

A Place for the Child: Playground Reform from 1890 to 1930

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“The adjustment of boy life to the city environment has always been a difficult one.”¹ Or, at least, that was the opinion of the New York City YMCA in 1927. City boys across the United States, however, might have disagreed. They played, worked, and lived in the city as successfully as boys anywhere in the nation. The city environment afforded many boys the spaces to create particularly strong peer networks as well as the opportunity to earn disposable incomes of which other boys could only dream.² Indeed, their familiarity and ease with city spaces shocked middle-class adults. Real boys in the Progressive Era found little difficulty in confronting urban life.

What the YMCA was referring to, however, was not the lived experiences of millions of children, but, rather, the adjustment of American ideals of boyhood to the city environment. Boyhood, and girlhood for that matter, was, in the middle-class mind, correctly situated in rural communities. As fewer and fewer children lived a rural life, fears of urban childhood grew, with important, and lasting, ramifications for Progressive-Era child-saving, and with it, the playground reform movement.

The playground reform movement is a well-studied area of Progressive-Era history: for decades, historians have sought to uncover the motivations and mechanics of the movement. The main historiographical debates hinge on the question of social control. Perhaps the most influential of books on the subject, *Eight Hours for What We Will* by Roy Rosenzweig, published in 1983, argued against the social control narrative. Rosenzweig challenged the contention that playgrounds were a top-down reform implemented by middle-class urban professionals seeking to control working class behaviour. Instead, Rosenzweig argued that urban workers appropriated playgrounds for their own uses and even took an active part in conceiving or advocating park reform.³ Since 1983, historians have continued to demonstrate how marginalised communities sought park spaces and built community identities around these places.⁴

These studies have been fruitful, greatly improving our understanding of the gender, racial, and class politics surrounding playground reform. Complicating the social control narrative has been productive, allowing historians to move beyond caricaturing Progressive reformers as either righteous crusaders or nefarious oppressors. However, while working class and marginalised communities were undoubtedly involved in playground reform, urban, middle-class professionals dominated the playground reform movement. In focussing on class conflict and social control theories, I argue that historians have failed to fully understand the motivations of these reformers. Far from simply wanting to control working-class leisure, Progressive Era playground reformers had multi-layered attitudes toward working-class children's play, further complicated when those working-class children were not white or male. This paper argues, that fear of city childhood and desire to control city spaces were as important to the playground reform movement as attitudes towards class. While urban workers and city youth challenged reformers' plans for playgrounds on the ground, reformers' plans and motivations are still important to understand for they helped shape playgrounds, parks and cities and they reveal much of the Progressive-Era child-savers' attitudes to urbanisation, childhood, and methods of reform.

Finally, I argue that studying playground reform has much to reveal about child savers' views on juvenile delinquency. There is certainly plenty written about the new Progressive-Era juvenile justice institutions, but the two aspects of Progressive Era reform – juvenile justice reform and playground reform – are seldom examined together, even though, as this paper demonstrates, they were very much related.

The Environment of Childhood

In the 1920s, the United States became a majority urban nation, a country of cities and city dwellers, but the process of urbanisation had been long underway and full of challenges.⁵ Unease about cities and urban life was as old as the places themselves.⁶ By the 1890s, Americans knew cities to be the homes of slums, of disease, of booming immigrant communities, and of crime. Progressive reformers at the start of the twentieth century, like Austin E. Griffiths, were sincere their warnings that city life threatened the very existence of the nation and might destroy “the whole body politic”.⁷

Ideas linking rural life, not just frontier life, with civic virtue in the United States stretched back to the founding of the country. As Thomas Jefferson wrote to James Madison, “I think our governments will remain virtuous for many centuries as long as they are chiefly agricultural.”⁸ What distinguished late nineteenth and early twentieth century fears of the city and longing for the countryside from this earlier school of thought was the focus on childhood. Changing concepts of childhood were at the centre of the new anti-urbanism. More importantly, it was through childhood leisure – play in fields and streams and the countryside – rather than through agrarian work that Progressive Era Americans like Charles E. Hughes, the Governor of New York, believed citizens naturally acquired civic virtue.⁹

