

Taming “Bad Boys” of the “Dangerous Class”: Child Rescue and Restraint at the Victoria Industrial School 1887-1935

Paul W. Bennett*

In late Victorian Canada child welfare reformers perceived a growing number of neglected, dependent and delinquent boys caught in a net of rapid social change. These reformers sought to restore neglected wayward and delinquent youths to the “proper” condition of childhood through institutional forms and reforms that provided both “rescue” and “restraint”. The Victoria Industrial school was one institution which tried to rehabilitate boys from poor or working class families. By examining both the ideology and experience of the school, this paper demonstrates that the initial visions of child rescue evaporated as the reform school degenerated into a custodial total institution. Under that regime, society’s restless ‘bad boys’ were reduced, in spite of active resistance, to classed and pathologized subjects.

À la fin de l’ère victorienne au Canada, des réformateurs préoccupés de la protection de l’enfant se sentaient particulièrement concernés par le nombre grandissant de jeunes garçons négligés, dépendants et délinquants pris dans le filet d’un rapide changement social. Ces réformateurs cherchèrent par différents moyens de remettre ces jeunes rebelles et ces jeunes délinquants dans le droit chemin grâce à une série de réformes institutionnelles qui devaient pourvoir à la fois « délivrance » et « contrainte ». L’école industrielle de Victoria fut une des institutions qui essaya de réhabiliter ces garçons de familles défavorisées. En examinant à la fois l’idéologie et les pratiques de l’école, cet essai fait voir que les conceptions initiales en matière d’aide aux enfants se sont volatilisées au fur et à mesure que l’établissement dégénérait en asile. Sous pareil régime et en dépit de fortes résistances, les remuants ‘mauvais garçons’ de la société étaient classés et définis en tant que sujets pathologiques.

“[In the Victoria Industrial School’s first months] poor ‘bags of bones’, found in a deplorable state, have acquired the home feeling and habits of industry and obedience in the kindly atmosphere of the School”.

— William H. Howland, founder, First Annual Meeting of the Industrial Schools Association, *The Globe* October 31, 1887.

“We find...that [the] promiscuous commingling [sic] of the mentally normal, the sub-normal and the borderline, the physically normal and the defective, the criminal and the unfortunate, the young child and the adolescent, presents a hopeless task from the standpoint of education and correction...the present management is making splendid efforts to segregate the various classes of boys according to age and mental status, but are [sic] seriously handicapped by the lack of facilities”.

— Report of the Special Committee of Enquiry, Victoria Industrial School, 1921.

* Paul Bennett is Chairman of the History Department at Upper Canada College. The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Bruce Curtis, Wayne Roberts, Susan Houston and fellow V.I.S. researcher June Collins. Etobicoke’s resident local historian, Robert A. Given, and two members of the Chester Ferrier family, Graeme G. Ferrier and Enid Raymond, also provided valuable help in reconstructing life at Mimico in its later years.

"When all other agencies have failed...he may be sent to an Industrial School. Here... obedience and respect for law are inculcated and an earnest effort is made to create in him higher ideals of life and his duty to himself and others".

— Chester Ferrier, Superintendent, Industrial Schools Association, *Annual Report*, 1929.

In late Victorian Canada child welfare reformers focussed on neglected, dependent and delinquent boys who had fallen away from the ideal of childhood. All children, they believed, should experience what leading Canadian child saver John Joseph Kelso described as "the ordinary joys of childhood and the endearments of home ties."¹ But every large Canadian city was experiencing social changes brought by rapid economic growth and large-scale immigration, and each now had its so-called "dangerous class," or floating population of street children and wayward youth. The opponent freedom and independence of working class street life was considered by middle class leaders to be harmful to, and destructive of, youth.

Inspired by middle class urban reform zeal, groups of Canadian child savers and juvenile reformers expressed alarm over the growing "street culture" of newsboys, bootblacks, messenger boys and common vagrants.² Children who forsook ordered family and school life were labelled "restless," readily classified as "wayward," "truant" or "incorrigible," and considered prime candidates for moral reclamation or child rescue from their "downward course" to ruin. For many child rescuers, removing such children from the "dangerous class" and placing them in "family-like" institutions emerged as a favoured means of restoring them to a proper condition of childhood. As Toronto mayor and industrial school promoter William H. Howland explained in 1889, institutions could be effective in rescuing "wayward boys" from "a criminal career," and in implanting a sense of "home feeling" and "habits of industry and obedience" in their charges.³

Recent studies of childhood and youth in Canada, Britain and the United States have produced compelling interpretations of the child institutionalization movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Following paths broken by foreign scholars,⁴ Patricia T. Rooke and R.L. Schnell have argued that child welfare impulses were rooted

1. The prevailing middle class view of childhood in the late 19th century finds its clearest expression in Neil Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society; Framing the Twentieth Century Consensus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), pp. 13 and 115.

2. See Susan E. Houston, "Victorian Origins of Juvenile Delinquency: A Canadian Experience", *History of Education Quarterly*, Vol. XII (Fall 1972), esp. pp. 254-55; and "The 'Waifs' and 'Strays' of a Late Victorian City: Juvenile Delinquents in Toronto," in Joy Parr, ed., *Childhood and Family in Canadian History* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), p. 129-42. For comparative studies, see Louis Chevalier, *Labouring Classes and Dangerous Classes*. Trans. Frank Jelinek. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973); and Joseph M. Hawes, *Children in Urban Society: Juvenile Delinquency in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), esp. pp. 87-89.

3. Archives of Ontario (A.O.), Industrial School Association of Toronto Records (hereafter ISAT Records), *Report of Annual Meeting*, 1887, p. 257; and *The Globe*, October 31, 1887.

4. For the most influential international works on childhood and child institutionalization, see Philippe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* (New York: Vintage Books, 1962); Ivy Pinchbeck and Margaret Hewitt, *Children in English Society*, Vol. II (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973); Lloyd de Mause, ed., *The History of Childhood* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), pp. 1-74; Anthony M. Platt, *The Child Savers: The Invention of Delinquency* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969); Michael B. Katz, *Class, Bureaucracy and Schools* (New York: Praeger, 1971); David J. Rothman, *The Invention of the Asylum* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1971); R.L. Schnell, "Childhood as Ideology," *British Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. 27 (February 1979), pp. 7-28; and N. Ray Hiner and Joseph M. Hawes, eds, *Growing Up in America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985).

in a pervasive middle-class conception of childhood. Based upon the concepts of Philippe Ariès, they contend that this "ideology of childhood" consisted of four essential conditions: segregation, protection, dependence and delayed responsibilities. Fired by such middle class conceptions, child welfare reformers in English Canada sought to restore neglected, wayward and delinquent youth to their proper condition of childhood through institutional forms and reforms that provided both "rescue" and "restraint."⁵ Just as this middle-class ideology of childhood was a major impulse behind the drive to institutionalize all children in the common schools of Canada West (Ontario) in the 1840s, it was an equally significant factor in the early creation of charity homes for orphan children and the later reform institutions or foster homes for wayward youth. According to Rooke and Schnell, this independent class of youth, generally poor and ethnically diverse, was the last to be assimilated into the world of childhood through moral crusades, juvenile court reforms and other agencies of institutionalized rescue.⁶

Other interpretations of juvenile reform measures and institutions have also been advanced in the historical literature. In his standard work *Children in English Canadian Society* (1976), Neil Sutherland treats the industrial school movement, and particularly the Victoria Industrial School, as a "nostalgically old fashioned" interlude in the shaping of a twentieth century family-centred "social consensus" on the nature of childhood and juvenile correction.⁷ Steven L. Schlossman, basing his argument upon studies of the Wisconsin State Reform School from 1860 to 1920, has demonstrated the significant gap between juvenile reform theory and practice, between the ideals of family-oriented, affectional discipline and the realities of harsh and unchanged operations. More importantly, he has also contended that the creation of juvenile courts and detention centres, at least in Milwaukee, actually increased the caseload of delinquents because it permitted laws to be applied against such children for the first time.⁸ Challenging the traditional assumptions of adolescent depravity and restlessness, British oral historian, Stephen Humphries has argued that much of the crime committed by wayward youth was "social crime" born of grinding poverty and that all reformatories were essentially "institutions of class control, designed to inculcate discipline and obedience in working class children."⁹ Other lesser known, but significant studies by Diane (Indiana) Matters (1980) and Peter Seixas (1981), strongly suggest that North American industrial reform schools follow discernable cyclical patterns in their origins, institutional evolution, and eventual decline.¹⁰

5. Patricia T. Rooke and R.L. Schnell, *Discarding the Asylum: From Child Rescue to the Welfare State in English Canada 1800-1950* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983). See also R.L. Schnell, "Childhood Rescued and Restrained in English Canada," in Rooke and Schnell, eds, *Studies in Childhood History: A Canadian Perspective* (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 1982), pp. 204-12.

6. Patricia T. Rooke, "The 'Child-Institutionalized' in Canada, Britain and the United States: A Trans-Atlantic Perspective," *The Journal of Educational Thought*, vol. 11 (August 1977), esp. pp. 161-65; and Rooke and Schnell, *Discarding the Asylum*, Part II.

7. Sutherland, *Children in English Canadian Society*, chap. 7, "From Reformatory to Family Home." See also Andrew Jones and Leonard Rutman, *In the Children's Aid: J.J. Kelso and Child Welfare in Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), chap. 2-5.

8. Steven L. Schlossman, *Love and the American Delinquent: The Theory and Practice of "Progressive" Juvenile Justice 1825-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977).

9. Stephen Humphries, *Hooligans or Rebels? An Oral History of Working-Class Childhood and Youth 1889-1939* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), esp. chap. 8. See also Humphries, "Steal to Survive: The Social Crime of Working Class Children 1890-1940," *Oral History Journal*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Spring 1981), pp. 24-33.

