practices, the CCWA considered the impact that integration would have on overall camper experience. Previous to 1967, the CCWA segregated camps by race (white and black), religion (Jewish and Christian) and gender (male and female). While the camps remained separated by gender, the project of integration deconstructed the racial and religious separation. The CCWA regarded this issue as one that required delicate and thorough attention so as to protect the white children they served from the potential hazards they envisioned might occur if integration were done

¹¹⁴ *Plessy V. Ferguson, Plessy v. Ferguson* (163 U.S. 5371896).

¹¹⁵ While this thesis does not go into great detail on the Civil Rights Act of 1964, see the following for more information: Patricia Behlar, *Civil Rights Act of 1964*, (2017), 154-156.;David Benjamin Oppenheimer, "Kennedy, King, Shuttlesworth and Walker: The Events Leading to the Introduction of the Civil Rights Act of 1964," *USFL Rev.* 29 (1994), 645.;Daniel B. Rodriguez and Barry R. Weingast, "The Positive Political Theory of Legislative History: New Perspectives on the 1964 Civil Rights Act and its Interpretation," *U.Pa.L.Rev.* 151 (2002), 1417.

carelessly—indeed, the camper placement procedure committee provided recommendations in order to “enable us to accommodate the same number of white children as we did in 1963.”¹¹⁶ This fear resulted in several measures taken before Paradise Farm integrated in 1967. This fear infiltrated the promotional aspects of the organization’s work. They interviewed mothers of white children regarding whether or not they would agree to send their child to an integrated camp and the CCWA surveyed integrated camps to glean information on the realities faced by integrated camps.

Before taking the steps to understand how integration might impact daily life and retention of campers at Paradise Farm, board members considered how the influence of integration efforts around the country should affect their promotional strategy. Board members considered this in the 1963 executive report:

Will the promotion of CCWA focus enough attention on a “white” camp to cause any embarrassment if “colored” interests choose to make an issue of it? This should be carefully considered before any stimulated promotion program is put into effect. It is true that colored applicants are taken care of through University Camp, but Camp Paradise is all white. If our promotion program is too aggressive it is sure to come to the attention of people who could cause an uncomfortable situation.¹¹⁷

The writing of this executive report shows that the leading members of the CCWA understood efforts to integrate as a threat to the functioning of camp life. Even while the camps remained under capacity, camp administrators considered stalling promotional efforts because they hoped to avoid “people who could cause an uncomfortable situation.” The rhetoric employed in this internal document shows that the CCWA saw itself not as an actor in the arguments surrounding integration, but merely subject to the whims of those who might cause them trouble.

¹¹⁶ Report and Recommendations of Camper Placement Procedure Committee for the consideration of the board of directors of the Children’s Country Week Association August 21, 1964, Box 2, Children’s Country Week Association Records

¹¹⁷ Executive Report 1963, Box 2, Children’s Country Week Association Records

When confronted by recommendations to integrate Paradise Farm, the CCWA expressed several concerns. Indeed, someone did make an “uncomfortable situation.” In the 1964 Progress report from February to March, one item on the agenda addressed the problem of integration: “This was led (sic) by a colored gentleman who insisted that all public camping facilities be integrated, regardless of the consequences to the campers of the staff. A number of comments convinced me that we should clearly define our policy on this subject and adhere to it.”¹¹⁸ This quotation shows a few important things—the Executive Director imagined important consequences would arise from integrating Paradise Farm. The identity of the “gentleman” delegitimized his call for full integration and permitted the leadership of the CCWA to further forestall the project of integration until the “consequences” (presumably those for white families and children) could be better understood. The process of integration began long before black children and white children camped together. It started with the CCWA endeavoring to research how best to minimize these consequences.

In an effort to gauge how white families who already attended Paradise Farm would respond to camp integration, the CCWA surveyed fifty-one adults who were registering their child for camp. Miss Davids¹¹⁹, the woman in charge of intake interviews for new families, finished her interview by asking the adult if they would send their child to Paradise Farm if the camp were to integrate. This question prompted one of three responses: forty-one responded yes, six responded no, and four said they were undecided. According to an internal report on integration, the most common comment was “these children go to school with colored children and play with them so why not go to camp with them.” There were some qualifiers given from

¹¹⁸ 1964 Progress Report March to February 1947 Annual Report, Box 2, Children’s Country Week Association Records

¹¹⁹ This name has been changed to protect anonymity.

parents who responded “yes”; however, most were concerned with ensuring that integration would occur with care in order to protect white children.¹²⁰ The Camper Placement Procedure Committee relied on the primarily tolerant attitudes of parents in their report and recommendations to the Board of Directors of the CCWA on the feasibility and impact of integration.¹²¹