This concept was, of course, highly gendered. As Hughes explained, both boyhood and girlhood was better suited to the countryside, but for different reasons. Hughes argued rural girlhood created “the mothers of the country, the mothers of the men that have made the country”. In this construction, rural girlhood was beneficial to society through its creation of virtuous, republican mothers. Concerning rural boyhood, Hughes was more specific regarding the benefits: “...and the boys, with their love of nature and their opportunities in the

happy, careless, outdoor life have developed a strength that in these strenuous days has enabled them to bear the burdens of statesmanship”.¹⁰ Hughes thus imagined a romantic rural boyhood that would produce model citizens. This idea was not original to Hughes but, in fact, already a common theme in middle-class ideas about proper child-raising.

If rural childhood created republican mothers and worthy statesmen, city childhood corrupted girls and boys alike. Separated from parents, allowed to run wild in the streets with disposable incomes, city children became demoralised. Reformers like National Child Labor Committee investigator and future general secretary, Owen Lovejoy, believed children would “accurately mirror the world in which they move”.¹¹ If this world consisted of congested city streets, as Lovejoy feared, children would become dependent (i.e. upon the public for support), or worse, delinquent. Fear of juvenile delinquency, and changing conceptions of crime, and criminal behaviour, were thus central to urban reform.

Lombrosian ideas dominated US criminology throughout the late nineteenth century.¹² The influential nineteenth century Italian criminologist, Cesare Lombroso, placed the blame for crime firmly at the door of the criminal, arguing that there was such a thing as a born criminal. Crime was, in this understanding, a biological trait, which criminal justice should meet with punishment and repression.¹³

As the nineteenth century progressed, however, those involved in criminal justice increasingly made an exception for child criminals. While Lombrosian ideology argued criminals were biologically destined for crime from birth, states across the country invested growing amounts in juvenile reformatories, with the aim (in theory if not in practice) of rehabilitating the child on the path to crime.¹⁴

Furthermore, alternative theories regarding the causes of crime gained credence, especially in relation to juvenile crime. If the congested districts of the city bred physical disease, criminologists at the turn of the century began to ask, surely

they could also produce moral disease. Rather than the individual child, Progressive Era criminologists and reformers pathologised the city. Juvenile delinquents, in the words of Allen Burns, Dean of the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy, were “more sinned against than sinning”.¹⁵ Most delinquent activity, turn-of-the-century child-savers argued, came not from innate badness but misdirected energies, childish impulses in the wrong environment.¹⁶ Indeed, some, like play administrator George E. Johnson, went so far as to argue that delinquent boys were in fact biologically superior to ‘good’ boys. “Who is a bad boy?” he asked rhetorically. “He is one in whom the streams of heredity run deep and strong, in whom the virtues of his ancestors are expressed in tireless energy.”¹⁷ Johnson even explained away serious violent behaviour as childish impulses in an unsupervised environment: “Boy gangs stoning and knifing each other is unsupervised rivalry play, organised games [baseball, basketball etc.] the supervised.”¹⁸ According to this understanding of delinquent behaviour, childish impulses, which were perfectly safe in the countryside, led children in the city down dangerous paths to crime and dependency.¹⁹

The move away from congenital causes of crime had important ramifications for the treatment of delinquent children. Juvenile justice reformers were optimistic about the opportunities for reform. Proponents of this view thought that if children’s delinquent behaviour resulted from misplaced and misdirected mischief they could, by relocating their activities, guide children into upright American citizenship.²⁰ To achieve this transformation, Progressives across the country completely transformed the juvenile justice system, from largely punitive in aim to mainly rehabilitative.²¹

Being ‘redeemable’ was a privilege only some children had. The recapitulation theory of G. Stanley Hall particularly influenced the ‘childish impulse’ argument of child-savers. In Hall’s theory, instinct governed children’s behaviour. Boys, especially, were full of uncontrollable ‘savagery’ which adults must allow them to express.²² Hall argued that children developed along the same trajectory as their

race: in the case of white boys, this meant from primitiveness through savagery to an adulthood of civilization. Thus, white boys, the younger the better, were the most likely to profit from rehabilitative ideals. Working-class and European immigrant boys fell within this category and became the main focus of juvenile justice rehabilitative efforts.