10. Diane L. (Indiana) Matters, "The Boys Industrial School: Education for Juvenile Offenders," in J. Donald Wilson and David C. Jones, eds, *Schooling and Society in Twentieth Century British Columbia* (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 1980), pp. 53-70; and Peter Carr Seixas, "From Juvenile Asylum to Treatment Center:

A careful study of Ontario's first and most prominent industrial reform institution for boys, Victoria Industrial School (V.I.S.), not only lends support to aspects of these interpretations, but also provides a few new pieces for the puzzle of late nineteenth and early twentieth century juvenile reform. What began in 1887 as a child rescue venture dedicated to moral rehabilitation evolved gradually into a punitive school of educational rehabilitation and then became a kind of therapeutic institution of custodial care. The intent of the juvenile reform measures was never realized, largely because of the way in which the institutions and legislation were administered by Ontario authorities and the Toronto juvenile court established in 1912. In V.I.S.'s later years, being "sent to Mimico" meant confinement in a decrepit, regimented custodial institution with a mixed lot composed of hardened juvenile offenders, the mentally-deficient and the physically-handicapped. It became, according to one director of Toronto's Big Brother movement, a hard, cold-blooded reformatory that kept boys "half fed" and operated under a "barbarous and antiquated system."¹¹

I — VISIONS OF CHILD RESCUE:

TRANSFORMING THE "FAMILY SYSTEM" INTO PRACTICE

From its earliest beginnings, the Victoria Industrial School was heralded as a model Canadian experiment in juvenile reform. The driving force behind the establishment of the Mimico school was the Industrial Schools Association of Toronto, founded in June 1883 and spearheaded by William H. Howland and Toronto lawyer Beverley Jones. The Toronto industrial schools movement's leaders strongly believed in the reforming influence of institutions and expressed a spirit of idealism common in the city's urban reform wave of the 1880s.¹² Imbued with reforming zeal and a singular sense of mission, Howland, Jones and the other founders saw Mimico as the first "family-style" juvenile reform institution in Canada and an embodiment of the latest ideas about the reformation of wayward, vagrant and destitute youth. They claimed that V.I.S. was an institution which, by creating an ideal family atmosphere, would rescue vagrant, destitute and delinquent boys from "a criminal career" and provide for their reformation.¹³

Changes in a New York Institution for Children, 1905-1930," Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1981. Matters' study lent support to the cyclical model advanced in Carl Kaestle, "Social Reform and the Urban School," *History of Education Quarterly*, Vol. XII (Summer 1972), pp. 211-28.

11. This overall interpretation of V.I.S.'s institutional evolution is based upon A.O. ISAT Records, Series D, Box 5 (MU 1912), "History of Industrial Schools" file, J.J. Kelso, "Early History of Victoria Industrial School," private MS.; *ibid.*, "Victoria Industrial School", private MS: Chester Ferrier, Superintendent's Reports, *Report of Annual Meetings*, 1903 and 1930; and *The Toronto Daily Star*, May 1 and May 5, 1934, clippings in ISAT Records. A comparable assessment is offered in June Collins, "The Industrial Schools Movement in Toronto: The Victoria Industrial School," undergraduate paper, April 1984, York University, pp. 20-29. The Mimico pattern bears striking similarities to that of American reform schools as set out in Seixas, "From Juvenile Asylum to Treatment Centre"; and Barbara M. Brenzel, *Daughters of the States: A Social Portrait of the First Reform School for Girls in North America, 1856-1905* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983).

12. For a fuller analysis, see Paul W. Bennett, "Turning 'Bad Boys' into 'Good Citizens': The Reforming Impulse of Toronto's Industrial Schools Movement, 1883 to the 1920s," *Ontario History*, Vol. 78 (September 1986), esp. pp. 209-15; and Paul Rutherford, ed., *Saving the Canadian City: The First Phase 1880-1920* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), Introduction, pp. x-xi.

13. Canada, Royal Commission on the Relations of Capital and Labor in Canada *Report* (hereafter RC on CL Report), Vol. V, *Evidence-Ontario*. (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1889), Testimony of W.H. Howland, p. 162.

Like most child-saving reformers in late Victorian Canada, the founders of V.I.S. held a social environmentalist view of juvenile criminality. Since they believed that wayward children drifted into the "criminal class" because of the immoral, neglectful or evil influences of parents, family or friends, the route to rehabilitation lay in removing children from such bad influences and placing them in a proper home atmosphere where values of industry, sobriety and discipline could be instilled.¹⁴ And to that end, the Mimico founders set out to create a reform institution that emulated the ideal middle class family. It was designed according to the "cottage system" or "family plan" developed at Mettray in France (1840) and Red Hill in England (1848) and pioneered in North America at the Massachusetts State Industrial School for Girls (1856) and the Ohio Reform/Farm School (1857).¹⁵ As the school's first Superintendent, W.J. Hendry, explained in his 1887 report, the "cottage system" was one which worked small miracles in instilling "the home feeling" and in producing boys who "soon become quite contented, and take an interest in the place, their work, and also in each other."¹⁶

Unlike many such institutions, the Victoria Industrial School was said to be modelled after an idealized English public school or academy. "The industrial school," Howland claimed in 1891, "should be for those who cannot afford to send their children to a boarding school ... The Industrial School is the boarding school for the poor. That would be for the children who go about the streets, who are beyond the power of their parents, and who are now sent to the gaol...". The comparison drawn between Mimico and the private boarding school for children of the "well-off" class was a dubious one. Although the industrial school was designed to improve the lot of poor children, it reflected deeply held notions of social class and the strong influence of Jeremy Bentham's educational ideas. Each class — the upper class, the "middling ranks" and the poor — were to have their own, specially constructed, institutions. Practical training at an industrial school, like book learning at an English public school, was aimed at producing useful children, well-fitted to their future role in society.¹⁷

Education at the Mimico institution placed a heavy emphasis upon practical training and the acquisition of useful knowledge, in keeping with Benthamite ideas. Howland and the school's founders initially sought to produce boys who "may be useful to farmers" rather than lads skilled in the already crowded manual trades. "We should train [a boy] to use his mind, his hand and his eye together", Howland theorized in 1889, "and when you thoroughly train him to do that, when he is turned out, he will be able to learn any trade..." In line with this utilitarian philosophy, Mimico inmates were to be taught to do "anything about a farm" from the handling of horses to sowing and planting to simple carpentry work. If wayward and delinquent boys were trained to obedience, habits of industry and usefulness, so Howland believed, they would quickly find places as much-

14. A.O., RG 18, B-10, Box 1 *Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Enquire Into the Prison and Reformatory System of Ontario, 1891* (Toronto: Warwick & Sons, 1891), p. 693. See also Thomas Hassard, "The Industrial School," *Proceedings of the First Ontario Conference on Child Saving*, Toronto, October 18-19, 1895, in *Ontario Sessional Papers*, 1895, No. 29, Appendix, p. 26.

15. See Robert M. Mennel, *Thorns and Thistles: Juvenile Delinquents in the United States, 1825-1940* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1973), pp. 52-55.

16. A.O., ISAT Records, *Report of Annual Meeting, 1887* (Micro B96), p. 253.

17. *Report on Prison Reform*, 1891, p. 690. On Benthamite ideas and their influence, see Brian W. Taylor, "Utilitarianism and the Child: Jeremy Bentham," in Rooke and Schnell, eds, *Studies in Childhood History*, pp. 4-8.

needed Ontario farm apprentices, and eventually establish themselves on farms; “good citizens” would thereby be “manufactured out of so-called bad boys.”¹⁸

In establishing Ontario’s first industrial school, the founders chose a 50-acre site near the small village of Mimico about five miles west of Toronto. The school was located just north of the Great Western Railway tracks and a short walk from the Mimico station. The village of Mimico, which had been founded after the opening of the railway in 1855 and took its name from the Indian word “Omimeca” meaning home of the wild pigeon, was by the time of the school’s founding a Lake Ontario shore settlement numbering 100 to 200 people.¹⁹ A rural locale was chosen for the Victoria Industrial School because its founders, like most nineteenth-century reformers, associated crime with city influences and idealized the “countryside” as a place well suited to the uplifting and redemption of neglected, dependent and wayward children. And, even though the school grounds were only a short distance from Mimico, they were located “a world apart” from the lakeshore settlement.²⁰

The design and architectural layout of the Victoria Industrial School reflected the desire of its founders to create a “family-like” institution. Departing from the contemporary norms of penal architecture, consisting of large walled and congregate institutions, this reform school was built as a series of “cottages” or English-type family homes.²¹ Upon close examination, however, the facilities did not project much of a home-like, family-style atmosphere. The cottages at V.I.S. were large, two or three storey red brick buildings more like those of a boarding school than a family home. Certainly they bore little resemblance to the characteristic wooden frame houses inhabited by Mimico families.²² Each of the six original cottages housed some 35 to 40 boys who slept in large dormitory rooms with rows of beds lined up side-by-side.²³ A male and female “officer,” usually a husband and wife, resided in each building and exercised supervision over the dormitory, the bathroom and lower-level sitting, play and work rooms. The school’s dining facilities, along with other common activities, were organized on the congregate system, where boys were subject to close discipline and often forbidden to talk to one another.²⁴ In spite of the “cottage plan” rhetoric, the facilities were far from “homes” for the boys.

The day-to-day management of Victoria Industrial School was entrusted to the Superintendent, who wielded a great deal of power over the boys’ lives. In the first ten years the post was held by a succession of men — W.J. Hendry (1886-88), Donald J. McKinnon

18. RC on CL *Report*, 1889, p. 163; and Taylor, “Utilitarianism and the Child,” pp. 8-10.

19. For the early history of Mimico, see Robert A. Given, *The Story of Etobicoke* (Etobicoke: The Township of Etobicoke, 1950), p. 17; and Harvey Currell, *The Mimico Story* (Mimico: Town of Mimico and Library Board, 1967).

20. ISAT Records, *Report of Annual Meeting 1887*, Superintendent’s Report, W.J. Hendry, p. 23. See also Seixas, “From Juvenile Asylum to Treatment Center”, chap. 1. Mimico residents Graeme Ferrier, Enid Raymond and Helen Chisholm all describe the school’s location as north of the tracks, and “a world apart” from the village.