The CCWA responded to concerns over proper integration strategies because parental input as well as overall societal concern over integration required data-driven interventions to quell fears of race riots and programmatic decline. In the 1960s, experts in child psychology and education acknowledged that desegregation and integration were not the same concept, and that to integrate effectively, required more care than simply permitting access to places and institutions to all races. One academic wrote “Integration as an educational policy involves steps that go further than simply putting students from different cultural backgrounds under the same roof.”¹²²

At the CCWA, concern over gangs, staff capacity for handling integration, and ability to control the pace and structure of integration guided much of the discourse surrounding integration. In order to better understand what faced the CCWA were Paradise Farm to integrate, the CCWA conducted a study visiting ten integrated camps in Eastern Pennsylvania. Each camp was a member of the American Camping Association, enrolled children with similar socioeconomic backgrounds as the CCWA, charged similar rates for campers as the CCWA, and

¹²⁰ Report of Surveys Made Among Parents of New Campers and Integrated Agency Camps in Eastern Pennsylvania, Box 2, Children’s Country Week Association Records

¹²¹ Report and Recommendations of Camper Placement Procedure Committee for Consideration of the Board of Directors of the Children’s Country Week Association, August 21, 1964, Box 2, Children’s Country Week Association Records

¹²² Eli Ginzberg, *Values and Ideals of American Youth* (New York, London: Columbia University Press, 1961) 201.

was integrated with varying proportions of racial differences.¹²³ The report concluded that not more than 30% of campers ought to be black—the report authors cited poor equipment, management, and control over children if more than 30% of all campers were black. Efforts to reduce “gangs”, “care should be taken to keep at a minimum the number from any one neighborhood for any single encampment. Likewise, colored campers should be spread through as many cabins as possible.”¹²⁴

This recommendation addresses one concern voiced by parents that are to be taken in order not to overwhelm the camp with “colored children.” The Camper Placement Procedure Committee assuaged fears about disjunction and conflict caused by black racial gangs by separating black campers from each other. Additionally, ages of campers was taken into consideration with the idea that younger campers would better assimilate to camp culture than older more “unmanageable” black children.

With all this research done, the CCWA began its project of integration in 1967, carefully tracking the successes, challenges, and failures of the programmatic shift. In describing the integration project, the Camp Weitzel Director reported “problems we visualized, failed to erupt, negro boys were good boys, they were gregarious and apparently accustomed to making friends, counselors responded to this challenge with tact and good taste, isolated instances of name-calling.”¹²⁵ By most accounts, the experiment was a tentative success, with many commenting that continued surveillance and structure be given to the project of integration for future encampments. Specific racial tensions did not emerge until the 1968 summer season—“the third

¹²³ Report of Surveys Made Among Parents of New Campers and Integrated Agency Camps in Eastern Pennsylvania, Box 2, Children’s Country Week Association Records

¹²⁴ Report of Surveys Made Among Parents of New Campers and Integrated Agency Camps in Eastern Pennsylvania, p. 2, Box 1, Children’s Country Week Association Records

¹²⁵ 1968 Maintenance Report, Box 2, Children’s Country Week Association Records

encampment saw our Negro boys of last summer return to us [...] The returning Negroes seemed to feel freer in discussing racial problems and did so on a number of occasions.”¹²⁶ The increasing willingness for black children to express their frustration was not met with much enthusiasm. In fact, the report suggested that staffer experienced anxiety surrounding this development.

The CCWA did not describe in detail what these “racial problems” consisted of. The writer expressed concern over how discussion of “racial problems” began to create tension even outside of the camp. The increasing tensions had consequences: “two factions had developed—one white, the other black—and that there had apparently been letter writing home—both groups attempting to muster up forces to meet at 30th street station.”¹²⁷ Clearly the issues were extensive enough that these tensions were felt outside of the camp community. The CCWA expressed concern that racial conflict would escalate, this is proof that it did. The health of the camp community was threatened by integration. Despite the carefully considered measures taken to avoid the interruption of normal camp life, the country environment could not necessarily escape the damage done by the very urban issue of integration.

After the second year of integration, one camp staff person concluded that “Paradise Farm Camps is not ready to integrate any further than we have done at this time.”¹²⁸ Fears over racial tensions thus limited the scope of the integration project at Paradise Farm Camps. Camp administrators saw the country environment succumbing to some of the same social problems that plagued the cities—indeed for the first time, the afflictions of human life threatened the country environment itself. The CCWA managed of the social project of integration in the

¹²⁶ 1969 Negro Situation document, Box 2, Children’s Country Week Association Records

¹²⁷ 1969 Negro Situation document, Box 2, Children’s Country Week Association Records

¹²⁸ 1969 Negro Situation document, Box 2, Children’s Country Week Association Records

country more easily because of its separation from the city and from the public institutions that required immediate integration. Even so, the imagined power of the country as a space for healing required protection and consideration for the first time.