Boys of colour, on the other hand, could never achieve the civilized status of white manhood, thus, according to Hall and his followers, Americans should not encourage their boyhood 'savagery' but, rather, repress it. This highly racialized theory became the justification for the institutionalisation of Native American children and the sentencing of African American boys to adult jails and institutions.²³

Girls, of all races, were also unlikely to fit rehabilitative ideals. Police officers, juvenile justice officials, and the girls' own relatives often brought girl delinquents into the juvenile justice system for crimes of 'immorality', a catchall term usually referring to sexual activity (whether willing participants or not).²⁴ Reformers did not idealise immoral girls as they did savage boys. G. Stanley Hall explicitly linked childhood savagery and recapitulation to boyhood. Hall argued, sentiment, not savagery, governed girls making them naturally tame and tractable.²⁵ Unlike a mischievous boy, a delinquent girl was, therefore, an aberration of nature, to be repressed and controlled rather than guided and organised. Although far fewer girls than boys appeared in juvenile courts as delinquents, judges usually sent the girls who did appear to institutions and for longer periods than the boys they saw.²⁶

More important than saving delinquent children, to the burgeoning Progressive-Era reformer-class at least, was saving children from becoming delinquent. Here again, the environmental causes of crime had important ramifications. Just stopping delinquent or pre-delinquent activities was not enough, indeed, it might inhibit proper progression through Hall's developmental process.

This concept was also highly gendered. Reformers idealised boys' delinquent activity: while they saw girls' delinquent (sexual) behaviour as undesirable and unnatural, middle-class adults often characterised boys' delinquent behaviour as mischief – a natural, even laudatory, part of masculine development. To completely tame a boy of mischief would, in the words of the influential Denver Juvenile Court Judge, Ben Lindsey, “develop a mollycoddle or a milk-sop”.²⁷ Both mollycoddle and milksop contained important developmental connotations. A mollycoddle described a pampered (coddled), effeminate (molly) boy; a milksop, on the other hand, referred to bread dipped in milk, the diet of babies, hence condemning the infantilisation of children. Girlish or childish, the boy whose mischief adults tamed could never grow into a true man.²⁸

Reformers like Lindsey thus posed themselves the challenge of stopping boys' delinquent behaviour without stifling their masculine spirit. To do this, they set about to change the environment urban children played in and to direct natural childhood energies into productive outlets. Play workers needed not to stop natural mischief, but relocate and redirect it.

The Need for Play Space

If the city streets were the wrong place for children's play, then schools, according to Progressive-Era experts like Dr. Woods Hutchinson, were little better. Delinquent behaviour did not lessen by moving children from streets to schools; if anything, as Hutchinson argued, children should spend less time in schools.

We have not improved matters by substituting the school for the yard, the field, and the shop. We have simply attempted to correct the underdevelopment of the child's body by overdevelopment of his mind. Since he no longer has any safe place to play, we shut him up in the schoolroom all day long... As physicians, we must demand that the schoolroom, admirable as are its aims and its motives, must relinquish at

least one-half its claims upon the time and strength of our children.²⁹

Hutchinson suggested that schools did not provide enough time or space for children's physical development. His alternative, dedicated play-spaces for children – city playgrounds – would allow children places in which to exercise their bodies.

Playground reformers like Hutchinson often publicised the public health benefits of playgrounds. In particular, fears of rampant tuberculosis within the cities of Progressive-Era America spurred the play movement. Cho Cho the Clown, a product of the emerging child health movement, urged children to “play part of every day out of doors”, while the governor of New York argued that free air playgrounds should figure at the forefront of the fight against ‘the Great White Plague’.³⁰ Curing tuberculosis and physically strengthening children's bodies, playgrounds offered an antidote to the unhealthy, industrial city.

However, public health benefits formed just one part of the motivations for playground reform. As Hutchinson continued, city playgrounds would create an alternative space which could develop a child's social education, at least as important as his intellectual or physical development.³¹ It was through play which children learnt social skills and civic virtue.