21. See C.J. Taylor, “The Kingston, Ontario Penitentiary and Moral Architecture,” *Histoire Sociale — Social History*, Vol. 12 (November 1979). On the cottage plan at the Vancouver industrial school, see Matters, “The Boys’ Industrial School,” p. 54.

22. This survey of the school buildings is based on a report conducted by the Office of the Inspector of Prisons and Charities, Ontario, December 7, 1894, in Ontario, *Sessional Papers*, 1895, Vol. 27, Part 3, pp. 118-20. See also *Report on Prison Reform, 1891*, pp. 102-3.

23. Ontario *Sessional Papers*, 1895, vol. 27, part 3, pp. 118-20.

24. Donald J. McKinnon’s testimony, August 15, 1890, *Report on Prison Reform*, 1891, p. 478.

(1888-91), and Thomas Hassard (1891-96) — who translated the reformist visions of the founders into practice. The admission of boys, the hiring of staff, school discipline and the "placing out" (or indenturing) of boys on farms or work situations all were handled by the Superintendent. Such were the prerogatives of the position that Superintendent McKinnon once boasted in 1890 that "No one interferes with me."²⁵

No school official exerted a more dominant influence over life at the Victoria Industrial School than Chester Ferrier, the school's longest-serving Superintendent. While he was at the helm, V.I.S. maintained a strict disciplinary regime.²⁶ Through all the investigations of — and inquiries into — the school's management and methods, Ferrier was the leading figure fending off the critics. Some contemporaries thought he was autocratic, antiquated in his approach to juvenile reform, and prone to labelling boys with the stigma of "sub normal."²⁷ Yet Ferrier was firm in his Christian religious principles, fervently patriotic in wartime, and took great pride in welcoming boys who returned years later for visits to the school. And when a stroke finally forced him to retire in 1932 at the age of 76 (after serving 36 years as Superintendent), V.I.S. had become, for all intents and purposes, Chester Ferrier's personal fiefdom.

II — THE BOYS OF MIMICO:

A PROFILE OF THE SCHOOL'S CHANGING POPULATION

Over the forty-eight year life of the Victoria Industrial School some 4,600 boys passed through the gates, during which time the nature of its entrants — and prevailing attitudes toward them — changed radically. From a reform school populated by just over 100 mainly pre-delinquent and wayward Toronto boys in 1889, the Mimico institution grew steadily to 146 inmates by 1900. After the closing of the Penetanguishene Reformatory in 1904, the school population jumped significantly, turning V.I.S. into a crowded public institution housing up to 300 mostly older and "hardened" delinquents from all parts of Ontario. Total population at Mimico peaked during the years 1913 to 1917, immediately following the creation of the Juvenile Court of Toronto in 1912 and extending into the war years.²⁸ (See Table 1) This evidence supports the contention of Schlossman and other scholars that juvenile courts contributed to increase the caseload of those branded "juvenile delinquents."

In the *Annual Report* for 1890, Superintendent Donald J. McKinnon expressed a sympathetic and optimistic view of the Mimico boys common among the school's founders:

"Our Boys ... Are they mischievous (*sic*)? Delightfully so. Sharp? Try them. Hot-tempered? Sometimes; but when a boy learns to keep his hands off the football or go 'out', he also learns

25. ISAT Records, MU 1412, Series D, Box 5, Miscellaneous File, "Notes on the Annual Reports, 1889-1930"; and *Report on Prison Reform, 1891*, p. 481.

26. Graeme C. Ferrier and Enid Raymond, Personal Interviews, April 11 and April 13, 1985. See also Salmon and Given, *The Etobicoke Press*, October 6, 1955, p. 4.

27. Salmon and Given, *The Etobicoke Press*, October 6, 1955, p. 4; and *The Toronto Daily Star*, May 1, 1934, p. 2.

28. See Table 1, "School Population, Victoria Industrial School, 1887-1933" for figures on the expanding size of the inmate population at Mimico. The effects of the closure of the Penetang Reformatory (1904) and the later transfer of better boys to the Bowmanville Training School are discussed in ISAT Records, MU 1412, Series D, Box 5, "Victoria Industrial School" private mss., pp. 2-3; and Andrew Jones, "Closing Penetanguishene Reformatory: An Attempt to Deinstitutionalize Treatment of Juvenile Offenders in Early Twentieth Century Ontario," *Ontario History* (1978), pp. 240-42.

Table 1 School Population, Victoria Industrial School, 1887-1933^a

| Year | No. of Residents /Inmates | No. from Toronto | Alexandra Industrial School for Girls |
|------|------------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------------|
| 1887 | 50 | 42 | — |
| 1888 | 62 | 49 | — |
| 1889 | 108 | 80 | — |
| 1890 | 146 | 108 | — |
| 1892 | 158 | 110 | 29 |
| 1893 | 185 | 131 | 30 |
| 1894 | 195 | 128 | 22 |
| 1895 | 179 | 103 | 24 |
| 1896 | 117 | 53 | 17 |
| 1897 | 110 | 46 | 19 |
| 1898 | 110 | 45 | 23 |
| 1899 | 129 | 25 ^b | n/a |
| 1900 | 146 | 31 ^b | n/a |
| 1902 | 160 | 29 ^b | 28 |
| 1903 | 160 | n/a | 28 |
| 1906 | 207 | n/a | 40 |
| 1909 | 241 | n/a | 90 |
| 1910 | 242 | n/a | (140) |
| 1911 | 266 | n/a | n/a |
| 1913 | 300 (avg.) | n/a | 98 |
| 1915 | 296 | n/a | 120 |
| 1917 | 300 | n/a | n/a |
| 1921 | 264 | n/a | n/a |
| 1922 | 252 | n/a | n/a |
| 1925 | 242 | n/a | 127 |
| 1926 | 234 | n/a | n/a |
| 1927 | 246 | 5 ^b | 139 |
| 1931 | 246 | 11 ^b | 137 |
| 1932 | 246 | 7 ^b | 142 |
| 1933 | 179 | 6 ^b | 145 |

Source: P.A.O., ISAT Records, Industrial School Association of Toronto, *Report of the Annual Meetings*, 1887-1933.

^a Selected years. Data not reported in certain years.

^b Figures represent number of committals only from Toronto and vicinity.

to keep his hands off other boys when he is angry. Not once a month does it come to blows. Disobedient? Certainly — if you don't expect obedience. Self-willed? The boy who is not will make a 'mouse of a man'. Selfish? Watch them when the baskets come on Visiting Day. See the boy who has a mother (and therefore a basket) 'divvy' with the boy who has neither. Sulky? Almost never. I have never known a boy punished one day who will refuse me a smile the next. Deceitful? Oftener than I could wish, but when we remember the 'schemes' of our own school-days we can forgive them. Liars? By no means. They may give a false colour to the truth, but a straight lie is rare indeed. I never before knew boys so ready to 'own up'. Thieves? Not at all. They have stolen, doubtless, but which of us has not? ... Hopelessly bad through hereditary tendencies? In very few cases. Our boys have all their share of 'Original Sin'; some have more; a very few are physically, mentally and morally incapable of conversion into really useful citizens. But a bad man's son ... well-trained, will in most cases do better than a good man's son ill trained.'²⁹

29. *Report of Annual Meeting*, 1890, Superintendent's Report, p. 18.

Thirty years later the "Mimico boys" had changed — and so had the institution. Its "entrants" were older and "harder," and the earlier faith in their salvageability had been severely shaken. Our boys, Superintendent Ferrier wrote bluntly, "have become beyond the control of all known agencies at work for children. They have appeared many times in our Juvenile and other courts for such offences as shop-breaking and theft." According to Ferrier, V.I.S. was a "school of last resort" where up to 25 per cent of the entrants "may be classed as sub-normal."³⁰

The records of the Victoria Industrial School's entrants give a clear picture of this metamorphosis. (See Table 2) In the beginning V.I.S. was primarily a school for boys, aged 7 to 14, classed as "incorrigibles", and committed by parents or family for such minor transgressions as persistent truancy and petty larceny. A sizeable proportion of committals were for what Stephen Humphries has called the "social crime" of working-class children, pilfering food, short-trading, or shoplifting to supplement family economies.³¹ Typical of such lads was Fred "J", a 7½ year old wayward boy committed in November 1887, who was 'placed out' in 1891 after 4 years and was reported in 1903 to be "doing well" living under a different name. Like Fred, most of these boys were termed "incorrigible" because, in the words of Superintendent McKinnon, "they sleep out at night, run away from home, refuse to go to school, or are suspended from school and have proved unmanageable by the parents or teachers."³²

By the 1920s the Victoria Industrial School's population had changed, but so had the system generating boys for the institution. Boys classed as "convicted juvenile delinquents" and "multiple offenders," aged 9 to 16, had become as numerous as the so-called incorrigibles in the school.³³ The closing of the Ontario Reformatory at Penetanguishene in 1904, the home care activities of J.J. Kelso's Children's Aid Society and the establishment of the Juvenile Court of Toronto in 1912 had all played their part in changing the volume and nature of entrants to Mimico. Indeed, V.I.S. became a dumping ground for the increasing numbers of boys caught up in the new juvenile justice system and too young for incarceration in adult institutions. Part of the change was also attributable to the activities of Ontario's mental hygiene movement. This movement, composed of groups of zealous citizens, saw the "feeble-minded" as a social menace and from 1911 onward supported all efforts to identify and segregate mentally handicapped children from the so-called "normal" population. Of the forty-eight delinquents sent to industrial schools by the Toronto Juvenile Court in 1912, for example, over thirty were classified by the commissioners as "mental defectives" sent to these institutions "to protect them against themselves."³⁴

A large and growing proportion of Mimico boys by the 1920s did have criminal records with convictions for crimes ranging from house-breaking and auto theft to assault

30. *Ibid.*, 1920, p. 15; and 1925, Superintendent's Report.