Conclusion

The changes in thinking about childhood development described in the previous chapter informed the methods by which the CCWA prepared for and evaluated the project of integrating Paradise Farm camps. The CCWA responded to fears about the safety and well-being of white children who already attended camp by determining appropriate steps to take in integrating their programming. Unlike schools, programs like the CCWA were not legally required to desegregate, and thus were able to consider things like the age, geographic location, and number of black children they would host during each encampment. The “scientific” process undertaken by the CCWA mimics the science done to suggest that segregation had a net negative effect on black children; this use of measured planning reflects anxieties over how integration might influence white children.

As a case study, the CCWA’s integration tells the story of a camp seeking to cautiously engage in integration—but only if the project posed no threat to its white campers. The cautious management of this process reflects an effort to control the environment that has been helpful to children over the years. The fear that drove this process of vetting integrated camps shows that although the “country” could address the ills of modern life, it was not immune to these ills itself, and required careful consideration to protect.

CONCLUSION

Beginning in 1875, the CCWA aimed to improve the lives of children in the Delaware Valley Region. Since the CCWA's founding its core mission remained consistent: to send children from urban environments into the country to spend a week or two in the fresh air in order to improve their health and well-being. What has changed has been the CCWA's understanding of the benefits for children of this effort (and the adjustment of its goals in respect of those benefits). Throughout its first hundred years, the CCWA engaged the expertise of mothers, nurses, doctors, educators, and childhood development professionals in varying capacities as paradigms of children's health and development shifted. (?) Over the past hundred and twenty five plus years, approaches to children's health (indeed to most Western health systems) have emphasized clinical outcomes.

This thesis elucidates that there has always existed a more holistic approach to children's well-being. Proof of this can be found in the Children's Country Week Association as it centered its approach on the country and nature as an environment of healing and growth. A more reductionist understanding of the history of medicine in the United States might suggest that the bacteriological revolution transformed healthcare into the biomedical giant that considers the germ above all else. Yet, the CCWA and organizations like it provide proof that treatment of health and well-being extended far beyond the clinician's office throughout its history.

While the histories of pediatrics and scientific motherhood are more complete, this thesis concerns itself with answering how philanthropic social welfare organizations contributed to the perceptions of and support granted to children's health and developmental needs from 1875 to 1975. The work done by the CCWA represents a model of societal responsibility for caring for the well-being of children in America which extends beyond strict emphases on epidemiological

and clinical approaches to health. In considering the value added by Paradise Farm, the CCWA consistently reframed the utility of the countryside throughout the history of the CCWA's work in order to address the specific childhood needs dictated by experts in the fields of pediatrics, childhood development, and psychology.

The countryside in particular held value as a place where nutritious foods and healthy sunshine abounds, moral and spiritual influences motivate children to become better citizens, and the dynamics of childhood growth and development across varying physical and social environments can be tested and perfected. While the CCWA's rhetoric surrounding the benefits of the country evolved as ideas about differences between the city and the country changed, the emphasis on the country as a place of healing remained consistent. Indeed, ideas about why the country environment was essential for healthy minds, bodies, souls, and communities influenced approaches to philanthropic efforts for the urban poor youth. The country and camp environment remained flexible over this century, capable of conforming to new and emerging ideas about what constitutes health: including the physical, spiritual, civic, and psychosocial. From families to boarding homes to a single integrated camp community, the leadership of the CCWA served the children by providing for them the environment laden with cultural importance as a place of well-being.

As a case study, the CCWA shows both how those outside of the realm of science and childhood experts understood, applied, and changed the views on children's well-being historically. Of course, parent, doctor, and child expert advice and knowledge were all put to use at Paradise Farm camps over the years. Yet in many ways, it was the environment of first the country home, then Paradise Farm, and finally the integrated camp community that impacted the health of the child served by the CCWA. By acknowledging the importance of the environment

at Paradise Farm, this thesis expands the scope of environmental health histories to include the country camp environment.

Today, the CCWA continues to send children from Philadelphia to Paradise Farm in Downingtown, PA each summer. According to the current CCWA website, their mission as of 2018 is to “encourage children to open their eyes to the wonders of the outdoors and the possibilities of their own potential.” The “wonders of the outdoors” and “the possibilities of their own potential” are intentionally and inextricably linked at Paradise Farm. The CCWA has redefined potential and health over time—yet they can always be found in the countryside. The camp environment promotes the kind of health that is harder to quantify than that measured by the physician. Potential cannot be easily calculated, and wonder is hard to assess. Yet still, the CCWA occupies the unique role of temporary “Paradise” designed to promote health and well-being throughout the course of a child’s life. The countryside, in contrast to the city, is the place where children can develop and realize their highest potential.

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