The playground should be organized, supervised, and recognized as a vital and coordinate branch of our scheme of education. The playground is the chief field for the development of body and mind; of training for social life, for organization and combination with his fellows.³²

Hutchinson finished his paper with a rhetorical flourish, one which playground advocates would often quote afterwards. “Better a playground without a schoolhouse, than a schoolhouse without a playground.”³³ Implicit in this construction was the focus on boys – playgrounds were designed primarily to create upright American men. Rather than a criminal educated on the streets or a mollycoddle locked up in the schoolhouse, playgrounds would, according to

Lindsey, create “wholesome, vigorous citizens, with rich, red blood in their veins”,³⁴

If Progressives agreed almost unanimously on the need for playgrounds to prevent delinquency and to raise model citizens, they disagreed about what play spaces should feature. Some, like urban planner Charles Mulford Robinson, believed playgrounds should represent “little oases of the countryside” brought into the city.³⁵ The focus, according to Robinson, should revolve around landscape gardening, creating picturesque, idealised rural play spaces within congested urban areas. Robinson was speaking in 1908, yet the ideas he enunciated had been part of park philosophy for decades. Frederick Law Olmstead, for example, imagined parks as picturesque rural scenes. Influentially, Olmstead implemented this vision in Central Park in New York and the landscaping of the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893.³⁶

Most Progressive play reformers contended that rural childhood encouraged the development of citizens and that play in the urban environment created delinquents, so it is somewhat surprising that few agreed with Robinson and Olmstead that simply creating rural oases in the city would cure the ailments of urban childhood. Beginning in Chicago in the first decade of the twentieth century, the small parks movement did not aim to do what its name suggests. Unlike Robinson, leaders of the small parks movement did not aspire to recreate the Olmsteadian park ideal on a smaller space. Instead, leaders like the Chicago South Parks Commission athletics director, E. B. DeGroot, suggested that without the proper organisation and methods, small parks would “turn out products no better than have been turned out by the street and alley playgrounds since the beginning of the city”.³⁷ Playgrounds needed planning and organisation, just importing the countryside into the city would not transform urban childhood.

Playground reformers, on the whole, did not seek to bring the countryside into the city. Instead, they sought to create playgrounds as specifically urban

institutions of civic virtue. Thus, while Progressive child savers romanticized rural childhood, and deplored modern urban childhood, they remained optimistic about the prospects of what city life could offer.

The model small park, as created by the South Park Commission, was smaller than ten acres in size, with one located within easy walking distance of all neighbourhoods, particularly crowded, immigrant neighbourhoods. The model park had several age- and gender-segregated areas. Firstly, a small children's playground for children under the age of ten, ideally with a paddling pool and sandpit. For those older than ten, the park would have male and female indoor and outdoor gymnasiums. Many parks would also contain a swimming pool. In these areas, children, youth, and for that matter, older adults, could take part in structured, organised recreation.³⁸

Structuring recreation and ordering use of the playground was the job of the most fundamental feature of the small park: the play organisers. The proper, adult supervision was the key to the success of the new play environment. These play organisers needed to maintain the equipment and the order of the playground. Ideally, in the words of New York Parks and Playground Association secretary Howard Bradstreet, the play worker would see to it that “the boys do not invade the territory of the girls... that rebellions are subdued, that invasions of older youths are repelled.”³⁹ In other words, the play organiser must determine which children could use the space of the playground and how they interacted with the environment. Thus, while reformers idealised rural childhood, rather than attempting to recreate the countryside within the city, leading play reformers such as DeGroot set about creating ideal urban play spaces: orderly, supervised, and dedicated solely to proper recreation.