31. See Table 2, "Causes of Committal, V.I.S., Selected Years, 1898-1933".

32. Ontario Archives, Victoria Industrial School Records, Vol. 18, Historical Records, 1887-95, Case No. 49. Supplied to author by June Collins, York University. For corroboration, see Donald J. McKinnon Testimony, *Report on Prison Reform 1891*, pp. 475-76. See also Chester Ferrier's description of a typical "incorrigible" in *Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1903.

33. See Tables 2 and 3.

34. On the Ontario Association for the Care of the Feeble-Minded (founded 1911) and its activities, see Harvey G. Simmins, *From Asylum to Welfare* (Downsview: National Institute on Mental Retardation, 1982), Part II. The data on "mental defectives" is from City of Toronto Archives, *Report of the Juvenile Court, Toronto, for the Year 1912*, Information file: Juvenile Court. Dated February 11, 1913.

Table 2 Causes of Committal, Victoria Industrial School, Selected Years, 1898-1933

| Cause of Committal | 1898 | 1900 | 1902 | 1904 | 1906 | 1910 | 1913 | 1915 | 1917 | 1921 | 1922 | 1924 | 1926 | 1927 | 1929 | 1932 | 1933 |
|------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| Incorrigibility ¹ | 36 | 24 | 28 | 29 | 38 | 44 | 65 | 58 | 58 | 14 | 29 | 21 | 20 | 22 | 30 | 21 | 19 |
| Petty Larceny | 12 | 30 | 32 | 17 | 37 | 69 | 59 | 56 | 98 | 46 | 51 | 39 | 50 | 49 | 45 | 28 | 28 |
| Burglary ² | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 9 | n/a | 8 | 11 | 19 | 19 | 37 | 25 | 17 | 12 |
| Vagrancy | 0 | 1 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Assault ³ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| Other Causes | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 8 | 5 |
| Total Committals | 49 | 55 | 64 | 59 | 89 | 141 | 136 | 129 | 156 | 76 | 100 | 88 | 94 | 113 | 118 | 76 | 71 |

1. Including truancy and delinquency.

2. House and shopbreaking, auto theft.

3. Including sexual offences.

Source: ISAT Records, Industrial School Association of Toronto, *Reports of Annual Meetings*, 1887-1933 (Micro B96, Reel 1&2).

causing bodily harm. Fairly typical of the later entrants was Victor "F", a Belleville boy of English parentage committed to V.I.S. in March 1920 at 14 years of age. Although the cause of his committal was listed as incorrigibility, Victor had a record of several convictions for "theft, vagrancy & c." and was classified by Superintendent Ferrier as "a sub-normal boy" really "not more than 10 in mentality." In spite of a bitter two-year-long struggle to gain his release involving Victor's father, the local C.A.S. and even the Mayor of Belleville, the boy was not sent home until March 1923, three years less 5 days after his committal.³⁵

Many, but by no means all, of the Mimico boys were the products of what were known as "broken homes". At the turn of the century, about three out of four entrants came from homes where parents had died, separated or abandoned their children. In the final years of V.I.S., surprisingly enough, the figure was closer to one out of every two boys committed. The death of both parents was the least common cause of "broken homes"; at any given time only about 10 per cent of the lads were orphaned.

Superintendent McKinnon, recalling his four years at V.I.S. (1888-91), noted that a small minority of the boys came to the school from society's "better classes." Yet most entrants seemed to be the victims of both poverty and family circumstances. As A.J. Parker, the school's Visiting Inspector, observed in the 1915 *Annual Report*, "most of our boys come from the working classes..." where "poverty and crime are hand-in-hand." An alarming number of the Mimico boys were fatherless, which often meant that their families had no reliable sources of income. "In half the homes," Chester Ferrier asserted in 1927, "the conditions for a proper home training were not the best. The lack of a father for boys from 13 to 15 years is a serious one, for this is the critical time in a boy's life."³⁶

Poverty and job insecurities often compelled working-class parents to give up their boys to Victoria Industrial School. The case of Victor "F" of Belleville, who was committed to V.I.S. from 1921 to 1923, was repeated many times. Victor's father, Fred, was a self-described "workingman" from Bristol, England, and his mother Annie a woman with recurrent illnesses. After he reached seven years of age, Victor fell into bad company, ran the streets and stayed away from home so often that Mr F. could no longer afford to lose any more time from work hunting the lad down. Finally, after years of frustrating efforts to reform the boy, Fred and Annie made Victor a ward of the Belleville Children's Aid Society, and from there he was sent to Mimico.³⁷

Fred "F" was quite representative of most of the fathers of boys entering the Victoria Industrial School. School records for the five years from 1898 to 1902 reveal that the vast majority of Mimico boys were sons of workingmen and working women. Of the 278 lads who entered in this period, only some 176 (or 63 percent) appear to have had living fathers, and most of them were either unskilled labourers or unemployed (i.e., with occupations "unknown"). Few fathers had occupations which would have produced steady incomes, and few V.I.S. boys would have experienced much financial security in early childhood.

35. ISAT Records, MU 1412, Series D, Box 5, Miscellaneous File No. 2944, Victor "F".

36. David Archibald Testimony, *Report on Prison Reform* 1891, p. 701; ISAT Records, MU 1410, Series B, Box 3, Correspondence, 1921, File No. 20, D.J. McKinnon to Hon. R.H. Grant, Minister of Education, February 20, 1921, p. 2; *Report of the Annual Meeting* 1915, Visiting Inspector's Report, A.J. Parker; and *ibid.*, 1927, Superintendent's Report. See also *ibid.*, 1925 for further comments on fatherless boys.

37. ISAT Records, MU 1412, Series D, Box 5, Miscellaneous File No. 2944, Victor "F" to Chester Ferrier, June 6, 1921; and Committal Form, Victor "F", April 4, 1921.

Although a significant minority (about 15 percent) of the boys had mothers considered to have had "occupations" most of these women were struggling along in low-paying employment as housekeepers, washing women and seamstresses. For these working women and their sons, the future prospects must have looked dim.³⁸

Over the school's history, the changing nationalities and ethnic backgrounds of the boys reflected changes in the general composition of the population in Toronto and southern Ontario. In its early years the Mimico boys were overwhelmingly sons of the Protestant British-born. Of the 49 lads committed in 1898, the first year for which data is available, 24 (49 percent) had parents who were English, Scottish or Irish, and some 13 (26 percent) were of Canadian-born parentage. After the onset of early twentieth century immigration, a small but growing number of boys of American, German, Russian and "unknown" parentage were sent to Mimico. Among the minority groups at Mimico were boys of Black origin who averaged between 2 and 4 percent of the school population. After 1905, V.I.S. began to serve as a reform school for small numbers of "wayward Jewish boys," and a special Sunday morning class was established to provide some ten or twelve of them with time for Jewish Biblical studies. Like many minorities at that time, the Black and Jewish boys at Mimico were labelled as different in reflection of Anglo-Canadian racist sentiment. Few if any Catholic boys were admitted to V.I.S. after the mid-1890s when the Brothers of the Christian School, a Catholic order, opened St. John's Industrial School at Blantyre Park in East Toronto and those of Catholic parentage were transferred there.³⁹

Boys committed to Mimico were crudely classified by school authorities. From 1887 onwards little care was taken in classifying boys as "illiterates" and later as "feeble-minded." At the turn of the century it was commonplace for the school to receive ten to fifteen boys each year who could neither read nor write.⁴⁰ Once "mental testing" became popular, Mimico relied upon IQ test scores, and large numbers of committals were classed as "feeble-minded" boys. As at many other child welfare and custodial institutions, mental test scores were regarded, as a measure of innate or inborn mental capacity and little distinction was made between illiteracy and mental incapacity. Furthermore, this process consigned untold numbers of poor, illiterate Mimico boys to the educational scrapheap.

The Victoria Industrial School and its superintendent were certainly swept up in the Ontario mental hygiene campaign. As the school population climbed from 250 to 300 boys between 1911 and 1915, Ferrier feared that V.I.S. was being overrun by the so-called "feeble-minded." He charged that the deluge of "feeble-minded" boys was menacing the reformatory work:

At least 50 out of 300 now in the school are mental defectives according to the results obtained from the Binet Test. Some of these are hopeless cases who are incapable of mental development.

38. The foregoing analysis is based on the *Annual Reports* for 1898-1902.

39. Strong traces of racism are evident in the captions describing "African lads" and "Jewish boys" in *Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1915 and 1920. Dr Joseph Gollom, the teacher of Jewish religious studies (1925-28), provided information on the Jewish boys at V.I.S. (Interview, April 20, 1985.) See also *Report of the Annual Meeting, 1896*. Superintendent Report, p. 15; and ISAT Records, MU 1409, Series B, Box 2, Correspondence: 1896, Report of Apprenticing Committee, Roman Catholic Boys, January 23, 1896. Superintendent's Report, p. 15; and ISAT Records, MU 1409, Series B, Box 2, Correspondence: 1896, Report of Apprenticing Committee, Roman Catholic Boys, January 23, 1896. The St. John's Industrial School at Blantyre Park later moved to 127 Victoria Park Avenue in East Toronto and eventually relocated in Uxbridge, Ontario.