Even so, play organisers also believed they must not limit activities in playgrounds to activities boys would deem too safe. Many play reformers, like

probation officer and social worker Henry W. Thurston, recognised the need for compromise with boys of the mischievous type:

It becomes plain that a spare-time program of a wholesome sort that will compete at all successfully with present wasteful and unsafe uses of spare time must not be confined to sand-piles, see-saws, and other playground attractions that are too tame. There must be, for the bolder spirits that “just ache for adventure”, some stunts that tax their growing bodily and imaginative powers to the limit. Otherwise some of the strongest and most daring will snap the tether and pioneer for themselves beyond the circumference of supervision and into conditions that are dangerous to character and good citizenship.⁴⁰

As Thurston argued, playgrounds and boys’ clubs must appeal to boys and must tempt them away from the streets. Unlike schools, playgrounds, while contained, carried no state requirements: neither the state nor the private agencies which ran playgrounds used force to get children to attend. Thus, play reformers and playground specialists recognised the ability of children to choose to attend or not. This recognition shaped the spaces of playgrounds, which reformers must make attractive to children, both in terms of activities and equipment. As De Groot argued, playground equipment must address the desires of the children: “if the playground does not contain something to ‘flip’, the streetcars will be used to practice on”.⁴¹ Therefore, even though adults created formal playgrounds, the activities of children outside of playground spaces shaped the institutions.

A playground needed supervisors and play apparatus. They also required fences, and businesses quickly acknowledged the profit-making potential. In publications such as *The Playground*, advertisements for new play equipment appeared alongside spreads advertising the latest fences.⁴² Capitalising on playground organisers’ fears of the streets, companies like Anchor Fences boasted that their products could “Keep children on the playground” away from “the forbidden street where danger lurks”.⁴³ Fences protected children from traffic and the moral dangers of the street, however they also helped reformers in their

constant battle for the attention of children. Without a fence, play advocate Joseph Lee argued, playgrounds constantly lost children to the allure of the street. “Without a fence,” Lee said of children in playgrounds, “they will all run to watch every fire engine that goes by.”⁴⁴ Fences gave playgrounds boundaries, making them into institutions, and defining the limits of proper play space. Importantly, in fencing playgrounds, play organisers sought to limit children’s mobility, keeping them contained in designated spaces. Mobility, play reformers recognised, had always served as an important resource for children, enabling them to evade the control of juvenile institutions. To save children from the evils of the street environment, play reformers sought to contain children within the institutional space of the small park.

The small parks movement grew rapidly with Chicago and the South Parks Commission, one of its three park commissions, at the forefront. Chicago was certainly not the first city to have playgrounds, yet, by 1907, the South Parks Commission had created an extensive system of small parks based on the ideology of the new playground movement, with a global reputation and a large budget to match. That year the city offered the two smaller park commissions in Chicago – the West Chicago Park Commission and the Lincoln Park Commission – a total of one and a half million dollars for the creation of new playgrounds and small parks, while it gave the South Parks Commission a budget of three million dollars to further expand its small park model.⁴⁵ Those interested in playground reform ventured to Chicago from around the world, taking home the methods and organisation of the South Parks Commission.

From 1906, playground reformers in the United States could join the new national Playground Association of America which – with Theodore Roosevelt himself as honorary president – aimed to spread the small parks ideal across the country. Cities around America began to invest in municipal playgrounds and hire experts to run them. The Playground Association of America oversaw the professionalization of play organisers, attempting to register and keep account of

trained playground workers.⁴⁶ By 1921, almost 200 cities employed a total of over eleven thousand men and women as year-round playground workers.⁴⁷

Well into the 1920s, child savers whole-heartedly believed that playgrounds, and other organised recreation institutions, could save children from turning to delinquents. Municipal and state governments across the country agreed, investing millions in urban play spaces designed to keep children off the streets. Yet, sociologists had yet to prove that organised recreation did in fact reduce delinquency. Proving it could only strengthen the case for more playgrounds, and so, in the late 1920s, the Bureau of Social Hygiene set about to do just that.

Failing Optimism

Frederick Thrasher had been a leading proponent of environmental causes of delinquency since the early 1920s. His highly influential study *The Gang: A Study of 1313 Gangs in Chicago*, originally published in 1927, posited that gangs developed from boy nature left unsupervised in the interstitial spaces of the city.⁴⁸ Moving to New York following the publication of his book, Thrasher received funding from the Bureau of Social Hygiene to study the Jefferson Park Boys' Club, located in one of the 'toughest' blocks of East Harlem. The Jefferson Park Study was an outstanding piece of early twentieth century research. Its methods represent a pinnacle of Progressive-Era-style optimism. Thrasher, and his team of researchers, collected information in minute detail concerning East Harlem, the Boys' Club, and the boys who frequented it. The amount of data collected was astounding.

On the other hand, the results of the study embodied the growing pessimism about boys work. The study was extremely expensive, and dragged on for years, causing tension between Lawrence Dunham, the director of the Bureau of Social Hygiene, and Thrasher, and taking a toll on Thrasher's deteriorating health. The

gathering of knowledge on this scale was just not feasible within the time and budget provided. Moreover, the study's results were shocking and disappointing. For years, child savers, urban reformers, and Thrasher himself had sung the praises of recreation centres, primarily for their roles in getting boys off the street, and thus out of delinquency. Thrasher's study, however, far from providing proof for this long cherished assumption, dramatically challenged it. Thrasher and his team of researchers uncovered a link between boys' attendance at recreation centres and increased delinquency. The tone of despair is apparent in sentences such as, "If anything definite may be concluded, it is that delinquency-truancy rates prior to two year membership periods seem to be less than during membership; while the rates for periods subsequent to two year membership periods are, on the whole, increased, rather than decreased".⁴⁹

The spatial solutions of the Progressives had failed. Their optimistic vision of cities free from the scourge of juvenile delinquency faltered, and with it the theories of environmental determinism that had underpinned their solutions to urban problems. In its place rose the new theories of psychiatry and personality – a return to biological causes of crime, although differing from earlier, Victorian theories of the born criminal. The environment still was a character in theories on the causes of crime, but, as the thirties progressed, it was an increasingly limited one.

Conclusion

The solutions Progressive-Era child savers presented to solve the problem of juvenile delinquency were more multi-faceted than simply reforming the juvenile justice system. Progressives sought, instead, to transform the whole environment of the city which they believed to be the primary cause of delinquency. In particular, reformers sought to get children off the streets and into playgrounds.

However, playground reformers had a complicated relationship to delinquent behaviours. The popular developmental theories of G. Stanley Hall suggested that misbehaviour of certain children was desirable. Boy instinct, Progressives believed, should not be quelled but rather, negotiated with, tempted back to the safe spaces of organised, supervised recreation. Thus, child savers didn't seek an end to white, working-class boys' misbehaviours, just a relocation and redirection of the energies behind the delinquencies. Yet, the developmental theories providing a foundation for playground and juvenile justice reform, applied only to white male children. While some reformers, like Henry Winfred Thurston, may have been sympathetic to female delinquents and their recreational needs, thirst for adventure and harmless mischief never became desirable traits for ideal girls. From the beginning, therefore, racialized and gendered understandings of children's development framed the environmental causes of delinquency and the child-saving institutions created to combat it. Exclusion of children of colour was not accidental but a foundational part of the theories behind urban child saving.

Even as Progressive Era reformers tried to change the city and waxed lyrical about the benefits of rural childhood, they remained pragmatic. Playground advocates like Charles Hughes decried the congested areas of the city while they stayed optimistic about urban life in general. Hughes loved the rural beauty of upstate New York but believed the future of mankind lay in cities like New York City.⁵⁰ Reforms like the playground movement may have been born out of an idealistic and nostalgic longing for an agrarian past, but they were equally a part of a pragmatic and optimistic plan for an orderly urban future.

¹Seventy-Fourth Annual Report of the YMCA of the City of New York, 1927, Folder 235, Box 22, Series 3, Subseries 4, Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Records (LSRM), Rockefeller Archive Center (RAC).

² Newsboys' earnings, for example, could even be good in comparison to adult wages. Child labor investigator Edward Clopper suggested that newsboys stayed in that trade because other jobs they found paid such pitiful wages in comparison. Clopper met one sixteen year old boy who he reported "hopes for a better job, but says that although he has hunted one, so little is offered for what he can do (\$2 to \$3 per week) that it would hardly suffice for spending money. Clopper, E. N., *Child Labor in City Streets*, (New York, 1913) accessed at <http://www.gutenberg.org/>; For an example of some of Lewis Hine's photos where the children's wages are documented see Lewis Hine, 'Eleven year old newsie...' (Austin, Tex., Oct. 1913); Lewis Hine, 'Joseph Bernstein...' (Washington D.C., April 1912); Lewis Hine, 'Louis Gabriel...' (Washington D.C., April 1912) all accessed at <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/nclc/> (07/05/2014).