40. See Table 3, particularly the section entitled "Educational Level."



A STUDY IN COLOR



OUR JEWISH BOYS

The best we can do with them is to keep them employed in the most elementary activities of mechanical and farm work. They should be subjects for permanent institutional care. During the year we have succeeded in transferring only three to the Provincial Hospital at Orillia.⁴¹

These fears were heightened in the years following the opening of the Bowmanville Training School for Boys in 1925-26, when those classified as southern Ontario's "better" juvenile delinquents (i.e., minor juvenile offenders with an IQ of 80 and over) were sent to the new institution. Thereafter V.I.S did become a "school of last resort" and faced what Ferrier termed the problem of "the mingling of normal and subnormal delinquents in the same school."⁴²

III — WORKSHOP, CLASSROOM, PLAYGROUND, AND COTTAGE: THE MIMICO EXPERIENCE

The daily life of the Mimico boys, from the school's inception and throughout the Ferrier years, was highly regulated and routinized like most coercive "total institutions" of the time.⁴³ Under the daily regimen, boys rose at 6:30 a.m., spent 4½ hours employed in manual labour, attended school for 3 hours, engaged in Bible study and religious services for 1 hour, and bedded down at 8:45 or 9:00 p.m. each night. Almost every minute of a normal day was planned to keep the boys "busy" because, in the words of Superintendent Hassard, "idleness is a source of crime" and "as long as a boy is kept busy you will have no trouble in controlling him."⁴⁴ Even the 3 hours allotted for play out-of-doors was divided up into half hour and full hour segments of time. Except for the one hour of "free and easy" time in the evenings, the boys — like their counterparts in the French reform school at Mettray and similar American institutions — were under the almost constant supervision of officers, who oversaw the 9 or 10 working hours of every day; directed military exercises, and physical training; and checked cleanliness and supervised bathing. In addition, boys were employed in housework, knitting, laundering clothes and linens, cooking, baking loaves of bread, and serving their own food. It was all part of the V.I.S. approach to "training", designed to produce obedient and practical skilled boys or what Michel Foucault has described as "bodies both docile and capable."⁴⁵

41. For the origins and impact of the North American mental hygiene movement, see Leon J. Kamin, *The Science and Politics of IQ* (Potomac, Maryland: Erlbaum, 1974); and H.J. Eysenck and Kamin, *The Intelligence Controversy* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Superintendent's Report, p. 9. See also *ibid.*, 1914, p. 8; and A.O. Toronto Boys' Home Records, MU 4932, *Fifty-Fifth Annual Report*, 1913-14, p. 14.

42. ISAT Records, Series D, Box 5, MU 1412, "Victoria Industrial School," p. mss., p. 3; C.W. Topping, *Canadian Penal Institutions* (Chicago University of Chicago Press, 1930), pp. 52-55; and *Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1931, Superintendent Chester Ferrier's final report.

43. See Erving Goffman, *Asylums* (New York: Doubleday, 1961). The "total institution," as defined by Goffman, is "a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed formally administered round of life" (p. iii).

44. For details of the V.I.S. school routine, see ISAT Records, *Report on Annual Meeting for 1888*, Superintendent's Report; and Ontario, *Sessional Papers*, 1895, Vol. 27, Part III, pp. 118-20; Hassard, "The Industrial School," Ontario *Sessional Papers*, 1895, No. 29, Appendix, p. 26. See also Michael Katz, *The Irony of Early School Reform*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), pp. 194-95 on "idle hands" theory.

45. W.H. Howland Testimony, Report of the Royal Commission on the Relations of Capital and Labour in Canada, Vol. V., *Evidence-Ontario*, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1889), p. 163; and Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), Trans. by Alan Sheridan, p. 194.

"Visiting Day" provided a welcome break from the disciplinary monotony of daily life at Mimico. The first Saturday of every month at V.I.S. was set aside for visits by parents, friends and families of the boys. While many Mimico boys were labelled as "deprived, tough and unmanageable", Visiting Day revealed, on occasion, that they readily shared any "cake and candy" gifts brought to the institution by kindly mothers or sisters. Looking back on Visiting Day in the late 1880s and early 1890s, Superintendent McKinnon recalled that often "motherless ones had more to carry over to the next day ... than the boys who had visitors." But there was a limit to that selflessness. For, as school physician Dr. J.M. Cotton reported in 1890, the sick list swelled for a week or so after Visiting Day, as many boys overindulged in the "sweets" and other "dainties" brought in by visitors.⁴⁶

Dormitory life for the Boys was certainly spartan and severely cramped at times. The Victoria Industrial School's cottages, designed ideally to house 30 boys each, were jammed to overflowing for months and years on end, particularly during the peak enrolment periods 1890-95 and 1905-32. Cramped conditions in the V.I.S. cottages were cited by Superintendent McKinnon in the 1889 Annual Report as one of the school's greatest difficulties. In fact, the institution was so "overcrowded" and over subscribed that school authorities "fitted up a room in the main building putting it into the charge of a steady boy and giving him eleven roommates." With the exception of a brief period from 1895 to 1904, when school enrolment dropped as a result of J.J. Kelso's activities in promoting foster home care, overcrowding remained a chronic problem in the cottages. Lighting was also a major concern because, until the installation of an electric light plant in April 1899, the cottages were lit by a potentially dangerous and inadequate system of coal oil lamps. While the windows of the cottages had no bars, the bare dormitory rooms with rows of beds arranged side-by-side and head-to-head were strongly suggestive of a penal institution.⁴⁷

Under the Ferrier regime, boys were classified and assigned to cottages by age and size rather than "character". But hardened delinquents, the so-called "bad boys" of Mimico, often mingled with other "tender" lads and spread their criminal influences.⁴⁸ Escapes from the cottages under nightfall became increasingly common after 1900 as the average age of boys committed climbed to thirteen years, an increasing number had criminal records, and the disciplinary regime became more oppressive. Following the closure of Penetang in 1904, J.J. Kelso and other child savers had pressured Ferrier to establish a "strongly guarded cottage" for "the thoroughly hardened and trouble-some boys". Superintendent Ferrier, who stubbornly resisted the calls for a "bad boys cottage," eventually relented. When the sixth cottage, named after Beverley Jones, was opened in October 1906, it was designated for the oldest class of juvenile offender, age sixteen and up.⁴⁹

46. ISAT Records, MU 1410, Series B, Box 3, Correspondence, 1921, File No. 20, Donald J. McKinnon to Hon. F.H. Grand, Minister of Education, February 10, 1921, p. 2; and *Report of the Annual Meeting* 1890, Physician's Report, p. 21.

47. Reports of the Annual Meeting 1889, Superintendent's Report, p. 24; 1910, Superintendent's Report, p. 17; 1897, Board of Management Report, p. 10; and 1899, Superintendent's Report. For a glimpse of a dormitory room in Cottage No. 6, see *Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1915.

48. See *Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1897, Superintendent's Report, p. 16.

49. ISAT Records, MU 1412, Series D, Box 5, Miscellaneous Correspondence, J.J. Kelso to Ferrier, November 17, 1906; Report of the Annual Meeting, 1910, p. 17; and Salmon and Given, The Etobicoke Press, September 29, 1955, p. 4. For Kelso's continuing efforts to secure a "bad boys" cottage, see ISAT Records, MU 1414, Kelso to Ferrier, March 20, 1919 and the reply, April 10, 1919.

Schooling the boys at Mimico produced its share of problems and frustrations. Howland and the school's founders believed that V.I.S. could provide truants and wayward boys with the rudiments of a "good Public School education". Not unexpectedly, in the early years, Superintendents and school officials alike expressed the view that Mimico boys, in spite of their histories of truancy, were "making good progress" and even showing "great intelligence."⁵⁰ Such optimism rang hollow because the boys spent only three hours a day on school work and a much heavier emphasis was placed on manual labour and the development of practical skills. After Ferrier became Superintendent in 1896, however, schooling was assigned a higher priority. "The Lion" himself took charge of the School of Letters and attempted to "drill" the basic skills into the lads. He went to great lengths to rouse what he termed their "sluggish natures," drilling the boys daily "line upon line; precept upon precept" and extending the school year right through July and August, beginning in the summer 1897. When the boys' progress produced great "discouragements," he took heart from their progress in learning the "higher lessons" of "cleanliness, carefulness and prompt obedience." And when parents intervened to secure the "parole" of their boy to assist in supporting the family, Ferrier often insisted that the lad remain at V.I.S. for months on end until he reached a certain "standard" in his scholastic training.⁵¹

The workshops and related departments of work at V.I.S. placed a heavy emphasis on the acquisition of "habits of industry" and practical skills. For four and one-half hours each day Mimico boys were assigned to work in various departments: housework, baking, tailoring, farming, carpentry, painting, printing, shoe repairing, and grounds maintenance. In the early years, farm work was considered the most important department of labour. Yet most boys at V.I.S. were "city lads" for whom farm work held few attractions and for which many were ill-suited. In the boys' hierarchy of departments, laundry and housework ranked lowest. Smaller boys, age 7 to 10, were generally employed at housework in the cottages under the watchful eye of a matron where they would busy themselves mending, darning and knitting clothing and socks. Especially dreaded by Mimico boys was laundry work. It was, accordingly, reserved for "new boys" or lads guilty of misconduct. "When a boy 'runs away'," as McKinnon explained in 1889, "he is generally sent back to the laundry to work his way up again."⁵²

Religious instruction formed an integral part of the Mimico "training" programme. V.I.S. was an unmistakably Protestant institution, where all boys, except the Jewish lads, were expected to embrace the Christian faith and to attend both Sunday school and Sabbath services. Prominent school leaders Donald McKinnon, Thomas Hassard, and George R. Gauld, were pillars of the Mimico Presbyterian Church; indeed all were active members of the church's first session in 1891-92. Under the Industrial Schools Act (1874), Catholic boys could be sent to Mimico only with parental consent. Once these Catholic lads enrolled, however, they were required to "submit to the rules of the institution." And, since there was no Catholic place of worship in Mimico, this meant attending services in one of the local Protestant churches. Each Sunday the boys marched off in parade formation to Church,

50. *Report of Annual Meeting*, 1887, Report of the Principal, W.J. Hendry, p. 253.

51. See Chester Ferrier's Superintendent's Reports, *Reports of the Annual Meetings*, 1896, 1897 and 1898; and *The Advertiser*, (New Toronto, Mimico, Long Branch), June 16, 1927, p. 10. For an actual case, see also ISAT Records, MU 1412, Series d, Box 5, Miscellaneous file No. 2944, Merit Board Report, Victor "F", September 15, 1922; and Chester Ferrier to Fred "F", September 27, 1922.

52. ISAT Records, *Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1889, p. 22; 1890, p. 14; 1889, p. 23; and 1890, p. 17.



BOYS LEARNING THE ART OF PRINTING



PAINTERS

where they rose to recite a Psalm and then filed out together, making little contact with the parishioners.⁵³ The weekly programme consisted of a half-hour Bible study and service every evening, a visit to the Mimico churches on Sunday morning, and a special Sabbath school at V.I.S. every Sunday evening.⁵⁴ Even though the Superintendent Ferrier saw among the boys little “outward expression of faith,” it remained his personal mission to bring “the teachings of God’s word” to the lads.⁵⁵

Church-going and Sunday schooling seemed to go hand-in-hand with moral and citizenship education at V.I.S. Under Ferrier’s direction after 1896, the school library was stocked with “pure wholesome literature” and new emphasis was placed on improving the Band, which the Superintendent believed had an “uplifting and reforming” effect on “character.” Cigarette smoking was considered a horrible habit linked to juvenile misbehaviour and often blamed for the failure of some boys to “do well” after leaving the school. In 1901 this led Ferrier to launch an Anti-Cigarette League aimed at creating “a strong healthy sentiment among the boys against the habit.” The Great War, 1914-18, brought British Canadian patriotic fervour to Mimico. At the strong urging of Ferrier some eighteen V.I.S. boys eighteen years and over voluntarily enlisted for overseas military service in 1916 and another thirty a year later. Ferrier regularly proclaimed that “V.I.S. isn’t a home for slackers,” read emotional letters to the boys from former Mimico lads overseas, and took great pride in the school’s success in “inculcating a spirit of loyalty and devotion to King and Country.”⁵⁶

Like most child welfare institutions, the Victoria Industrial School had health problems. In the early years (1887-94) the newly developed Mimico property and facilities were a virtual breeding ground for contagious diseases. The V.I.S. cottages and buildings suffered from chronic water shortages and what Ontario provincial health inspectors called a “bad water supply.” Bathing facilities and water were in such short supply that for many years the boys were taken once a week in summer months to bathe in Lake Ontario, a distance of a mile and a half away.⁵⁷ Drainage was very poor on the Mimico site and this was often linked by investigators with periodic outbreaks of disease. In the period 1891 to 1894, the Mimico boys were ravaged by massive epidemics of “intermittent fever”, malaria and diphtheria. A committee of the Provincial Board of Health, appointed in 1893, traced the health problems to the poor V.I.S. drainage system, a bad water supply and unsanitary wet floor conditions in the cottages. In response to the investigation, Superintendent Hassard and the school’s physician, Dr. J.M. Cotton, authorized changes which improved drainage and removed the bathrooms from the cottages “owing to the dampness they create.”⁵⁸ Although V.I.S. was struck again by scarlet fever in 1897 and diphtheria in 1905 and 1911, the threat of future mass epidemics was contained by strict quarantine policies.

53. Helen Chisholm, Mimico resident (1901-21), Personal Interview, April 19, 1985.

54. *Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1887, p. 259; and 1918, p. 16; Dr Joseph Gollom, Personal Interview, April 20, 1985; Harvey Currell, *The Mimico Story* (Mimico, 1967), p. 152; McKinnon Testimony, *Report on Prison Reform* 1891, pp. 482-3; and *Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1903, Superintendent’s Report.

55. *Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1903, Superintendent’s Report.

56. *Ibid.*, 1896, p. 19; 1901; 1916, p. 15; and 1917, p. 17.

57. *Ibid.*, 1887, p. 260.

58. ISAT Records, *Report of Annual Meetings*, Physician’s Reports, 1892, pp. 14-15 and 71; 1893, p. 15; Board of Management Report 1893, pp. 9-10; and Physician’s Report, *ibid.*, 1894, pp. 15-16.

In such a closed and confining institution, school officials assumed control over medical and dental care and sometimes employed stringent measures. Overcrowding of the cottages and the lack of adequate bathing facilities before 1896 may have contributed to a high incidence of ringworm, pink eye, and other skin disorders among the boys. Because of poverty, neglect and the normal boy's preference for "sweets", many lads suffered from headaches and toothaches as a result of severe tooth decay, requiring regular visits by the Mimico dental surgeon. A small but significant number of boys came to V.I.S. with a birth defect known as "club feet" and in the years after 1900 operations were performed to correct their deformities.⁵⁹ To combat the spread of infectious diseases, the school physician from 1896 onward, Dr Forbes Godfrey of Mimico, adopted a medical practice controversial at this time. Boys at V.I.S. were among the first to receive group inoculations, even though many citizens and a few influential doctors frowned on the practice.⁶⁰

At Victoria Industrial School sports and playground activities were generally considered "amusements" — or time for physical release. In the early years Mimico boys spent one to three hours per day, depending on the season, engaged in out-of-doors play. Much of this activity consisted of "pick up" games popular among working-class children. From the late 1880s onwards, American baseball was the clear favourite of boys at play. In addition to ball games, lacrosse, "shinny" hockey and skating came and went in fashion with the rhythm of the seasons. Under the supervision of V.I.S. officers, playing games was encouraged to allow the boys to both "blow off steam" and to learn lessons of "self-restraint" and "respect for the rights of others."⁶¹ When the original International League of baseball collapsed in the late 1880s, the game of lacrosse played locally in Mimico enjoyed a period of wild popularity at V.I.S. Five Mimico boys joined the Mimico village lacrosse team in 1890 and played competitively in matches against Hamilton and Toronto Y.M.C.A. club teams — a practice which continued for many years. Another tradition, the annual "Games Day" started by permanent and summer residents of Mimico in 1889, was regarded by V.I.S. boys as a kind of "summer Christmas."⁶² Boys' games remained loosely organized and "free and easy" in spirit at the school until the early 1920s. Then, largely at the urging of a 1921 Royal Commission concerned over disorders at V.I.S., a supervised system of physical training was instituted, placing a heavier emphasis on organized competitive team sports and regularized out-of-doors exercises.⁶³

IV — ORDER, REBELLION AND RESTRAINT

Mimico's founders envisioned a model reform institution which would tame "waifs" and wayward boys by providing a so-called well-ordered home life. From the outset, V.I.S.

59. See Physician's Reports, *ibid.*, 1890, p. 20; 1892, p. 14; 1893, p. 15; 1894, p. 15; 1896, p. 22; 1900, p. 20; 1911, p. 20.

60. See Currell, *The Mimico Story*, p. 153. Dr Forbes Godfrey, V.I.S. physician, was a prominent Conservative trustee for School Section No. 1, and a pioneer in the field of preventative medicine. He later served as Ontario's first Minister of Health in the G. Howard Ferguson administration (1923-30).

61. *Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1887, Superintendent's Report, p. 260; *ibid.*, 1889, p. 24; and *ibid.*, 1897, p. 14.

62. For background on Lacrosse in Mimico, see Currell, *The Mimico Story*, p. 159. See also *Report of the Annual Meeting* 1890, Superintendent's Report, p. 17.

63. A.O. Ontario. Royal Commission to Investigate the Victoria Industrial School, *Report*, 1921 (RG 18, B-53), p. 3.

authorities utilized military parade drill to promote regularity in movement and punctual habits. A regular feature of most Annual Meetings and Open Houses from 1889 onwards was the parade drill, in which rows of Mimico boys marched in their grey school uniforms behind a fife and drum band. In Howland's rather idealistic view, an Industrial School which created in the boys a "home feeling" and among them an *esprit de corps* would succeed in maintaining order with a minimum of punitive action. Discipline would be insured by the influence of an organized, well-regulated daily regimen and heavy doses of "regular and systematic military drill."⁶⁴

The initial idealized system of disciplinary order was quickly abandoned in the early years of V.I.S. Faced with the daily task of coping with unruly and unmanageable boys, the school's Superintendents resorted to the regular use of corporal punishment. By 1890 a formal system of punishments has emerged which covered most forms of misbehaviour. When asked by the 1891 Royal Commission on Prison Reform to explain the school's methods, Superintendent McKinnon replied: "The boys march. We punish them in various ways suitable to the offence; by whipping sometimes."⁶⁵ Some actual punishments were stated more explicitly in the school's 1892 private records: two slaps for "indecent language", two days of bread and water for "stealing apples from the cellar," and whipping on the bare back or bare legs for a variety of other school offences.⁶⁶ Such actions, it was believed, would correct a boy threatening to continue his "downward course to ruin."

As Mimico grew harder and tougher over the years, so did its system of discipline. Methods of discipline — rarely talked about outside the confines of the school — were used to punish troublemakers and to "keep the boys in line." Officers were forbidden from striking a boy during the normal course of their duties and in one case in February 1919 a school employee had \$5.00 deducted from his pay for taking such an action.⁶⁷ In spite of incidents like this, periodic allegations were made that cruel and inhumane forms of punishment were carried out at Mimico.

A Toronto City Council Committee investigating a series of allegations in March of 1927 heard many sensational tales of Mimico brutality, some of which were grossly exaggerated by the Toronto press.⁶⁸ One serious offender, Wilbert Spain, was said to have been shackled by his feet to a bed for one month and four days, beaten one day on his bare back 15 times with a leather strap, then 5 times on each hand, and finally put on a bread and water diet for 16 days until a school matron took pity and brought toast and milk. Another seventeen-year old lad, James Brawn, who had claimed that his work on the V.I.S. paint crew made him feel sick, had died in May 1926 of what the parents charged was paint-induced lead poisoning. Several boys were allegedly told to stand outside on a sidewalk in the slush, while it was raining, and when one side of them got soaked, told to turn around

64. See W. H. Howland, Board of Management Reports, *The Globe*, October 31, 1887; *Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1888, p. 14; and W. J. Hendry's view of military drill, *ibid.*, 1887, p. 260. For background on the role of drill in educational discipline, see J. S. Hart, "Drill, Discipline and the Elementary School Ethos," in Phillip McCann, ed., *Popular Education and Socialization in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Methuen, 1977), pp. 167-91.

65. Donald J. McKinnon's Testimony, *Report on Prison Reform*, 1891, p. 484.

66. A.O., Victoria Industrial School Records, II 25-c, Vol. 18, Historical Records, Case File Unidentified boy (July 1887-Spring, 1892). Supplied to author by June Collins. See also Superintendent McKinnon's comments on "lickings" in ISAT Records, MU 1410, Series B. Box 3, Correspondence, McKinnon to Grant, February 10, 1921, p. 2.