³Roy Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), Rosenzweig was arguing against the social control theory put forward by scholars such as Galen Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1982) and Cary Goodman, *Choosing Sides: Playgrounds and Street Life on the Lower East Side* (New York: Schocken Books, 1979).

⁴ For a recent example of this see Colin Fisher, *Urban Green: Nature, Recreation, and the Working Class in Industrial Chicago* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015).

⁵ 'Fourteenth Census of the United States taken in the year 1920', US Bureau of the Census (1920).

⁶ For a history of anti-urban feeling in the United States see Steven Conn, *Americans Against the City: Anti-urbanism in the twentieth century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014)

⁷ Austin E. Griffiths, 'Address on Playgrounds and Legislation in Relation Thereto with Special Reference to the Washington Playground Bill Vetoed' (1908), 104 CHy 30, Russell Sage Foundation Microfiche (RSFM), RAC.

⁸ Thomas Jefferson, 'Letter to James Madison' (Paris, Dec., 20, 1787), The Thomas Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress, available online at <https://www.loc.gov/collections/thomas-jefferson-papers/about-this-collection/> (accessed 10/05/2016)

⁹ Charles E. Hughes, 'Why We Want Playgrounds' Proceedings of the Second Annual Playground Congress (1908), 104 CHy 18, RSFM, RAC

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Owen Lovejoy, 'Child Labor and The Night Messenger Service', *The Survey*, 24 (1910), pp. 311-316.

¹² Anthony M. Platt, *The Child Savers: The Invention of Delinquency* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977).

¹³ Charles L. Chute, 'The Development of Probation', (1922), 102 CH 46, RSFM, RAC.

¹⁴ Steven L. Schlossman, *Love and the American Delinquent: The Theory and Practice of 'Progressive' Juvenile Justice, 1825-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977).

¹⁵ Allen Burns, 'The Relation of Playground to Juvenile Delinquency', (1908), 104 CHy 9, RSFM, RAC.

¹⁶ See, for example, Harriet Hickox Heller, 'The Playground as a Phase of Social Reform', (1908), 104 CHy 10, RSFM, RAC.

¹⁷ George E. Johnson, 'Why Teach a Child to Play?' (1909), 104 CHy 34, RSFM, RAC

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Heller, 'The Playground as a Phase of Social Reform'.

²⁰ One such proponent was Theodore Roosevelt, who argued for moving children from streets which were 'schools of crime' to playgrounds. Roosevelt cited in 'The Playground Association of America', (1907) Folder 38RR.P6z, [Miscellaneous Pamphlets], The Playground Association of Chicago, Chicago History Museum (CHM).

²¹ The aims and practice of juvenile justice were certainly two very different things. Despite reformers' desires to move away from punitive forms of juvenile justice, children who found themselves in juvenile justice institutions often faced physical, emotional and sexual abuse. Furthermore, since Anthony Platt's *The Child Savers* published in 1969, historians have been well aware that new laws concerning juvenile delinquents greatly expanded definitions of delinquency and brought many more children into the purview of the court. See, for example, Miroslava Chavez-Garcia, 'In Retrospect: Anthony M. Platt's *The Child Savers: The Invention of Delinquency*', Introduction to the 40th Anniversary Edition, Anthony M. Platt, *The Child Savers: The Invention of Delinquency* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2009).

²² Judith Sealander, *Private Wealth, Public Life: Foundation Philanthropy and the Reshaping of American Social Policy from the Progressive Era to the New Deal* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1997), pp. 79-82.

²³ Julia Bates, 'The Role of Race in Legitimizing Institutionalization: A Comparative Analysis of Early Child Welfare Initiatives in the United States', *JHCY*, 9, 1, (Winter 2016), pp. 15-28; Geoff K. Ward, *The Black Child Savers: Racial Democracy and Juvenile Justice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

²⁴ Anne Meis Knupfer, *Reform and Resistance: Gender, Delinquency and America's First Juvenile Court* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

²⁵ Gail Bederman has an excellent discussion of gender and G. Stanley Hall's recapitulation theory in Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

²⁶ Knupfer, *Reform and Resistance*; Michael Rembis, *Defining Deviance: Sex, Science and Delinquent Girls, 1890-1960* (Champaign, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 2011).