67. A case cited in Collins, "The Industrial Schools Movement in Toronto," p. 17.

68. See *The Globe*, March 24, 1927, pp. 11 and 12; and March 25, 1927, p. 12.

so the other side would get drenched! Other lads were supposed to have been choked by a school officer until their faces turned blue.⁶⁹

The serious allegations of brutality at Mimico were strongly denied by Superintendent Ferrier and other school officials. Reporting to City Council in March 1927, Ferrier insisted that strapping on the hands, walking in line for brief periods of time, and, in extreme cases, solitary confinement for periods up to ten days were the only sanctioned forms of punishment at V.I.S. Strapping on the hands, he contended, had been utilized an average of eleven times a month in 1926 — and the practice of strapping boys on the seat had been discontinued six months earlier. On the use of a bare detention room with a floor mattress for isolation punishment, Ferrier was adamant:

Boys have been put in detention for insubordinate conduct and other offences. What punishment should be given a boy of 18 years who entered his Cottage and violently assaulted the young Matron? What for a boy who shot his officer? This officer is still suffering for this dastardly deed. What for a boy who deliberately assaulted his officer when his back was turned? What for the boy who upsets the discipline of the School by constantly plotting at ... escape? What would my unfriendly critics do with these boys? A short term in detention is not a harsh punishment ...

The message was clear: some V.I.S. lads were "bad boys" who sometimes required severe forms of punishment to straighten them out. "We of the Staff", he stressed, "are human, apt to err at times and make mistakes; but we are humane. There is no undue severity in the administration of discipline. What boys need to be taught in these days is obedience and respect for the law, and we do the best we can to teach these."⁷⁰

Not all boys responded to the Victoria Industrial School's system of discipline and training. The sheer number and frequency of escapes provided an indication of rebelliousness. From the school's earliest days, the Superintendents expressed the view that Mimico boys must be taught "self-control" and thus V.I.S. should not be turned into a prison surrounded by walls.⁷¹ But as time wore on the number and regularity of escapes became a matter of active concern for Superintendent Ferrier and school authorities. Four escapees in the fall of 1896, for example, had run away and been returned some five times each over the previous year, and so Ferrier finally decided to let them go without a chase. Escapes reached epidemic proportions during 1907 and 1915, both times precipitated by internal conditions that bred restlessness and discontent. During 1907 Mimico was placed under quarantine for four months by the provincial Health Department because of a diphtheria outbreak. Boys at V.I.S. were deprived of their Sunday outings to Mimico churches, visiting privileges were suspended completely, lads due to parole were detained, and crowding forced the school to be divided into two sections. The wartime difficulties of finding work for V.I.S. boys ready to be "placed out" made 1915 another year of turmoil. Before it was over the school recorded 35 escape attempts and 14 successful "early paroles," most carried out by jumping on freight trains in the Mimico Rail Yards close to the school property.⁷² The rash of disturbances at V.I.S. brought growing demands for

69. See Salmon and Given, *The Etobicoke Press*, October 6, 1955, p. 4; and *The Globe*, March 24, 1927, pp. 11 and 12.

70. ISAT Records, MU 1410, Series B. Box 3, Correspondence, 1927, Chester Ferrier Memorandum, March 30, 1927. For an earlier and firmer Ferrier statement on discipline, see *Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1903.

71. *Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1889, Superintendent's Report, D.J. McKinnon, p. 25; and *ibid.*, 1892, Thomas Hassard, p. 12.

72. ISAT Records, MU 1409, Series B. Box 2, Correspondence, 1897, Chester Ferrier, Report to the Executive Committee, January 15, 1897; *Report of the Annual Meeting* 1907, Superintendent's Report, p. 14; and *Ibid.*, 1915, Superintendent's Report.

radical administrative changes and may have contributed to the decision in 1916-17 to abandon grey school uniforms, long reviled by the boys for their prison-like appearance.⁷³

Several incidents at the Victoria Industrial School in the 1920s were reported in the Toronto dailies as signs of restlessness and open rebellion. The "Mimico breakaway" of July 1921 was one such incident. On a hot July night, two Mimico boys engineered a daring escape through an unfastened cottage window and they were joined while making their getaway by some twenty other fellows half-dressed in white nightshirts. For most of the escapees, the nighttime adventure was shortlived. One local farmer living a mile from V.I.S., discovered three half-clad boys the next morning eating unripe fruit in his orchard and he promptly escorted them back to Mimico. By breakfast time all but three of the runaways had returned. When asked by a *Toronto Globe* reporter why he had run away, one lad replied: "Ain't got no folks and I'm homesick." Asked where he was heading, he shrugged and said "Dunno. Just somewheres."⁷⁴ Even though the Industrial Schools Association conducted an emergency investigation and two V.I.S. night watchmen were suspended for their negligence, the episode seemed like more of a boyhood lark than a serious disorder. More indicative of open resistance were two notable acts of violence. In one celebrated case of the mid-1920s an eighteen-year-old boy violently assaulted a young matron alone in her cottage. The other incident saw Deputy Superintendent William G. Pettinger get shot in the side by a disgruntled boy, inflicting a nasty wound which took months to heal.⁷⁵

In spite of periodic disorders and setbacks, Superintendents from Hendry to Ferrier publicly claimed that Victoria Industrial School had a vaguely defined "success rate" of 70 to 80 percent. In one early estimate offered in the 1892 Annual Report, Thomas Hassard asserted that about 82 of the 112 boys who had left the school since its founding were "doing well" and predicted that another 25 would "yet turn out right". Thirty-seven years later when V.I.S. had changed radically in its school population, Superintendent Ferrier continued to claim that "fully 75 percent of the boys make good citizens."⁷⁶ These "success rates" were mostly guesswork, however, because the school never established a proper system of after-care visiting agents and relied heavily on hearsay and often unreliable parental reports to gauge the progress of "old boys."

At V.I.S. the system of indenturing or apprenticing boys at the end of their committal period was known as "placing out." Since boys were committed to Mimico on indeterminate sentences and after April 1900 could be kept for up to 3 years (until 18 years of age),⁷⁷ the Superintendent and school officials were responsible for determining the time and conditions of release from the school. From the school's inception Mimico officials believed that their work of restoration involved creating a "home feeling" within a boy

73. *Ibid.*, 1916-17, Superintendent's Report. The ending of V.I.S. School uniforms, long advocated by J.J. Kelso, was implemented in 1916-17 after visits to a number of New York State reform schools. By 1921 the old grey uniforms were seldom seen, replaced by two piece Norfolk suits of corduroy and tweed material.

74. "Mimico Breakaway Brings Suspension of Night Watchman", *The Globe*, July 25, 1921, p. 1. See also *The Advertiser*, April 14, 1927, p. 1, for a report on a routine escape.

75. ISAT Records, MU 1410, Series B. Box 3, Ferrier Memorandum, March 30, 1927; and *The Globe*, March 25, 1927, p. 12.

76. *Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1892, Superintendent's Report, p. 11; and *ibid.*, 1929, Superintendent's Report.

77. *Ibid.*, 1902, Board of Management Report, W.J. Hendry.

and calming his "restlessness." Only after the lad became "settled," W.H. Howland contended, could he be returned to his family or "sent out to a situation."⁷⁸

In actual practice, the timing of — and reasons for — release were highly variable. Typical Mimico boys in the early years, such as Mark "T" (1887-91), Thomas "C" (1887-90), and James "M" (1887-92), were committed at a young age, kept as 'wards of the state' for 5 to 7 years, and then generally placed out on farms far from the so-called "evil city influences."⁷⁹ Later, when boys eligible for "parole" came before the school's Merit Board, the boy's character, conduct and scholastic progress, his family home conditions, and employment prospects were all considered by school officials.⁸⁰ As Superintendent from 1896 to 1932, Chester Ferrier exercised great personal discretion, sometimes overruled recommendations from home visiting agents, and stubbornly resisted persistent interventions by some parents to secure the release of boys. In many cases, Ferrier's habit of "labelling" boys, his insistence on scholastic improvement and his strong aversion to interfering mothers and fathers effectively prolonged the period of a boy's detention.⁸¹

Victoria Industrial School had its reform successes, and its notable failures. Comprehensive data on boys placed out is not available but counted among the school's successes was Charlie "S", a Toronto lad of small stature and limited mental capacities who was placed out on a farm in Bradford, Ontario in the fall of 1906. Even though Charlie's mother wanted him returned home to learn a trade and help support her, Ferrier sent him to a farm situation. After several weeks of farm work, Charlie wrote a poignant letter expressing happiness with his new life — and appreciation for the school's work:

We can do a good many more things out here than you can down there. I like living out here better than at Mimico please let me know how Mother and Miss Linden Miss Brown [his teachers] and the other officers are how is Charlie May and Rowe is the indians still there. rember me to them all from one of your boys. [sic]

Like most Mimico old boys, Charlie struggled along on a wage of \$40 in his first year and "made it" in the outside world, with the help of a kindly Ontario farmer.⁸² And this was a story repeated many times in the case histories of former V.I.S. lads; for, whether they were placed on farms, sent out to factory situations or returned to their families, most went on to lead normal working class lives.

But not every Mimico "old boy" turned his back on a life of delinquency and crime. Quite typical of an early V.I.S. "failure" was an anonymous ten-year old boy admitted in October 1891, who served 5 years at Mimico and was returned home to attend school in October 1896. Even though his mother was initially "delighted with his good behaviour," the boy gradually fell back into his old associations and was "returned" to the school 15 months later.⁸³ A more celebrated later case was that of Max Bluestein, one of V.I.S.'s "Jewish boys" in the mid-1920s who went on to bigger and better things in the Toronto

78. Howland Testimony, *Report on Prison Reform*, 1891, p. 694.

79. P.A.O., Victoria Industrial Records, II 25-C, Vol. 18, Historical Record, Selected cases; and Vol. 10. Letterbook, 1888-91, p. 160.