²⁷ Ben B. Lindsey, 'Public Playgrounds and Juvenile Delinquency', (1908), 104 CHy 21, RSFM, RAC.

²⁸ The fear of molly-coddled boys was a part of the crisis in middle-class masculinity at the turn of the twentieth century. For examinations of this crisis see D.I. Macleod, *Building Character in the American Boy: The Boy Scouts, YMCA, and their Forerunners, 1870-1920* (Madison, 1983), G. Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago ; London, 1995), J. Grant, 'A "Real Boy" and Not a Sissy: Gender, Childhood, and Masculinity, 1890-1940', *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 37 (No. 4, 2004), pp.829-851.

²⁹ Woods Hutchinson, 'Can the Child Survive Civilization?', Proceedings of the Second Annual Playground Congress (1908), 104 Chy 11, RSFM, RAC.

³⁰ 'Cho Cho Says' [Poster], Child Health Organisation (c. 1920-1922), Fol. 9, Box 1, Subseries 1, Series 3, LSRM, RAC; Hughes, 'Why We Want Playgrounds'.

³¹ I have used the pronoun 'his' here to reflect the focus on boys in much of this literature.

³² Hutchinson, 'Can the Child Survive Civilization?'

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Lindsey, 'Public Playgrounds and Juvenile Delinquency'

³⁵ Charles Mulford Robinson, 'Landscape Gardening for Playgrounds', (1908), 104 CHy 2, RSFM, RAC.

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- ³⁶ Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours for What We Will*.
- ³⁷ E. B. De Groot, 'Recent Playground Development in Chicago', (1908), 104 CHy 7, RSFM, RAC.
- ³⁸ Chicago South Parks Commission, 'Annual Report of the South Park Commissioners', (1905-1915), available online at <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000549367> (accessed 04/07/2016). Lorna H. Leland, 'Playground Construction: An Ideal Development for a Playground on an Irregular Tract of Land Between Five and Six Acres in Extent', (1909), 104 CHy 49, RSFM, RAC.
- ³⁹ Arthur Leland, 'Winter Organization of Playgrounds', (1908), 104 CHy 6, RSFM RAC.
- ⁴⁰ Thurston, Henry W., *Delinquency and spare time: a study of a few stories written into the court records of the City of Cleveland* (The Survey Committee of the Cleveland Foundation, Philadelphia, 1918), pp. 136-137
- ⁴¹ Chicago South Parks Commission, 'Annual Report of the South Park Commissioners', (1906), p. 55 available online at <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000549367> (accessed 04/07/2016).
- ⁴² The Playground was the monthly magazine published by The Playground Association of America (1907-1929). Several issues are kept by the RAC. LSRM Series 3 Subseries 4 Box 17.
- ⁴³ 'The Playground' (May, 1929), Fol. 184, Box 17, Subseries 4, Series 3, LSRM, RAC.
- ⁴⁴ 'The Playground' (April, 1927), Fol. 184, Box 17, Subseries 4, Series 3, LSRM, RAC.
- ⁴⁵ De Groot, 'Recent Playground Development in Chicago'.
- ⁴⁶ 'The Playground' v.1-2 (Apr. 1907-Mar. 1909) available online at <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000507224> (accessed 04/07/2016)
- ⁴⁷ 'The Playground' (Mar., 1922), Fol. 182, Box 17, Subseries 4, Series 3, LSRM, RAC
- ⁴⁸ Frederick Thrasher, *The Gang: A Study of 1313 Gangs in Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927).
- ⁴⁹ Frederick Thrasher, *The Jefferson Boys' Club Study* (unpublished manuscript), The Rockefeller Archive Center BSH, Series 3, Subseries 3, Box 13, vol 6.
- ⁵⁰ Hughes, 'Why We Want Playgrounds'.