80. See Beverley Jones, "Parole from Industrial Schools," *The Globe*, February 28, 1921, p. 4.

81. Two representative cases are found in ISAT Records, MU 1412, Series D, Box 5, File No. 2944, Louis "S" (1911) and Victor "F" (1921-23).

82. ISAT Records, MU 1412, Series D, Box 5, File 2944, J.J. Kelso to Ferrier, November 3, 1906; Charlie "S" to Ferrier, November 1, 1906; and T.G. Fennell, Bradford, to Ferrier, November 1, 1906.

83. P.A.O., Victoria Industrial School Records, II 25-c, Vol. 10, Letterbook, 1888-91. Case information supplied to author by June Collins.

crime world. Bluestein, who as a public school lad in West Toronto ran “floating crap games” at Trinity Park, served several years at Victoria Industrial School, but found it impossible to “go straight”. Taking up the street name “Maxie Baker”, he became a well-known Toronto “bookie,” involved himself in a series of illegal gambling operations, and fought to keep rival Italian gangland figures out of Toronto’s bookmaking business. Eventually Maxie was the victim of a brutal 1961 beating at Toronto’s Town Tavern — a suspected gangland attack that left him in a terrorized state for the rest of his life.⁸⁴ Similar, but perhaps less colourful, stories of personal tragedy were undoubtedly recorded by hundred of lesser known Mimico “graduates.”

V — CONCLUSION

The Victoria Industrial School experience is an example of the many juvenile reform institutions in North America from the 1880s to the early 1930s. Although Mimico was much smaller in size than comparable American institutions like the New York Juvenile Asylum (Children’s Village) at Dobbs Ferry and the Massachusetts State Reform School for Girls at Lancaster, there are clear parallels with other institutions.⁸⁵ The Boy’s Industrial School in Vancouver, British Columbia, operating at precisely the same period, underwent a remarkably similar cycle of “cottage system” reform expectations, followed by neglect and deterioration, and ending in therapeutic custodial care.⁸⁶ None of these institutions in Canada or the United States appears to have lived up to the idealistic claims of their child rescue founders. It is also significant that the “industrial school” model employed to rescue poor street children believed to be drifting into the “criminal class” became a preferred method for reforming a sizeable minority of Indian children.⁸⁷

The Mimico reform school, like its counterparts elsewhere, was swept up in, and profoundly influenced by, North American social developments of the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century. Major shifts in industrial and urban growth and in immigration were clearly reflected in the changing composition of the institution’s population. Moves to de-institutionalize children, such as the closure of Ontario’s Penetang Reformatory in 1904, were hailed as a triumph for home care advocates, but such decisions created overcrowding and horrendous problems which V.I.S. was not equipped to handle. The creation of Toronto’s juvenile court system, as in the case of Milwaukee, worked to increase the caseload at Mimico and surrounding industrial schools, likely because many children were thereafter being prosecuted as “criminals” under an ostensibly kinder system of “progressive” juvenile justice.⁸⁸ The rise of the mental hygiene movement, particularly after

84. Max Bluestein’s life history was reconstructed from personal interviews with Dr Joseph Gollom, April 20, 1985; Hugh Thurston, retired Metro Police inspector, April 30, 1985; and Gwyn “Jocko” Thomas, *Toronto Star* crime reporter, April 29, 1985. See also Bluestein’s obituary, *The Globe and Mail*, October 31, 1984, p. M6.

85. See Seixas, “From Juvenile Asylum to Treatment Center,” esp. chap. 1; Robert Mennel, ed., *Children in Confinement* (New York: Arno Press, 1974); and Barbara M. Brenzel, *Daughters of the State*.

86. Matters, “The Boys’ Industrial School,” esp. pp. 67-69.

87. On the industrial school model of Indian schools, see E. Brian Titley, “Indian Industrial Schools in Western Canada,” in Nancy M. Sheehan, J. Donald Wilson and David C. Jones, eds. *Schools in the West* (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 1983), pp. 133-54; and David A. Nock, “The Social Effects of Missionary Education: A Victorian Case Study,” in R.W. Nelsen and D.A. Nock, eds, *Reading, Writing and Riches: Education and the Socio-Economic Order in North America* (Kitchener: Between the Lines, 1978), pp. 233-50.

88. Schlossman, *Love and the American Delinquent*; and *Report of the Juvenile Court, Toronto, 1912*, February 11, 1913.

the 1911 founding of the Ontario Provincial Association for the Care of the Feeble-Minded, led to the introduction of IQ testing, then classification and segregation of the boys by reputed mental capacities. The furore created by the mental hygienists not only forced Mimico to absorb increasing numbers of boys "scientifically" classified as "sub-normal" but also influenced school authorities, and affected the institution's reformatory work.⁸⁹

From its inception until its closure, V.I.S. remained a reform school designed to rehabilitate boys mainly of the poor or working class, many of whom were street children. Based on a study of the available data on parent's occupations, most were sons of working-class families and many were from "broken homes". In the early years V.I.S. catered to truants and so-called incorrigibles. For certain boys it served as a "way station" between the reformatory and the prison; for others it functioned as an employment placement agency, securing work for the sons of workingmen and women. Most entrants to Mimico appeared to be the products of poor families "skidding" from the lower class to the underclass in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Canada.⁹⁰

Why did the Mimico experiment ultimately end in the closure of the institution? Major shifts in Ontario government policy, chronic neglect and underfunding, the changing composition of the school population and administrative rigidity all played their part in the process of institutional deterioration leading to its closing in December 1935.⁹¹ There was much truth to the allegations of its critics including social service analyst Frank Sharpe who in November 1927 charged that juvenile reformatories like Mimico only taught boys to be "better criminals," offered out-dated "vocational training," and neglected their "follow-up work."⁹² A full report on the Victoria Industrial School conducted by Ferrier's successor, William G. Green, in 1933 strongly suggested that Mimico had contracted administrative hardening of the arteries and recommended some sweeping changes. During Ferrier's thirty-six-year regime, Green contended that too much emphasis was placed on boys maintaining the school; that the school's corps of officers had become aged to the point where several needed replacement; that farm training was an over-worked area ill-suited to city boys; that the school's teachers should have had some knowledge of psychology; and that instructors like the gardener and the painter should have been skilled in teaching as well as in their trade.⁹³ Some Mimico critics were even harsher in their judgements. "Come to Jesus or we'll knock your block off" was the phrase E.C. Reed of Toronto's Big Brother Movement used in May 1934 to describe V.I.S.'s approach to religious instruction. Mimico, he claimed, operated under "a barbarous and antiquated system," had more escapes than the Guelph Reformatory, and contributed an estimated "25 per cent" of the two hundred youths then incarcerated at Kingston Penitentiary.⁹⁴ Whether the charges were exaggerated or not, Mimico's somewhat antiquated methods of reformation had played their part in the institution's demise.

89. See Kamin, *The Science and Politics of IQ*; and Seixas, "From Juvenile Asylum to Treatment Center," pp. 27-30 and 92-94.

90. See Tables 4 and 5, above.

91. Bennett, "Turning 'Bad Boys' into 'Good Citizens'," pp. 226-27.

92. Frank Sharpe, "Do Reformatories Reform?," *Social Welfare*, Vol. X, No. 2 (November 1927), pp. 25-27, 37 and 38.

93. William G. Green, Superintendent's Report to the Executive Committee, 1933, as cited in Collins, "The Industrial Schools Movement in Toronto: V.I.S." pp. 22-24 and 26.

94. *The Toronto Daily Star*, May 5, 1984, p. 1. E.C. Reed, director of the Big Brother Movement and founder of the Boys' "K" Club, had been active for 25 years in Toronto Boys' work.

The Mimico institution conforms well with the double-edged system of “child rescue” and “restraint” recently set out by Rooke and Schnell.⁹⁵ The high hopes of the Toronto industrial school advocates, William H. Howland and Beverley Jones, never really materialized. V.I.S. had been launched by the “child rescuers” of the late 1880s with Benthamite reformist vision, faith in individualistic character — building, and a flourish of rhetoric about the ideal of “family-style” institutional care. The initial reformist visions quickly evaporated, as the industrial school leaders departed or lost their reform zeal. In reality V.I.S. was a short-term “total institution” where the inmates’ entire lives were circumscribed by the regimen of the institution and where outside influences were subject to severe constraints or practically eliminated.⁹⁶ Like most juvenile reform experiments, it was also a coercive institution that imposed social control through a variety of means, from moral suasion to physical isolation for short periods of time.⁹⁷ To most Toronto and southern Ontario “wayward” boys, the institution known simply as “Mimico” was definitely a place to be avoided because it meant confinement and removal from the independent and resourceful, albeit impoverished, world of working-class street culture. And such a system was not accepted passively by its inmates, as evidenced by the acts of rebellion and regular breakouts, especially in later years.

The industrial reform school that closed in December 1935 was not the one envisioned by its child rescue founders. It had changed from a detention school of educational rehabilitation to a kind of surrogate medical institution, offering custodial care and rudimentary job training. Like the British Columbia Boys’ Industrial School and other such institutions, V.I.S. evolved into a “school of last resort,” and a kind of dumping ground for all classes of boy — labelled as “anti-social and dangerous,” “low mentality” or “physically defective” — unwanted by other child welfare agencies and considered social outcasts by the wider community. By the time of its closing, Mimico also had degenerated into a kind of “boys’ prison” that acted to restrain the much feared restlessness of the “dangerous class.” It was not only a social institution aimed at taming society’s “bad boys,” but part of a system that legitimated pathologized dependency for working-class youth.

95. Rooke and Schnell, *Transforming the Asylum*, esp. Part. II.

96. The concept of “total institution,” as defined by Goffman, *Asylums*, p. xiii; and applied effectively by Seixas in “From Juvenile Asylum to Treatment Center”, pp. 23-24.

97. Juvenile reform Schools of this period were, by their very nature, institutions of social control. See Gareth Stedman Jones, “Class Expression vs. Social Control: A Critique of Recent Trends in the Social History of Leisure,” *History Workshop*, Vol. 4 (1977), pp. 162-70; and Seixas, “From Juvenile Asylum to Treatment Centre,” pp. 22-25.